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« The Success and Ambiguity of Young Adult Literature: Merging Literary Modes in Contemporary British Fiction »

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Résumé

Cet article se penche sur les romans destinés aux grands adolescents ou « jeunes adultes », catégorie qui connaît un engouement particulier et que l'on considère traditionnellement comme une subdivision de la littérature pour la jeunesse bien que, d'un point de vue terminologique, elle mette en avant le dépassement de la division adulte/enfant en brouillant les frontières entre ces deux âges de la vie pour mieux se concentrer sur la transition d'un état vers un autre. En Grande-Bretagne, la fiction pour jeunes adultes s'est développée de façon significative au cours des quatre dernières décennies ; cet article s'intéresse aux effets qu'ont eus cette émergence et cette évolution littéraires depuis le début du XXI^e siècle, en particulier en termes de genre et de mode de narration. La fiction britannique pour jeunes adultes est ancrée dans la tradition américaine, pionnière en la matière, dont elle s'inspire largement et qui a mis un terme à une vision romantique de l'enfance ainsi qu'à l'obligation du *happy ending* dans le livre pour enfants. Cependant, une tendance récente semble s'employer à atténuer un réalisme âpre et brutal grâce à des éléments, voire de petites touches de *fantasy*. La fiction britannique pour jeunes adultes, qui flirte parfois avec ce qui s'apparente au « réalisme magique », entremêle différents sous-genres pour parvenir à des expériences formelles suggérant l'état particulier dans lequel se trouve le jeune adulte. Grâce à la création d'une hybridité textuelle, ces romans ambigus d'un point de vue générique, reflètent l'entre-deux du lectorat auquel ils s'adressent.

Mots-clés

Fantasy, fiction britannique, littérature pour enfants, réalisme, roman pour jeunes adultes

Abstract

This paper focuses on novels addressed to that category of older teenagers called “young adults”, a particularly successful category that is traditionally regarded as a subpart of children’s literature and yet terminologically insists on overriding the adult/child divide by blurring the frontier between adulthood and childhood and focusing on the transition from one state to the other. In Britain, YA fiction has developed extensively in the last four decades; this article examines what this literary emergence and evolution has entailed since the beginning of the 21st century, especially from the point of view of genre and narrative mode. British YA fiction is deeply indebted to and anchored in the American tradition, which proclaimed the end of the Romantic child as well as that of the compulsory happy ending of the children’s book. However, there seems to be a recent trend which consists in alleviating the roughness, the straightforwardness of realism thanks to elements or touches of fantasy. British YA fiction, coming close to what could sometimes be called “magic realism”, mingles subgenres to produce experiments in form that suggest the particular state of young adulthood. By creating textual hybridity, these generically ambiguous novels mirror the in-betweenness of their intended audience.

Keywords

British fiction, children’s book, fantasy, realism, young adult novel

Publishers tend to use the label “YA novel” for any teen novel, whatever the exact reading age. However, it seems that the label “young adults” does not refer to the same age group as “teenagers”: the latter word etymologically indicates the 13-19 age group only whereas YA literature rather targets readers seen as more mature, roughly older than 14 and up to about 20 or more. As Michael Cart remarked in a 2001 article, “[s]ince the mid-90s, the upper parameter of ‘young adult’ has been pushed beyond the traditional cutoff age of 18 and now includes readers as old as 25.”¹ And the “YA literature” category has been the preferred phrase, for over a quarter of a century now, to describe books aimed at readers that publishers are reluctant to call “adolescents”, as the English term is often deemed slightly specialised or technical. Paradoxically, while children’s literature studies encompass YA fiction, it is a label that refers to a category which the phrase “children’s literature” seems to exclude, aiming to override the adult/teen divide. This points to a significant shift of perspective in the way Western society considers teenagers: YA literature aims to pull them out of childhood.

