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CROSSOVER
FICTION

Global and Historical Perspectives

SANDRA L. BECKETT
For Paul and my three J’s
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Dedicated to furthering original research in children’s literature and culture, the Children’s Literature and Culture series includes monographs on individual authors and illustrators, historical examinations of different periods, literary analyses of genres, and comparative studies on literature and the mass media. The series is international in scope and is intended to encourage innovative research in children’s literature with a focus on interdisciplinary methodology.

Children’s literature and culture are understood in the broadest sense of the term ‘children’ to encompass the period of childhood up through adolescence. Owing to the fact that the notion of childhood has changed so much since the origination of children’s literature, this Routledge series is particularly concerned with transformations in children’s culture and how they have affected the representation and socialization of children. While the emphasis of the series is on children’s literature, all types of studies that deal with children’s radio, film, television, and art are included in an endeavor to grasp the aesthetics and values of children’s culture. Not only have there been momentous changes in children’s culture in the last fifty years, but there have been radical shifts in the scholarship that deals with these changes. In this regard, the goal of the Children’s Literature and Culture series is to enhance research in this field and, at the same time, point to new directions that bring together the best scholarly work throughout the world.

Jack Zipes
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Introduction

For me, the proof of the novel’s success is the response that it was able to elicit from two readers at opposite poles of sophistication: a child at one end of the scale, a metaphysician at the other.

Michel Tournier, The Wind Spirit

The extraordinary success of J. K. Rowling’s Harry Potter, who was featured on the cover of Time in the fall of 1999 with a caption informing readers that “he’s not just for kids,” made crossover literature front-page news and brought the amazing phenomenon to the attention of millions around the world. The Time issue seemed to herald crossover fiction as the prominent genre of the new millennium. Certainly, the years since 2000 have been landmark ones for crossover literature. The fourth Harry Potter book, published in the millennial year, sold more copies in a year than any other title in the annals of publishing. In recent years, crossover novels have become contenders for some of the world’s most prestigious literary awards, including the Whitbread and the Man Booker. Authors of children’s titles with crossover potential are now receiving the kinds of advances previously given only to bestselling adult authors. Successful authors for adults are enthusiastically embracing children’s literature, hoping to win the coveted “crossover” handle. Children’s books appear on, even dominate, general bestseller lists. They are regularly found in the adult section of major bookstores, just as adult books can be found in the children’s section. Adults now unabashedly read children’s books in public. Screen versions of crossover books have flooded the feature film industry, and some have been among the top-grossing films of all time.

Crossover literature is generally seen as a new trend, even as an invention of the twenty-first century. Harry Potter is considered the crossover title, a kind of prototype of the genre. “Reading into Crossover Trends,” an article published in 2004, refers to the recent phenomenon of “more adults reach[ing] for children’s books—spawning the birth of crossover literature.” The British newspaper the Guardian even goes so far as to propose the exact year of its birth, claiming that traditional boundaries seemed to dissolve in 2001. Although crossover literature has recently acquired a new status, it is not a
new phenomenon. The relatively few critics and journalists who point to a
tradition of crossover literature tend to date the genre back only a few decades
to Richard Adams’s *Watership Down* (1972), which the British children’s author
S. F. Said calls “the godfather of Harry Potter,” or to J. R. R. Tolkien’s *The Lord
of the Rings* (1954–55), which has experienced a new surge of broad crossover
interest due to the Peter Jackson films and the fantasy boom ushered in by
*Harry Potter*. At the very most, they trace the history of crossover fiction to Lewis
Carroll’s *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*, which first appeared in 1865.
The author of the 1997 article “Breaking the Age Barrier,” one of the earliest
British articles to refer to the “crossover phenomenon” in those terms, states
that “books that blur the lines between children and adult categories have
captured the attention of sophisticated readers for decades,” citing *Alice* as well
as A. A. Milne’s *Winnie-the-Pooh*. Other crossover touchstones for the media
include Kenneth Grahame’s *The Wind in the Willows*, L. Frank Baum’s *The
Wizard of Oz*, and C. S. Lewis’s *The Chronicles of Narnia*.

