

Hunting for History: Children's Literature Outside, Over There, and Down Under

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HOW ARE WE to write histories of children's literature now that the world has turned on its axis? The cultural maps we write can no longer assume imperial supremacies by emptying out huge portions of the written world, rendering them alien, irrelevant, invisible, and inscrutable. Is it possible any longer to construct a global history, to survey the parameters of a "field" of literature in space and time, synchronically and diachronically? We have learnt some hard theoretical lessons in children's literature. Yet, while there has been a proliferation of guides, companions, and compilations, there have been precious few disruptive histories. Two antipathetic but deeply linked urges seem evident: the one, the need to collect, amass, substantiate a body of evidence to demonstrate the existence of the discipline and to make material available to scholars and enthusiasts; the other, the drive to disturb that very body of evidence, to dismember it, to produce, if not a corpse, then a corpus whose reason for being has gone missing in action.

Thus, while the past few years have seen the publication in England of Peter Hunt's *An Introduction to Children's Literature* (1994), and of revised editions of F. J. Harvey Darton's *Children's Books in England: Five Centuries of Social Life* (1982) and of *The Oxford Companion to Children's Literature* (1984), they have also seen the more disruptive publication of Jacqueline Rose's *The Case of Peter Pan, or The Impossibility of Children's Fiction* (1984), of Jeffrey Richards's edited collection, *Imperialism and Juvenile Literature* (1989), of Peter Hunt's *Criticism, Theory and Children's Literature* (1991), and of Karin Lesnick-Oberstein's *Children's Literature: Criticism and the Fictional Child* (1994). Against the

Eurocentric pattern, I want to set an Australian comparison. The 1980s have seen the publication of Brenda Niall's critical history, *Australia Through the Looking Glass: Children's Fiction 1830-1980* (1984), Kerry White's bibliographical study, *Australian Children's Fiction: The Subject Guide* (1992), Pam Macintyre and Stella Lees's *Oxford Companion to Australian Children's Literature* (1993), and Maurice Saxby's survey, *The Proof of the Puddin': Australian Children's Literature 1970-1990* (1993); they have also seen the publication of Barbara Wall's *The Narrator's Voice: The Dilemma of Children's Fiction* (1991) and John Stephens's *Language and Ideology in Children's Fiction* (1992). Both of the latter, incidentally, were published internationally.

The way we write about children's literature needs to move in directions informed more thoroughly by the understandings and practices of postcolonialism, new historicism and cultural studies. We need fewer Oxford guides, stamped with the authority of the centre, designed to provide an assumed (but virtual) pathway through that which is always and already known and understood. The most radical approaches are those which refuse to classify and categorize in the old way, which ask questions to confuse textual and contextual boundaries, which examine the intersections and interdependencies of discourses, and which enable innumerable stopped voices a speaking position. Contradiction, ambiguity and babel/babble are, to my mind, welcome co-travellers.

In "Missed Opportunities and Critical Malpractice: New Historicism and Children's Literature," a very rich article that should gradually transform critical practices, Mitzi Myers lays down a challenge to orthodoxies of children's literature. She stresses the dynamic production and reproduction of meaning between literary and extraliterary contexts, the "fault-lines" that demand attention for their exposure of connected discourses of time, gender, class, age, and race, the conditions of material production, the reception history and the question of canonicity. Most specifically, Myers challenges conventional organizations of historical material in a way that allows for a postcolonial decentring and destabilizing of received wisdoms. Speaking of the New Historicism in literary studies, she writes:

Recognizing that human subjectivity itself, much less its literary expression, is culture-bound, it couldn't reify or essentialize The Child and Children's Literature (or even Literature) and What Children Like. . . . What a New Historical orientation could not make central to its program is what most historically-based study of children's literature still does: organize material within preconceived patterns implying an evolutionary view of historical progress. Linearly organized, always *toward*, most literary histories aren't analytic history, but teleology. (42)

We have come to understand that history is a kind of narrative, its structure, plot, closure, and point of view contributing to and comprising its fictionality and textuality. And, as Myers argues, history organized in linear fashion always implies an end point and goal which seem to explain the *meaning* of the connections among events, things, and people. Teleologies thus are a version of metanarrative, and metanarratives are dangerous stories when it comes to the representation and construction of difference.