The growing ambiguity characterising this age group has entailed the shift of “YA literature—the genre formerly known as ‘realistic fiction for teens’”²— toward a much more ambivalent, less straightforward category, both in terms of age and genre boundaries. Since the turn of the 21st century and even the last decade of the 20th century, the kind of children’s literature that has attracted most critical attention is that of YA fiction. This does not imply that younger children or teenagers do not read any longer, or that books aimed at them are not successful. But it turns out that YA novels are probably the main focus of media attention. In contrast, the literary criticism specifically devoted to this “upper end” of the spectrum of children’s books has not expanded so much since Caroline Hunt pointed out twenty years ago, in an article entitled “Young Adult Literature Evades the Theorists”, that criticism was still blatantly scarce about a literature considered to have reached maturity.³ This article aims to bring new light on the evolution of the genre in the context of British literature, examining the themes broached in book series that build on hybrid genres.

The New Legitimacy of YA Books

From fantasy to bit lit or dystopian cycles and their addictive seriality, YA books have become one of the great publishing phenomena of the turn of the century. This popularity may be related to the controversial aspects of a genre that tackles taboo themes in innovative

¹ Michael CART, “From Insider to Outsider: The Evolution of Young Adult Literature”, *Voices from the Middle* 9.2, Dec. 2001, 95.

² *Ibidem*, 96.

³ Caroline HUNT, “Young Adult Literature Evades the Theorists”, *Children’s Literature Association Quarterly* 21.1, Spring 1996, 4-11.

manners. Indeed, underlying these books is a challenge to the traditional vision of childhood through the questioning of the usual assumptions about what a teen can “withstand” or not, or, in other terms, what is suitable for him/her.⁴ Admittedly, being much talked about is not necessarily a token of outstanding literary quality, as American fairy-tale historian and children’s literature critic Jack Zipes underlined in his 2001 essay “The Phenomenon of Harry Potter, or Why All the Talk?”, claiming that the worth of the series was all the more difficult to assess as “[Rowling’s] books are driven by commodity consumption that at the same time sets the parameters of reading and aesthetic taste.”⁵

Yet among the mass production of YA works achieving economic success by reproducing the *topoi* and codes of popular subgenres, there are books of high literary merit to be found. Indeed, YA novels have garnered most of the literary prizes in the field of children’s literature in recent years, which can be confirmed by a mere look at the list of the recipients of Britain’s three most prestigious children’s literature awards (see Table 1): the Carnegie Medal,⁶ the Guardian Children’s Fiction Award⁷ and the Whitbread (now Costa) Children’s Book Award.⁸ These awards have brought recognition to a long-underrated literature and to authors like Philip Pullman, David Almond, Jamila Gavin, Geraldine McCaughrean, Patrick Ness, Kevin Brooks or, most recently, Frances Hardinge... Although there are prizes devoted to picture books in particular, the focus of attention has definitely moved to young adult novels. YA authors have occasionally been accused of reaping awards traditionally devoted to children’s books when their novels are considered by some not to address children at all. For example, Kevin Brooks’s *The Bunker Diary* (2013) was deemed unsuitable for children on account of the extremely bleak tone of the first-person narrative, and an outcome which radically illustrates the obsolescence of the compulsory happy ending in children’s books. As for David Almond’s *A Song for Ella Grey* (2014), it was awarded the Guardian Children’s Fiction Award much to the discontent of Lynne Reid Banks (author of popular *The Indian in the Cupboard*, published in 1980), who said Almond’s novel was “not a book for children” and that “publishing is not a children’s world anymore.”⁹

⁴ A debate already broached by Nicholas TUCKER (ed.), *Suitable for Children? Controversies in Children’s Literature*, London: Chatto & Windus, 1976.

⁵ Jack ZIPES, *Sticks and Stones. The Troublesome Success of Children’s Literature from Slovenly Peter to Harry Potter*, London/New York: Routledge, 2001, 172.

⁶ The Carnegie Medal has been awarded by CILIP (the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals) since 1936.