In fact, crossover literature is much older than these commonly cited
examples. When fiction was first published, there was no specialized children’s
literature. Books found their own audience. After the publication of Jonathan
Swift’s *Gulliver’s Travels* in 1726, the author’s friend John Gay remarked: “It is
universally read, from the Cabinet-council to the Nursery.” The first volume
of Jean de La Fontaine’s *Fables*, published in 1668, was dedicated to the seven-
year-old son of Louis XIV, but the bestseller was popular with both adults
and children. Although the last two volumes were not written for children,
all of his fables, despite their sophistication and pessimism, were, and still
are, read by children, taught in French schools, and continually reedited,
often with illustrations by renowned artists and illustrators. Charles Perrault’s
*Contes*, first published under his youngest son’s name in 1697, were sophis-
ticated tales adapted for use at the court of Louis XIV, but, at the same time,
they could be appreciated on another level by very young children. Even earlier
examples of crossover works include Aesop’s *Fables* and the *Arabian Nights*.
Over the centuries, these works have appeared in countless editions for both
children and adults. Genres such as fairy tales, oriental tales, and fables have
ample historical precedent as crossover texts. The fairy tales and folk tales of
the nineteenth-century Finno-Swedish author Zacharias Topelius became
classics of Finland’s national literature, read by all ages. The same can be said
of Alexander Pushkin’s *skazki* or fairy tales. For many years, however, the
fairy tales of Perrault, the Brothers Grimm, Pushkin, and others were virtually
relegated to the children’s library. When asked whether he illustrated *The
Juniper Tree* for adults or children, Maurice Sendak replied: “There was a time
in history when books like *Alice in Wonderland* and the fairy tales of George
MacDonald were read by everybody. They were not designated as being ‘for
children.’”

Many crossover classics, such as the *Alice* books and Carlo Collodi’s *Pinocchio*,
became part of the children’s literature canon. It has often been pointed out
that a number of children’s classics adopted by adults, a notable example being *Peter Pan*, were written by authors who had trouble adapting to the adult world. Was children’s literature “a licensed form of dissent” for authors like J. M. Barrie, leading them to write “high literature for children that used adult codes,” as one critic has suggested? This view is not unlike that expressed by Zohar Shavit in her 1987 study *The Poetics of Children’s Literature*, where she claims that many children’s books with an “ambivalent status” address two implied readers: “a pseudo addressee [the child] and a real one [the adult].” According to Shavit, “the child, the official reader of the text, is not meant to realize it fully and is much more an excuse for the text rather than its genuine addressee.” While that may be true in a few cases, the high number of crossover works in the children’s canon precludes a general application of the theory of child reader as mere pretext. According to Bettina Kümmerling-Meibauer, 66 per cent of the authors cited in her international encyclopedia of children’s classics, *Klassiker der Kinder- und Jugendliteratur*, are, to a certain extent, “cross-writers.” Crossover titles figure prominently among children’s classics in many countries. The top four bestsellers of the children’s division of one of France’s largest publishing houses, Gallimard, are crossover books: Saint-Exupéry’s *Le Petit Prince* (*The Little Prince*), Michel Tournier’s *Vendredi ou la vie sauvage* (*Friday and Robinson: Life on Speranza Island*), Marcel Aymé’s *Les contes du chat perché* (*The Wonderful Farm*), and Henri Bosco’s *L’enfant et la rivière* (*The Boy and the River*).