So it is an occasion both for anticipation and no little scepticism to read, and decode, the long-awaited Oxford *Children's Literature: An Illustrated History* (1995), edited by Peter Hunt, vigorous as a theorist, critic, and historian in England, Europe, America, and, during a visiting fellowship, in Australia. But ironically, while Hunt's history signals radical shifts in critical and historical theory, these are imperfectly embodied in the narratives told. The editorial preface problematizes the practical difficulties of collecting the impedimenta of such a history, the parameters of children's literature, the notion of childhood as a moving target, the aesthetics of popular and unpopular culture, and the intransigence of didacticism. The use of different specialist historians and critics augurs well for the inclusion of different and contestatory approaches.

But overall, there is a resistance to grappling with the complex and subtle imbrications of ideology and a perceptibly controlling and homogenizing editorial stance and voice. The sheer weight of such a project and the manifold editorial difficulties of coordinating, directing, overseeing a diverse range of views, in themselves without doubt create a kind of inertia, a reactionary tendency. Ultimately, this is a traditional linear history informed by numerous teleologies. The occasional disruptive moment has

the effect of appliqué rather than a good honest tear to the fabric.

This history book is in large part a celebration of how far children's literature has developed from narrow religious and pedagogical beginnings. There is a teleology inherently linked with the Western myth of progress (every day in every way things are getting better, rosier, and truer) and the post-Darwinian theory of recapitulation (like children, natives, colonies, national cultures, and the working classes, children's literature had to grow up, repeat the stages of the adult/race).

Strangely, this dominant teleological drift is undercut by that recurring feature of conventional histories: most attention is paid to writers who, or literary phenomena which, are neither exactly contemporary nor too historically distanced, either in time or space. Thus, Lewis Carroll gets three pages, including this sharp summation of Alice by Briggs and Butts:

Alice's constant interrogation of the creatures she meets reflects her childish ignorance of widely accepted rules, while their interrogation of her may reflect Carroll's own search for greater intimacy with the object of his desire. These exchanges also reflect the contended-for and shifting dynamics of power between adult and child, controller and controlled: although full of self-doubt ("I'm not myself, you see"), Alice finds herself surrounded by strange and often childishly atavistic creatures. (Hunt 141)

Kingsley gets more than two pages, along with a sustained comparison between his Tom and MacDonald's Diamond; but *Tom's Midnight Garden* gets only a paragraph, and Mary Norton is barely glossed. Felice Holman and Norton Juster are absent.

As the saying goes, and Peter Hunt quotes it in his preface, "What's hit's history; what's missed's mystery" (ix). That is the case, of course, if you do not know what you do not know. But for those of us who know sweeps of these books, what is missed becomes an unsaid which is judged as lacking against the status of the "hit-upon" history. The effect of all of this is to canonize precisely the perceived Golden Age of children's literature, and to consign to a booming buzzing confusion those texts in the unclassifiable miasma of the present. The perspective lent by time is specifically that which needs deconstructing.

There are several other teleological narratives threaded through the history. One is instigated by Hunt in his preface, where he argues that, since women have been involved from the outset in the field of children's literature, and since "the male hegemony exercised in 'adult' literary history has not established itself quite so strongly in this sphere," there is less need for "revisionist readings." Hunt follows this with an immediate qualification which sounds like a disclaimer—"but that does not mean that the children's book world is in any sense a cosy or complacent one" (xiii).

Now I can hardly recognize this as the same voice which spoke so challengingly to a conference in Wollongong, Australia, in 1991, of the "ambivalent relationship with male culture" that exists within a field "dominated by women, on behalf of children" ("The Decline and Decline" 11). What is more, Hunt's controlling arguments, then, regarding a plateauing of the quality of children's books, the necessity for radically "childist" criteria and the sorry persistence of monolithic cultural values in selection and judgment, stand oddly against the meliorist tenor of this history.

In feminist terms, a great deal more could have been revised; for the most part, Hunt extrapolates from feminism to develop his notions of "childism." This is a fine comparison. Hunt applauds the paradigms, but a much more complex scrutiny of the dynamics of en-gendering within patriarchy is demanded. It is an understood wisdom that "the child" is a feminized construct, and that children's literature is feminized in relation to "grown-up" literature. I am not satisfied, however, with readings, such as Butts's, which claim that Marryat's "stereotypical portrayal of female characters is inevitably influenced by the historical situation when he wrote" (Hunt, *Children's Literature* 99). Such readings simply defer to a notionally synthesized ideology, and fail to engage with the complex of discourses which support gender stereotypes.