⁷ The Guardian Children’s Fiction Award has been awarded since 1967 by a jury of authors and the children’s book editor of *The Guardian*, Julia Eccleshare).

⁸ The Whitbread (now Costa) Children’s Book Award has been awarded since 1971 by the multinational Whitbread and since 2006 by its subsidiary Costa.

⁹ Quoted in Piers TORDAY, “A Song for Ella Grey is a children’s book – and a great one”, *The Guardian Online* (Dec. 1, 2015). <<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2015/dec/01/a-song-for-ella-grey-david-almond-lyne-reid-banks-young-adult-children-fiction>>, accessed 31 October, 2016.

The origins of British realist YA fiction

In Britain, YA fiction has developed extensively since the Second World War.¹⁰ Authors of children's literature may have felt the need to attend to the demand for reflection and commentary about some of the blatant social problems adolescents could be confronted with. Significantly, there was already an attempt to accommodate the specificity of an age group by adjusting the themes and the style of a literature addressing young adults. Farah Mendelsohn and Michael Levy observe a connection between narrative modes and the readers' age range, remarking that "the demand for social realism" in the late 1980s and the early 1990s "was one of the contributing factors in the growing division between children's and teen or Young Adult fiction."¹¹ In that respect, British YA fiction is deeply indebted to and anchored in the pioneering American trend of YA novels: from *The Outsiders* (Sue Hinton, 1967) to *The Chocolate War* (Robert Cormier, 1974) or *Forever* (Judy Blume, 1975), these early landmarks proclaimed the end of the Romantic child as well as that of the unavoidable happy ending of the children's book.

In Britain, where children's literature emerged in the mid-18th century before spreading to the rest of the Western world, the prevalent literary mode in fiction was fantasy, although realism permeated the adventure story and the school story. From *Alice in Wonderland* (Lewis Carroll, 1865) to *The Big Friendly Giant* (Roald Dahl, 1982), *The Jungle Book* (Rudyard Kipling, 1894), *Peter Rabbit* (Beatrix Potter, 1902), *Peter Pan* (J.M. Barrie, 1904), *The Wind in the Willows* (Kenneth Grahame, 1908), *Winnie-the-Pooh* (A.A. Milne, 1926), *The Hobbit* (J.R.R. Tolkien, 1937) or *Tom's Midnight Garden* (Philippa Pearce, 1958), among many others, the greatest classics of British children's literature definitely come from the world of fantasy. The return to a realist production in the 1970s and 1980s was brought about through the influence of YA American literature. The purpose of straightforward realism was then to avoid escapism and engage with the issues young people were confronted with in the real world. Peter Hollindale thus describes YA realism as "taboo-breaking realism in the depiction of teenage social experience and conflict [...] which purports to offer teenage readers a mirror image of their lives."¹² American YA literature paved the way for such subgenres as the "problem novel" and its (sometimes harshly) realistic stance, which fostered a myriad novels tackling subjects that had previously been carefully overlooked—family problems, difference, racism, bullying, sex, unwanted pregnancies, alcohol or drug addiction... *Dear Nobody* (Berlie Doherty, 1991), *The Illustrated Mum* (Jacqueline Wilson, 1999), or *Madame Doubtfire* (Anne Fine, 1987) illustrate the interest in socially realistic topics in Britain.

¹⁰ Alison WALLER, *Constructing Adolescence in Fantastic Realism*, New York/London: Routledge, 2009, 18.

¹¹ Farah MENDELSON and Michael LEVY, *Children's Fantasy Literature*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016, 161.

¹² Peter HOLLINDALE, "The Adolescent Novel of Ideas", *Children's Literature in Education* 26.1 (1995), 84.