A large number of works marketed as children’s books are in fact intended for readers of all ages. Many authors have claimed that their books published for young readers were not written with that audience in mind. Although *Les contes du chat perché* constitutes one of the most popular French children’s books of all time, it was for his own pleasure that Aymé penned these tales “for children from four to seventy-five.” Similarly, Henri Troyat’s children’s tale “L’âme de Mélitone” (Mélitone’s soul) was meant for “young people between the ages of ten and seventy,” to which the author adds, in a tongue-in-cheek allusion to La Fontaine’s fable, that the upper limit of the age category does not exclude “octogenarians who would stop planting to read.” These crossover authors validate children’s literature as “real” literature by creating an ambivalent implied reader who certainly cannot be separated into a child “pseudo addressee” and an adult “genuine addressee.” Both adults and children are able to share more or less equally, albeit in different ways, in the reading experience. Crossover fiction blurs the borderline between two traditionally separate readerships: children and adults. However, crossover texts do not necessarily address a dual audience of children and adults. Some may even seem to target a single audience of hybrid adult-child readers. In fact, crossover literature addresses a diverse, cross-generational audience that can include readers of all ages: children, adolescents, and adults. For practical purposes, “children’s literature” will often be used throughout this study in a general sense to include young adult literature—which now occupies an intermediary space.
between children’s books and adult fiction—since the category of young adult literature is relatively new and not used universally.

These so-called children’s books that have become classics are not only “real” literature, but they constitute, in the eyes of Michel Tournier, one of France’s most acclaimed contemporary writers, the “highest summits of world literature.” He cites in particular the fairy tales of Perrault, the Brothers Grimm, and Hans Christian Andersen, as well as La Fontaine’s *Fables*, Carroll’s *Alice in Wonderland*, Selma Lagerlöf’s *The Wonderful Adventures of Nils*, Rudyard Kipling’s *Just So Stories*, and Saint-Exupéry’s *Le Petit Prince*. “They are generally said to be ‘for children’ [he writes]. That is to pay a very great tribute to children and to admit, with me, that a work can be addressed to a young public only if it is perfect. Every shortcoming lowers it to the level of adults alone.” Tournier is certainly not unique in considering children the ultimate arbiters of successful writing. Robert Louis Stevenson once said that a writer must inevitably begin one day to wish to write only for children.

One of the oldest and most universal forms of crossover literature is folk and fairy tales, which are part of what Stuart Hannabuss refers to as “the common cultural pool.” In pre-literate societies and in the pre-print era, these stories were told to groups of all ages. This remains the case in traditional societies in many parts of the world today. The bestselling Norwegian crossover author Jostein Gaarder reminds us that orally transmitted stories “weren’t usually divided into stories ‘for children’ and stories ‘for adults.’” Although more erotic tales were perhaps not told until the youngest children were in bed, for the most part, the audience of folk tales included the entire family. In a similar manner, the old mythologies—Greek, Norse, and Celtic—addressed the essential ontological questions in enduring narratives that constituted “mainstream entertainment for countless generations.” As S. F. Said rightly points out, however, “in the modern age, they came to be seen as archaic, and were shunted out of the mainstream to academia—or to children’s literature.” In the post-postmodern era, many authors are using the kind of epic material that was originally the fireside property of young and old alike in order to reach readers of all ages. Crossover fiction is by no means a new trend, but rather an age-old tradition. Today adults and children once again have a large body of shared literature that they can discuss, if not around the fireside, then at least around the dinner table.

“Crossover literature,” as the term is used here, refers to fiction that crosses from child to adult or adult to child audiences. Since the success of the first *Harry Potter* books, however, critics, journalists, publishers, and even writers have generally adopted the term for books that cross over in one direction only, that is, from children to adults. In an article in the *Guardian* in 2003, the British children’s author Philip Ardagh points to this one-way traffic without, however, questioning it: “Crossover books seem to cross in one direction only, upwards, being novels intended for young readers that adults consider worthy of attention.” A 2004 article, entitled “Reading into Crossover Trends,” typically
defines “crossover literature” as “children’s books which appeal to adults.” This definition is implied when the restrictive term “kidult fiction” is used synonymously for crossover fiction. However, the term is sometimes reserved exclusively for young adult fiction that is read by adults. Pointing out that “people use the term ‘crossover’ in different ways,” the British author Linda Newbery stated, in an interview posted on the Wordmavericks website, that she feels “a ‘crossover’ book isn’t an older teenage novel,” but rather “a book which appeals to children, like Philip Pullman’s *His Dark Materials*, or *Alice in Wonderland*, and equally to adults.” There is a tendency to equate crossover with fantasy, which admittedly plays a major role in the current phenomenon, but, in fact, almost every genre can cross between child and adult audiences. Thus, even when the “crossover” tag is applied only to one-way traffic, it is not necessarily used to refer to all the traffic in that direction.