Nor am I impressed with the apparent glibness of Peter Hollindale's vacillations, especially given his pioneering role in ideological criticism. Referring to the stock contents of *Girl* magazine—boarding school girls, nurses, dancers, and ponies—he states:

"Whether such tastes are the sinister product of gender conditioning, or simply evidence of what girls like is a controversy that rages fiercely in the 1990s but, as the history of *Girl* demonstrates, is nothing new" (Hunt, *Children's Literature* 261). The first alternative implies a kind of paranoia in those who dare to detect gender role stereotypes (the term "sinister" is evidently meant for the perceivers rather than the "products"); the second is reductive and essentialist, and, with its reference to "nothing new," suggests a rehearsal of the cyclic and repetitive. As is very frequent in this history, and the more so the more contemporary the material and critique become, the contributors hedge, evade, and equivocate over their judgements.

I would like to have seen larger questions asked of gender-inflected shifts within particular historical and cultural contexts. Why, for example, was the first Golden Age of male fantasists in nineteenth-century England so preoccupied with eroticized images of the female child and with recuperation of the perceived "feminine"? And why are the acerbic female fantasists of the period (like Jean Ingelow, whose fairy Mopsa displaces the young male protagonist Jack in stature and status, and yet is so heavily contained by a recessive narrative frame) virtually overlooked and certainly underestimated?

Why was the second Golden Age of fantasists in post-World War II England so preoccupied with little boys being given a glimpse of glorious heritage by old women (for example, Tom in Pearce's *Tom's Midnight Garden*; Tolly in Boston's *The Children of Green Knowe*; the Boy in Norton's *The Borrowers*)? What cultural inflections determine differences in representations of the female child? As Brenda Niall questions in a review of the *Oxford History*, with regard to the American Pollyanna stories,

Is that relentless optimism an essentially American quality—or at least a quality American adults like to foster? I can't see Anne of Green Gables playing the Glad Game, nor any of the Seven Little Australians, and it would be worth asking why.

(Niall, "Once Upon" 7)

And can we imagine Carroll's Alice managing and imagining out on the prairie as Laura Ingalls did? Or being represented in such a way?

With regard to critical readings of individual texts, there are some "classic" novels of which I would like to see feminist revisionist readings: Tolkien's *The Hobbit* (peculiarly, Hunt reads the fantasy in purely archetypal terms, and yet he is a critic who typically resists what he calls the "speculative" fiction of the psychoanalytic reading); Garner's *The Owl Service* (whose woman of owls or flowers bears more than a passing resemblance to that old dichotomy, virgin or whore, and whose maddened and silenced older women are grim testimony to a patriarchal construction of the sexualized woman as vagina dentata, consuming and deadly); L'Engle's *A Wrinkle in Time* (whose domestication of the intellectualized and spiritualized feminine reinforces the old binaries); even, dare I say it, Avi's *The True Confessions of Charlotte Doyle* (whose dutiful daughter turned mutineer undertakes a boys' own adventure on the high seas in a narrative which sacrifices race in the cause of whited gender; not unexpectedly, the frontier seems to blow east and out to sea, where the winds take it altogether out of history, by way of myth, into the realm of male fantasy). Further, I would like to see some feminist revision with regard to the conditions of production of children's books, the development of pedagogies, the metonymic association with family and domesticity, and notions of writing the body of the child.

So we have two teleologies thus far: the myth of progress and the myth of the already revised female. Another teleological subplot concerns the narrative of a common culture. Now if you think organic communities, commonalities of culture and great traditions have gone the way of all Leavisites, scrutinize Oxford's *Children's Literature: An Illustrated History*. Common culture is an essential selection criterion, or, as the editor puts it, "a certain cultural cohesion" (revealing almost instantly a crucial slippage when he moves on to "narrative norms") dictates whether or not a national literature is included (xiii).

A most telling aspect of the tenacity of the notion evinces itself when regret is expressed several times in the later chapters of the book that classics are not being kept in print, that backlists are not being kept up, that single print runs are becoming the norm. The fear is that there will be no literary heritage to pass on from

one generation to another. The book is thus iconic of that "common culture," just as "Literature" used to signify "Life," no mere cultural baggage but a precious artefact in danger of a sort of technological implosion. This is one more of the ways, incidentally, that "the child" has been constructed as a crucial mediating emblem of universalization (no less than was done in the Sunday School reward books that allowed the child figure to move between class boundaries). When a concern is articulated for cultural continuity, we always have to ask on whose behalf, with what exclusions, within what model of cultural integrity, and for fear of what change.