A New Generic Hybridity

Since the years prior to the turn of the 21st century, YA realism has been challenged by a double phenomenon: first, the renewed interest in full-fledged fantasy (in such works as J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* series or Philip Pullman's *Dark Materials* trilogy); and second, the hybridisation of the formerly conflicting categories of fantasy and realism. The latter process is particularly significant. Perhaps because children's literature is a highly codified literature, the two modes of fantasy and realism rarely meet in the British tradition. For example, fantasy novels typically deal with such subject matters as the motif of the quest or of the Chosen One, whereas realist novels address the notions of racism, bullying, etc....

Fantasy began intruding on the traditionally realistic school story in the last decades of the 20th century, symbolised by the young witches and wizards of Jill Murphy (*The Worst Witch* series, 1974-2013), Diana Wynne Jones (several books in the Chrestomanci series, 1977-2006) and J. K. Rowling (Harry Potter novels, 1997-2007). YA literature reached both economic and literary maturity at the end of the 20th century as signified by the very title and argument of Maria Nikolajeva's pioneering study *Children's Literature Comes of Age* (1996). YA fiction, now a globalised literature trend linked with seriality and multimodality, has renewed itself by drawing on fleeting cultural trends and by mingling successful elements into the creation of new, hybrid subgenres.

Recent British YA fiction merges the two narrative modes of realism and fantasy, alleviating the bleak outlook of harsh realism with a measure of literary creativity. In an essay about problem novels, author Nina Bawden complains about the heavy didacticism and political-correctness of problem novels which broach "fashionable social problems [...]" but are "dragged in to satisfy some educational or social theory,"¹³ and calls for what she terms "emotional realism" to promote originality. She contends that this can only be achieved by breaking the codes or by introducing a certain degree of ambiguity. Maria Nikolajeva argues that the recurrent use of "defamiliarisation", the process through which the author plays on the reader's expectations in YA novels, is a means to bring about surprise and novelty in the reading experience.¹⁴ The development of hybridity between realism and fantasy (or the supernatural) responds to a desire to renew YA fiction and to address the transition from childhood to adulthood—i.e. the young protagonists' coming of age—, neither in terms of a sudden, radical transformation nor as a linear or straightforward change. This in-between state of young adults is often regarded as a somewhat erratic process or as an oscillation, even as a tearing apart

¹³ Nina BAWDEN, "Emotional Realism in Books for Young People", *The Horn Book Magazine* 56 (1980): 17-33. Quoted in M. O. GRENBY, *Children's Literature*, op. cit., 61.

¹⁴ Maria NIKOLAJEVA, "Voicing Identity: The Dilemma of Narrative Perspective in Twenty-First Century Young Adult Fiction", 254, in Kimberley Reynolds and Catherine Butler (eds.), *Modern Children's Literature*, Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, (2nd ed.) 2014, 251-267.

between two psychological states. In 2015, the author of *The Lie Tree*, Frances Hardinge, wrote of fourteen-year-old Faith:

For the last year she had felt like a seesaw, clumsily rocking between childhood and adulthood". It was always clearest at mealtimes. Sometimes she would find that she had grown into an adult overnight with magical beanstalk speed and was allowed the honour of eating with her parents in the dining room. And then, without warning, she would find herself back in the nursery with Howard, eating porridge while an undersized chair creaked beneath her weight.¹⁵

Significantly, the term "see-saw" is also used in *Candy* (Kevin Brooks, 2006) to describe adolescence through Joe and Candy's relationship and the way they both behave like children and adults in turn: "As we sat there looking at each other, [...] I felt the seesaw moving again. Candy started moving down, taking the yokel with her, and as they went down, the balance shifted and up came Joe the Man again."¹⁶ Reading a YA novel is as unsettling, confusing an experience as undergoing the transition from childhood to adulthood.