Although a few scholars have criticized this limited use of the term, the media has rarely recognized that crossover literature is not a one-sided phenomenon or a one-way border crossing. An article in the U.K. newspaper the *Observer* in 2004 points out this oversight: “What is not acknowledged, though, is that the traffic flows in the opposite direction—crossover fiction is also adult fiction that appeals to children.” One critic goes perhaps a little too far in this direction, describing bookshops that are “already choc full of crossover titles.” She offers the following very broad definition: “Any novel that can be comprehended by someone with a reading age of eight could legitimately be classified as a crossover title. And that includes a substantial portion of books currently marketed for adults.” At least the author of this article recognizes that adult books also cross over to young readers. Prior to *Harry Potter*, the crossover took place predominantly in that direction. Children have been appropriating adult books for generations. Classics like *Robinson Crusoe*, *Oliver Twist*, *Treasure Island*, *Don Quijote*, and *Les trois mousquetaires* became the property of young readers. Publishers have been repackaging adult fiction for children for almost as long. Critics talk about the latest trend of signing up mainstream authors who can straddle the adult-child literary divide to write young adult novels. In fact, publishers in France, Spain, and other countries have been doing this for decades. Authors and readers have always crossed the borders in both directions, with or without the help of publishers.

The term “crosswriting” was widely used by critics, even beyond English-speaking borders, before the widespread adoption of the term “crossover fiction.” Crosswriting, in the broad sense of the term, includes authors who write for both child and adult audiences in separate works. The list of renowned authors who have written for both readerships is extensive and distinguished. It even includes a few Nobel Laureates, such as Rudyard Kipling, Selma Lagerlöf, Gabriela Mistral, Toni Morrison, and Isaac Bashevis Singer. Among the many primarily adult authors who have also published for children are Margaret Atwood, Ray Bradbury, E. E. Cummings, Charles Dickens, T. S. Eliot, William Faulkner, Ian Fleming, Graham Greene, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Ted Hughes,
Aldous Huxley, James Joyce, Rudyard Kipling, Mordecai Richler, Gabrielle Roy, Salman Rushdie, John Ruskin, Carl Sandburg, Gertrude Stein, Robert Louis Stevenson, William Makepeace Thackeray, Mark Twain, H. G. Wells, E. B. White, T. H. White, Oscar Wilde, and Virginia Woolf. The English-speaking world is often cited as having a particularly high number of important adult authors who have written for children. The author of the article “When Majors Wrote for Minors,” published in 1952, actually claims that “almost every major writer of the nineteenth century [in English and American literatures] wrote for children as well as for adults.”

English-language literature does not, however, have a monopoly on cross-writers. The number of authors of adult fiction who have written for a juvenile audience in France is equally impressive, and it includes the names of some of the country’s most prominent poets, playwrights, and novelists, including Marcel Aymé, Henri Bosco, Michel Butor, Colette, Georges Duhamel, Marguerite Duras, Paul Eluard, Jean Giono, Julien Green, Max Jacob, Eugene Ionesco, J. M. G. Le Clézio, François Mauriac, André Maurois, Daniel Pennac, Jacques Prévert, Claude Roy, Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, Samivel, Georges Sand, Jules Supervielle, Michel Tournier, and Marguerite Yourcenar. Many other countries also provide illustrious examples, such as Isabel Allende, Peter Bichsel, Heinrich Böll, Bertolt Brecht, Clemens Brentano, Italo Calvino, Karel Čapek, Anton Chekhov, Umberto Eco, Natalia Ginzburg, Peter Härtling, E. T. A. Hoffmann, Erich Kästner, Selma Lagerlöf, Clarice Lispector, Ana Maria Machado, Carmen Martín Gaite, José Renato Monteiro Lobato, Rosa Montero, Elsa Morante, and Erwin Strittmatter. Some of these authors, for example, Bosco, Lagerlöf, Saint-Exupéry, and Tournier, are first and foremost novelists for adults, but their most celebrated works are children’s books.