A fourth teleological sub-text is made manifest in the increasing use of the term "political correctness." Hunt himself appears to be the first to use a variation on the term ("political incorrectness") in his chapter, "Retreatism and Advance," when he discusses George Orwell's critique of the *Greyfriars* stories. The increasing use of the term in Chapters 10 and 11 disguises a strongly naturalized set of "correct" values belonging to the writers. Teleologically, the history suggests the sophisticated acceptance of a narrative of conflict-denial, compromise, civilized balance, witty tolerance. This narrative undoes itself without blinking early in Chapter 10, when we are informed that in post-1970 there were, as Hollindale and Sutherland note, the beginnings of "problems of race . . . and of class and gender." The period between 1950 and 1970, they argue, was "singularly free of prescriptive ideologies"—a free space, that is, in comparison with pre-war propaganda and the post-1970s rule-book, "the new agenda of political correctness" (Hunt, *Children's Literature* 253, 259).

This chapter thus mythicizes the second Golden Age as a kind of interregnum between the tyrannies of respective discrete ideologies, without attempting to deconstruct the urgent impulse among children's writers, educators, and parents to naturalize "traditional" values and to recuperate what was perceived as a nearly-lost cultural arcady. The discussion of the W. E. Johns's *Biggles* books brings matters to a head. In the 1950s, the *Biggles* books flourished amid attempts at prescription and proscription, as Hollindale observes:

But among professionals such as teachers and librarians the mood of the peacetime years was hostile to many features of the “Biggles” books: their military values, cult of heroism, and propagation of racist stereotypes—as well as their unquestionably modest literary qualities. The books appeared to educated adult readers to be out-of-touch with the egalitarian, internationalist, post-colonial mood of the new Britain (Hunt, *Children’s Literature* 262).

The double use of the word “mood” signifies a muting of what is really an ideological cluster. Also, these “educated adult readers” are not accused of “political correctness” in this instance, but instead are accorded the triple crown. Only within the field and discourses of children’s literature could post-colonialism be yoked with a mood, such is the romanticism of its paradigms.

Zena Sutherland takes an apparently neutral stance when she discusses historical American texts which deal with slavery and African-American experiences. She tags this section with what has become a disclaimer of commitment in this history: “Many of these books have been controversial, dealing as they do with areas where political correctness is at a premium” (Hunt, *Children’s Literature* 264). There are those of us who think that more than “political correctness” is at a premium. William Armstrong’s *Southerner*, for example, has a “merciless impact” upon me fundamentally because of its awful fatalism inscribed with teleological echoes of the biblical exodus. The land promised is mythically displaced for the political purposes of the dominant culture.

The “political” seems so feared in *Children’s Literature: An Illustrated History* that analysis of it is absent even with respect to the most strikingly explicit texts. For example, Sutherland praises Madeleine L’Engle’s *A Wrinkle in Time* as “a most inventive fantasy, complicated in its intricate weaving of science, philosophy, religion and familial relationships” (273). No mention is made of its highly politicized dystopian elements, its invocation of a roll-call of freedom fighters, its responses to the Cold War, even its rewriting of Orwell’s *1984*.

Ultimately, the structure of Hunt’s history serves as a paradigm of imperialism itself. There are four chapters to tell the history of English children’s literature from its beginnings until 1850, and one for America to catch up and sneak ahead to 1870. Three English chapters cover the period between 1850 and 1945,

and one more American chapter brings the two together neck and neck. With the advent of what is termed "Internationalism," the English and American histories are conjoined for two chapters in a sort of literary two-step that takes the book up to the present. The British contribution is always represented as having more substance and density, as being a kind of gold standard or control.

When the two cultures meet, they recognize each other's imperial status with a degree of mutual self-congratulation (although with a hint of anxiety that England might be subject to colonization by the USA). Dancing a troika at the end are the three colonial literatures perceived as most mimetic of, least different from, the colonizing powers. Ironically the colonies of Canada, Australia, and New Zealand are those which took in the very cultures that had become marginalized and impoverished within Britain—the Irish, the Scots, the Welsh, and the English underclass itself, including its convicts.