Magic Realism in YA Fiction

Some YA writers have experimented with a hybrid form previously largely unknown to children's fiction—that of magic realism—in order to capture the state of uncertainty associated with that age range. Their narratives typically resort to supernatural or uncanny gusts that unexpectedly disrupt the otherwise down-to-earth, realistic accounts. Unlike fantasy, in which the meeting with magic occurs in a natural way, magic realism perfectly conveys the disturbed, troubled state of young adulthood. The best representative of this recent trend is David Almond, who is often described as "the Gabriel Garcia Marquez of children's literature." Almond's novels are often set in the industrial towns of Northern England and his stories are sprinkled with very small touches of fantasy that bring poetry to the dreary background of the former mining areas and counter the harshness and violence of realism. In *Skellig* (1998), the reader is never completely sure whether the eponymous elderly tramp living in the garage at the back of the hero's garden is actually growing an angel's wings on his back. *Kit's Wilderness* (1999) places magic where it is least expected; there is something supernatural about the pits and tunnels of the old mine, where the young narrator and some of his friends see the ghosts of former miners. *A Song for Ella Grey* (2014) is a romance in which the characters reenact the legend of Orpheus and Eurydice against the modern backdrop of the mining landscape of Tyneside, complete with Geordie accent and Northern dialect. It is characteristic of magic realism to find the supernatural in the most unassuming, ordinary places, such as the former mining tunnels of Newcastle, which act as the underworld that Orpheus enters to try and retrieve his young wife. This novel rewrites

¹⁵ Frances HARDINGE, *The Lie Tree*, London: Macmillan, 31-32.

¹⁶ Kevin BROOKS, *Candy*, London & New York: Scholastic, [2005] 2006, 217.

the myth of Orpheus and Eurydice and exploits its transgressive passage from one world to another to explore the young adult's tearing apart between two incompatible states.

In Kevin Brooks' fiction, the use of magic realism mainly comes about through characterisation. His novels have caused debate insofar as their hyperrealism sometimes seems to exclude them from the children's acceptable reading sphere; they are fraught with violence, especially physical violence, including rape, taboo topics like alcohol or drug-addiction and a fair amount of unhappy or not-so-happy endings. And yet, in many cases, his novels resort to some magical, supernatural, highly lyrical moments of epiphany, especially thanks to the fascinating, almost mystical youths that mesmerise the first-person teen narrators in *Lucas* (2003) or *Black Rabbit Summer* (2008), enlightening an otherwise very bleak outlook on life.

Magic realism has become a trend in YA fiction. For instance, *The White Darkness* (Geraldine McCaughrean, 2005) introduces fantasy in the realistic account of a Polar expedition with a reference to the historical character of Arctic explorer Titus Oates, scattering red herrings that the reader is supposed to spot in order to find his/her bearings in-between the plot and the narrator's own interpretation of the story. The more desperate the situation grows, the more the fantasy world young Symone has created for herself encroaches upon reality and the more real the fantasy character she has imagined finally becomes, challenging the reader's perception of what actually happens.

Challenging Expectations by Mingling Subgenres

Terry Pratchett, the highly popular author of the *Discworld* fantasy series, said in an interview that magic realism, which is a label sometimes used to describe his work, "is like a polite way of saying you write fantasy and it is more acceptable to certain people."¹⁷ This is definitely an allusion to the fact that fantasy, because it is deemed a childish genre, has a long tradition of being underrated whereas magic realism, as a genre connected with some prestigious South American authors, may sound more worthy of attention. "Fantasy" is actually a better word than "magic realism" to define Pratchett's work, even though he often resorts to fantasy with a distance, in a parodic, self-derisive way, as in the *Discworld* series.