There are also authors who have written extensively for both audiences, but who are nonetheless probably best known for their children’s books, including Louisa May Alcott, Roald Dahl, Michael Ende, Madeleine L’Engle, Kenneth Grahame, Russell Hoban, Erich Kästner, C. S. Lewis, A. A. Milne, José Renato Monteiro Lobato, and E. B. White. Children’s books by these writers generally appeal as much to adults as to children. A smaller category of authors are equally well known in the fields of children’s and adult fiction, for example Ursula Le Guin, Luigi Malerba, João Pedro Méseder, Jürg Schubiger, and Yuri Olesha. Authors who have won major prizes in both the adult literature and children’s literature categories have been relatively few. Peter Härtling, one of the few major German authors of literary fiction to have always written for children and young adults as well as adults, won the special Deutscher Jugendliteraturpreis (German Youth Literature Award) for his collected children’s works in 2001, as well as the Eichendorff Prize in 2000 and the Deutscher Bücherpreis (German Book Award) for his collected works in 2003. When authors publish works for both adults and children, their most loyal fans may read all of their books, regardless of the intended audience. Many readers seek out other books by writers that they have enjoyed, expecting to obtain a similar pleasure from all
their works. Readers may cross over from an author’s children’s books to their adult books or vice versa. The traffic passes in both directions in the case of Ursula Le Guin or the Italian author Luigi Malerba. This type of crossover seems to be more common in smaller countries and language areas, where there is a heightened sense of pride in, and loyalty to, the authors they consider to be national treasures.

Many of the writers listed above are not crossover authors in the strict sense of the term, that is, authors who address children and adults in the same text. For the most part, this study is concerned with the crossing over of texts and readers rather than writers. The works discussed are read by young readers and adults, although they are not necessarily written or marketed intentionally for both audiences. In its purest form, one could perhaps argue that a true crossover title is the rare book, such as Lian Hearn’s *Across the Nightingale Floor* and its sequels, that is written, published, and marketed for readers of all ages, but this is not the case for the vast majority of crossovers. They may initially have been published for a particular audience and subsequently appropriated by another, in a process that could be called “cross-reading.” Readership transgression has been commonly practised by children for centuries; now both adults and children are challenging reading constructs that attempt to erect barriers between them. Thus crossover books may find an audience of both children and adults with or without authorial and/or editorial intention. “Cross-writing” and “cross-reading” are both important facets of crossover fiction.

Since the 1990s, a number of new terms have been adopted to refer to this phenomenon that is as old as literature itself. Scholars and writers have been responsible for some of these terms, but many have been coined within the book industry for commercial purposes. Critics have referred to such works as having a “dual audience” or a “cross-audience,” the latter term having the advantage that it implies a diverse readership rather than merely two distinct readerships of adults and children. Others prefer to use the term “all-ages audience,” as did the Brazilian author Ana Maria Machado, in a 2002 paper devoted to the subject of children’s books as a “bridge between adults and children.” Hyperion, the general-interest book publishing division of The Walt Disney Company, was using the term “multipurposed books” to refer to their crossover titles as early as 1997. As Pottermania set in, in Britain these books began to be popularly called “crossovers,” a term that quickly gained popularity. As the children’s books editor for the *Observer*, Kate Kellaway, put it in 2004, “‘crossover’ is a buzzword that keeps buzzing.” The catchy term was a handy label for publishers. One could easily get the impression that the British think they invented crossover fiction. The following remark by Kellaway is somewhat typical: “Three authors—J. K. Rowling, Philip Pullman and Mark Haddon—are behind the burgeoning of a go-between genre, an appeal-to-all-ages idea—crossover fiction.” In fact, the term *allalderslitteratur* (all-ages-literature) was coined in both Norway and Sweden long before the term “crossover fiction” became a favourite handle with the media in Britain.
(it was first used in Norway in the 1980s). The Spanish-speaking countries refer to such books as “libros para todas las edades” (books for all ages). A number of countries have adopted terms that incorporate the idea of “all ages books,” sometimes using a variation of this anglicism.