Throughout the history, there are highly ambiguous constructions of imperialism from the British point of view. As Briggs and Butts say, there is more than a whiff of frustrated militarism in the description of boys' own adventure narratives promising "the possibility of exciting adventure within the hegemony of British imperialism" (Hunt, *Children's Literature* 149). But more is made of the fact that other lands were perceived as "exotic," than of the assumption of British mastery that enabled colonial subjection. In Briggs's comments in a later chapter, a plangent note enters the fray:

There is a strong heroic ethos in much of the writing for children between 1890 and 1914, as if the generation doomed to die on the battlefield had been reared with exactly the ideals needed to persuade them to volunteer as soon as they could. To what extent did their childhood reading help to determine the fate of a whole generation? (Hunt, *Children's Literature* 187)

What is not said here is that this childhood reading matter was not restricted to the English but was sent out in massive quantities to the colonies, especially in the form of reward books. The result was that more young Australian and New Zealand men per capita of gross population died on the European battlefields

than did young Englishmen; the young colonials were doubly subjected.

Perhaps, as Watkins states, the insistent Anglocentricity of the history explains why there has always been a hedging response to such a writer as William Mayne and his "ability to explore the importance of other cultures' perception of the world and the often limited quality of the European view" (Hunt, *Children's Literature* 309). Such hedging will be less when we refer to the "mixed ethnic origins" of an Englishman rather than of an African-American boy (as Watkins does of Arthur in Mayne's *The Jersey Shore*). Intimations of race and blood purity are never far away. It is fascinating, and significant, that Watkins's account of children's writers working "Across the Genres" (so the subheading goes) actually deals more specifically with writers working across and between cultures. This slippage is also enshrined in the title of the previous chapter, "Internationalism, Fantasy, and Realism."

Writings of history are these days very often re-writings, revisions. But Hunt's history still represents England as the imperial and cultural centre. His project, as stated in the preface, is to tell the history of children's literature among English-language countries, but he immediately discounts two enormous former colonial regions, India and the African possessions. His argument is that these literatures do not share the same "cultural cohesion" as the chosen ones. Hunt is thus working from a model of integrity and homogeneity that *must* suppress cultural difference and specificity. Those "Other" cultures are erased more effectively by slight(ing) reference than by complete silence. This manoeuvre is politically shocking: in the very terms in which the history is set up, the pedagogical intent of children's literature for the far-flung colonies was profound. Indeed, the very growth of English literature as a humanities discipline was intimately linked to the growth and extension of the British public service in the reaches of the Empire. And, as Jo-Ann Wallace has argued, that Empire was only conceivable, imaginable, through the reciprocal development of certain discourses of childhood. The literature produced for and on behalf of the "child-like" colonies cannot be separated from the literature produced for the children of the Empire.

There are even more adroit manoeuvres performed closer to home(s). The terms “British” and “English” are conflated tellingly. The cultures grafted to the English, often with unhealed scars, are almost completely eliminated as cultural sources or influences. The Welsh, the Scottish, and the Irish earn reference as timeless and dehistoricized fonts of Celtic myth, legend, and oral tradition. Watkins has a brief mention of contemporary novels about “the troubles”:

[Gillian Cross’s *Wolf*] is a complex novel with many layers of meaning which combines an exciting thriller about the IRA with the exploration of the psychological maturation of a thirteen-year-old girl.

(302)

However, apart from almost anecdotal references such as this (which recalls that earlier reference to “the possibility of exciting adventure within the hegemony of British imperialism”), the history elides the specific politics and cultures of the other members of the UK. There is, thus, a covert back-sourcing which hides the tensions of recent and immediate historic contexts.

Ironically, the first mention of the Welsh in *Children’s Literature: An Illustrated History* occurs in Chapter 10, “Internationalism, Fantasy, and Realism [1945-1970],” and that mention occurs in the context of an American fantasy text that plumbs Celtic sources of myth and legend—Lloyd Alexander’s *Prydain* chronicles. Given that English is the language of the conquerors, the language through which cultural literacy is negotiated, how do contemporary Welsh authors write for children? I, as an Australian of Scottish descent, am curious as to the very sparse references also to Scottish writers for children, especially contemporary ones. There are missed opportunities for cultural analysis and interpretation here and there, sometimes asked and unanswered, sometimes begging the question. In Chapter 6, Briggs and Butts say:

Like MacDonald, Stevenson and James Barrie, Crockett was a Scot, and the large Scottish contribution to writing for children from the 1860s might suggest that the concept of childhood north of the border was in key respects significantly different.