Unlike the *Discworld* novels, which are either written for adults or (in a few cases) for young adults, *Nation* (Terry Pratchett, 2008) is a crossover novel which addresses an undetermined reader. The author blurs generic frontiers, thus broadening the potential age range readership, from young adults to adults. In spite of its rather obvious reference to the *robinsonade* pointing out the basically fictitious nature of the account, the narrative sounds

¹⁷ Linda RICHARDS, "Terry Pratchett by Linda Richards", *January Magazine* 2002, <<http://januarymagazine.com/profiles/tpratchett2002.html>>, accessed 31 October, 2016.

realistic, accurate, almost documentary in describing the ancestral traditions of the primitive society of Mau, the young male protagonist. Nevertheless, the reader soon becomes aware that under its semblance of realism the story unravels in a fictitious society, which itself is set in the fictitious "Great Pelagic Ocean." The book also sounds like a historical novel as Daphne, the young female protagonist, seems to have travelled from an alternative version of Victorian England. *Nation* therefore has elements of uchronia (or alternate history) since the course of events it describes seems to have deviated at a point and triggered an alternative development of history.

The Lie Tree also combines an alternate Victorian period and a fictitious Channel island, relying on scientific accuracy as it recreates the atmosphere of Darwinian England through the study of fossils and plants. But a fantasy trope intrudes in this very realistic setting: the eponymous Lie Tree (or Mendacity Tree), which turns out to be a tree that is damaged by light and feeds on lies. The plot is built around the opposition between truth and lies, which in itself prompts a reflection on the nature of reality as opposed to fiction and, as far as narrative modes are concerned, on realism as opposed to fantasy (or other non-mimetic modes). The novel subtly succeeds in describing the in-between state of the young adult protagonist: Faith achieves emancipation and empowerment as she gradually gets to the bottom of the mystery she is faced with in the unsettling backdrop of an England torn between Darwinism and religion. *The Lie Tree* intricately mixes the generic codes of the historical novel, detective fiction (the murder mystery to be solved) and fantasy.

A great number of contemporary YA novels explore these alternate universes while being anchored in a realistic world. In the dystopian *Noughts and Crosses* series (Malorie Blackman, 2001-2008), Pangaea (i.e. the original only continent on earth) depicts a society politically dominated by Black people while Whites are oppressed. Whether they are about terrorism or organised crime, these novels sound very realistic; yet some details occasionally remind the reader of the unrealistic premises on which the existence of this fictitious world is based. The *Chaos Walking* trilogy (Patrick Ness, 2008-2010) is another dystopia which is more clearly related to science-fiction since the story takes place in the future on the planet New World which human beings have colonized. Although they undoubtedly belong to the non-mimetic mode, Ness's three highly acclaimed novels turn out to be war novels, a category which used to be realistic most of the time. Throughout the different stages of the plot, all the various aspects of war are tackled in a way that is reminiscent of actual historical events of World War 2 in particular (especially in the treatment of the Spackle, the extra-terrestrial creatures that the human settlers treat as beasts). War provides also the backdrop of *How I Live Now* (Meg Rosoff, 2004), which seems to offer a very down-to-earth description of family relationships, romance and coming of age until the reader realises that the conflict described is actually World War 3,

which gives the narrative a surprising and original dimension. Crossing the subgenres of former realism with the subcategories of fantasy has become a frequent strategy in recent YA fiction, allowing writers to explore the ambiguities and double-sidedness of young adulthood.

Conclusion

In *Language and Ideology in Children's Fiction*, John Stephens argues that “one of the most curious sides to the criticism of children’s literature is the urge to polarise fantasy and realism into rival genres, and to assert that children prefer one or the other, or ‘progress’ from fantasy to realism or vice-versa).”¹⁸ It may also be one of the weaknesses of literary analysis, which often seeks to distribute different types of text into clear-cut categories. This polarisation may have been necessary at the point when YA literature was just emerging, putting forward its realistic stance as a way to shape and lend authority to a new genre in counterpoint to the canonicity of children’s fantasy. However, the recent evolution of YA fiction proves that there is no such rivalry any longer. On the contrary, YA authors play on this so-called antagonism, creating highly original universes and coming as close as possible to conveying the double-sidedness, the in-betweenness of young adults. In doing so, they reveal a more ambiguous representation of young readers, based not on the opposition or separation of children and adults, but on transition, transformation and metamorphosis as essential, defining characteristics of adolescence.