In Germany, the Anglo-German terms All-Age-Buch, All-Age-Literatur, and All-Age-Titel have been used to refer to crossover works since about 2002. Germans also refer to literature that crosses over, generally from young readers to adults, as Brückenliteratur (bridge literature), a term that has been in use much longer, and may have been coined after the publication, in 1979, of Michael Ende’s hugely successful Die unendliche Geschichte (The Neverending Story), which is a perfect example of this kind of fiction. As is the case with “crossover” in English, these terms are rarely used to refer to adult literature that is read by a juvenile audience. Crossover literature is rather new to children’s book publishing in Germany, according to Antje Richers of Carlsen Verlag, an important German children’s publisher. In an e-mail message on April 3, 2006, she told me it is not yet “a trend,” but is certainly “a noticeable phenomenon.” While new terms have been coined to refer to this literature in light of its new status in the publishing industry, Ende’s novel indicates that the phenomenon is not new in Germany either. In some European countries, a marked crossover trend began somewhat earlier. Observing that “the dividing line” between children’s and adult literature in Denmark was becoming “more fluid,” Eva Glistrup predicted, in 1997, that the country was heading toward “a new era” in which there would not be “a special literature for children and young people—but a ‘people’s literature.’” The Dutch term literatuur zonder leeftijd (literature without age) began to be widely used after it was chosen as the title of a journal, in 1993, in order to reflect the growing importance of literature for all ages.

Crossover fiction is by no means a strictly European phenomenon. In 2002, a British journalist claimed that Across the Nightingale Floor, by the Australian author Lian Hearn, marked a new direction “by shifting the scene of crossover fiction out of Europe, where it traditionally flourishes.” Although it has certainly thrived there, Europe does not have a monopoly on crossover literature. The same journalist states that the “Brit hegemony” in the field of crossover fiction “piqued the patriotic pride of the Pulitzer prize-winning U.S. novelist Michael Chabon,” resulting in the novel Summerland in 2002. The novels by Hearn and Chabon are certainly not exceptions. Crossover fiction is doing well in many parts of the world, as witnessed by the works of the Chilean Isabel Allende, the Quebecois Dominique Demers, the South African Dianne Hofmeyr, the Australian Garth Nix, and the Japanese Haruki Murakami.

Well before the crossover trend, a few critics were pointing to the marked surge in the number of authors transgressing or transcending the borders between children’s and adult fiction. In his 1994 book Grensverkeer (Border traffic), Peter van den Hoven described the increase in the number of authors crossing the borders in both directions in Dutch literature. The essays in
Transcending Boundaries: Writing for a Dual Audience of Children and Adults, the first book devoted to international crossover literature in 1999, showed that a similar phenomenon was taking place in many countries. In the even earlier collection, Reflections of Change: Children’s Literature Since 1945, it was suggested that the shifting borders between children’s and adult fiction was one of the major trends in contemporary literature.31 Some critics felt that the boundaries were crumbling or disappearing, while others wondered if they had ever really existed.32 Pointing to the widespread phenomenon of fiction for all ages, some scholars speculated on the disappearance of children’s literature at the end of the twentieth century. Neil Postman had put forth the hypothesis that childhood itself was disappearing from modern Western society in his 1982 bestseller The Disappearance of Childhood. It is certainly true that the distinction between children’s literature and adult literature has become increasingly blurred in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. The borders of literary fields in general are ever more vague and shifting.