(Hunt, *Children’s Literature* 174)

This is the beginnings of a very valuable point in a history, and yet it is left untested, unexplored. Earlier, Briggs and Butts claim that Stevenson was “less interested in imperialism than other writers,” with mention in the next breath of his Scottish nationality and upbringing (152). A cultural connection might have been made here. Ireland is a terribly divided country, as we know. The history refers to Irish myth and legend (or at least to English re-workings of it) but it tells us precious little about literature for children coming from that divided culture. Why have Eire’s contributions not been included? This absence is stunning. It seems that Irish literature is celebrated and discussed more freely further from home, perhaps because so many of the colonies became another home to the Empire’s waste (see Hillel, “From Dubbo to Dublin”).

Something similar happens with the American colossus, so that reference to English-language colonies is swallowed up. What of the massive distribution of American texts for children to American colonies? Within the colonies themselves, which often imitated their imperial source, there is a further replication so that indigenous cultures are overlooked in significant ways. Certainly something is made of the attempts by native cultures to speak their own experiences and literatures, and reference is made to Inuits, American Indians, Maoris, and Aborigines. But nothing is made editorially of the ideological inconsistencies that become evident in the colonial/postcolonial chapter.

While the Canadian Roderick McGillis problematizes nominalism, explaining that the terms “Indians” and “Inuits” “misleadingly homogenize many peoples” (Hunt, *Canadian Literature* 338), Australia’s Michael Stone comfortably refers to “the true Aboriginal voice” and to “authenticity” (332), and New Zealand’s Betty Gilderdale elides the issue by concentrating on the theme of rapprochement between races. Overall, there is an appalling gap as far as the imposition of English-language literatures upon subject peoples in the name of assimilation. The historical impact of master-literatures upon infantilized races and cultures cannot be so breathtakingly ignored.

Hunt's history sets up a meta-narrative that is imitated in microcosm in each of the three colonial histories. It is time that the telling of the history of children's literature, a history which is so bound up with the formation and promulgation of imperialism, be deconstructed. "[T]he history of strategic colonialist investment in [the child] figure" (Wallace 182) exposes an intricate nexus between ideologies of childhood, race, class, and gender that demands postcolonial analysis and interpretation. The postcolonial cannot be consigned to a hybrid cultural set constrained within a chapter-as-coda (which is just what Hunt's history does in its textual practices and in its index entry: "Colonialism and postcolonialism, 322-51.") There is no separate entry or cross-indexing for postcolonialism, which can only be accessed through the precedent sign).

As Edward Said argues in *Culture and Imperialism*:

No one can deny the persisting continuities of long traditions, sustained habitations, national languages, and cultural geographies, but there seems no reason except fear and prejudice to keep insisting on their separation and distinctiveness, as if that was all human life was about. Survival in fact is about the connections between things. . . . It is more rewarding—and more difficult—to think concretely and sympathetically, contrapuntally, about others than only about "us." But this also means not trying to rule others, not trying to classify them or put them in hierarchies, above all, not constantly reiterating how "our" culture or country is number one (or *not* number one, for that matter). For the intellectual there is quite enough of value to do without *that*. (408)

But *that* is not quite that. The trouble is that for many of us, our hypotheses and theories change more rapidly than our mindsets and cultural assumptions. There seems always to be a degree of lag between new ways and old ways. It is not possible to write global histories in the old coherent way informed by imperialist structures and beliefs. Instead we will see a growing split in the critical marketplace between two forms: encyclopedic miscellanies, and writings from a cultural studies and new historicist stance, worrying at the edges of traditional categories, reframing the discourses and enabling an ongoing dialogic engagement between constitutive and contestatory elements. Nearly two decades ago, Walter Arnstein classified, somewhat whimsically, four common approaches to the writing of history:

1. The Whig interpretation of history, the "every day in every way we are getting better and better" point of view.
2. The Tory approach, the "since Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden it has been downhill all the way" point of view.
3. The cyclical approach, the "here we go again but haven't we been this way before?" approach to the past.
4. History as just one doggone thing after another, as a miscellany column in a newspaper, involving neither rhyme nor reason.

(44)

It seems to me that there is more than a touch of all of these approaches in Peter Hunt's history. His inclination is towards the fourth but elements of the three other approaches are evident. Now is the time for a powerful renegotiation of the status of otherness and difference within all those "doggone" things while we re-imagine our field without the secure authority of controlling metanarratives.

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