¹⁸ John STEPHENS, *Language and Ideology in Children's Fiction*, London: Longman, 1992, 241.

Table 1: British Children's Literature Awards

Books published the year the prize was awarded unless stated otherwise.

Books which can be considered to belong to the Young Adult category appear in the grey areas.

Dates	Carnegie Medal	Guardian Children's Fiction Award	Whitbread/Costa Children's Book Award
2000	Beverly Naidoo, <i>The Other Side of Truth</i>	Jacqueline Wilson, <i>The Illustrated Mum</i> (1999)	Jamila Gavin, <i>Coram Boy</i>
2001	Terry Pratchett, <i>The Amazing Maurice and his Educated Rodents</i>	Kevin Crossley-Holland, <i>The Seeing Stone</i> (2000)	Philip Pullman, <i>The Amber Spyglass</i> (+ Whitbread Book of the Year) (2000)
2002	Sharon Creech, <i>Ruby Holler</i>	Sonya Hartnett (Australia), <i>Thursday's Child</i> (2000)	Hilary McKay, <i>Saffy's Angel</i> (2001)
2003	Jennifer Donnelly (US), <i>A Gathering Light</i>	Mark Haddon, <i>The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time</i>	David Almond, <i>The Fire-Eaters</i> (Novel Award + Whitbread Book of the Year) Mark Haddon, <i>The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time</i>
2004	Frank Cottrell Boyce, <i>Millions</i>	Meg Rosoff, <i>How I Live Now</i>	Geraldine McCaughrean, <i>Not the End of the World</i>
2005	Mal Peet, <i>Tamar</i>	Kate Thompson, <i>The New Policeman</i>	Kate Thompson, <i>The New Policeman</i>
2006	/	Philip Reeve, <i>A Darkling Plain</i>	Linda Newbery, <i>Set in Stone</i>
2007	Meg Rosoff, <i>Just in Case</i> (2006)	Jenny Valentine, <i>Finding Violet Park</i>	Ann Kelley, <i>The Bower Bird</i>
2008	Philip Reeve, <i>Here Lies Arthur</i> (2007)	Patrick Ness, <i>The Knife of Never Letting Go</i>	Michelle Magorian, <i>Just Henry</i>
2009	Siobhan Dowd, <i>Bog Child</i> (2008)	Mal Peet, <i>Exposure</i> (2008)	Patrick Ness, <i>The Ask and the Answer</i>
2010	Neil Gaiman, <i>The Graveyard Book</i> (2008)	Michelle Paver, <i>Ghost Hunter</i> (2009)	Jason Wallace, <i>Out of Shadows</i>
2011	Patrick Ness, <i>Monsters of Men</i> (2010)	Andy Mulligan, <i>Return To Ribblestrop</i>	Moira Young, <i>Blood Red Road</i>
2012	Patrick Ness (Ill. Jim Kay), <i>A Monster Calls</i> (2011)	Frank Cottrell Boyce, <i>The Unforgotten Coat</i> (2011)	Sally Gardner, <i>Maggot Moon</i>
2013	Sally Gardner, <i>Maggot Moon</i> (2012)	Rebecca Stead, <i>Liar & Spy</i> (2012)	Chris Riddell, <i>Goth Girl and the Ghost of a Mouse</i>
2014	Kevin Brooks, <i>The Bunker Diary</i> (2013)	Piers Torday, <i>The Dark Wild</i>	Kate Saunders, <i>Five Children on the Western Front</i>
2015	Tanya Landman, <i>Buffalo Soldier</i> (2014)	David Almond, <i>A Song for Ella Grey</i> (2014)	Frances Hardinge, <i>The Lie Tree</i> (+ Whitbread Book of the Year)
2016	Sarah Crossan, <i>One</i> (2015)	Alex Wheatle, <i>Crongton Knights</i>	Brian Conaghan, <i>The Bombs That Brought Us Together</i>

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