Over the years, many authors and critics have maintained that good children’s literature must also appeal to adults. C. S. Lewis’s much-cited maxim that “a children’s story which is enjoyed only by children is a bad children’s story” immediately comes to mind.33 Certainly, some of the best children’s books reflect a conception of literature that, like Pinocchio, belies a strict separation between adults and children. Other authors and critics have approached the border from the opposite direction, insisting that good adult literature can also be read by children. Michel Tournier pronounces the texts of Racine, Shakespeare, and Balzac “second-rate” because they “put off” children and are only good enough for adults. In an article entitled “Writing for Children is No Child’s Play,” Tournier adds Goethe to the list of authors that are “marred” by an inexcusable defect, the fact that “children cannot read them.”34 Have all of these authors and critics, in fact, been talking about an intermediary category of literature that has only recently come to be known as crossover literature? Some works explicitly categorized as adult or children’s books inhabit a blurry and shifting intermediary space, a border zone that separates or joins, according to the point of view, fiction for children and fiction for adults. Whereas Zohar Shavit sees “ambivalent” texts as belonging simultaneously to both the system of children’s literature and the system of adult literature, Dagmar Grenz claims that “by extension this also means they fully belong to no system.”35 Is crossover literature now beginning to be recognized as a system unto itself, or are the two systems merely merging into one, or is there finally a dawning recognition that there was only one system to begin with?

Perhaps we are finally entering an era when good fiction can simply be considered good fiction without worrying about the audience. Why should the categories of children’s fiction and adult fiction be any more defined than those of the different genres of adult fiction: crime, romance, science fiction, and so forth? Unlike other literary genres, the integration of the target audience in the name “children’s literature” turns it into an age-based genre. It seems hardly
appropriate to be speaking of children’s literature in the case of crossover books that are read equally by adults. In a 2006 essay, Katharine Jones examines some of the problems inherent in the term and suggests that scholars get rid of it entirely.\textsuperscript{36} We do not normally talk about “adult literature” unless we are deliberately contrasting it with children’s literature. Although he has published at least a dozen “children’s” titles, J. M. G. Le Clézio, who has been called the most important living French author, persistently claims that there is no such thing as children’s literature. Likewise, the successful young adult authors Tormod Haugen and Bart Moeyaert repeatedly deny the division of literature into children’s and adult books. These authors are certainly not alone in believing that there is only good or bad fiction.

It is important to point out that in some countries the borders between children’s and adult fiction, and between high and popular literature are much less defined than in others. Whereas there has been a rich tradition of child-to-adult crossover works in England since the nineteenth century, Emer O’Sullivan points to the very different situation during the same period in Germany, where, with a few rare exceptions such as the Kunstmärchen of authors like Clemens Brentano and E. T. A. Hoffman, there was a more absolute separation of the adult and children’s literary systems.\textsuperscript{37} Some cultures have a time-honoured tradition of blurred borderlines, so contemporary crossovers merely continue this long line of books for all ages. Several Danish scholars feel there is a more fluid boundary between children’s literature and adult literature in Denmark, and usually attribute it to the important role that Hans Christian Andersen has played in their national literature. At the same time, they admit that the Danes themselves may not always be aware of this, tending to consider Andersen and other Danish crossover authors as either children’s or adult authors. Declan Kiberd claims that Irish writers have never respected categories and write not just for children, but for the kind of adults they hope they might become.\textsuperscript{38} Oscar Wilde and C. S. Lewis are names that immediately come to mind. William Butler Yeats was interested in reaching Irish readers of all ages with the folk and fairy tales of Ireland that he collected in the late nineteenth century. Oscar Wilde’s subversive fairy tales were intended for children as well as adults, and they are still read by both audiences. According to Rebecca West, a strict division between adult and children’s literature is basically “alien to Italian culture.” She attributes this to the rich oral folk tradition and strong classical education that, for centuries, were part of the common experience of the Italian educated elite and fed narratives shared by readers of all ages. Pointing to the example of Pinocchio, West claims that the blurring of the borderline between adult and children’s texts continued after the advent of children’s publishing in the nineteenth century. Even the profound societal changes of the twentieth century, changes that effaced a great deal of this shared knowledge, did not bring about a strict separation between adult and children’s fiction in Italy. Gianni Rodari, Italy’s most famous twentieth-century children’s author, had an enthusiastic following of both children and adults, as well as
the praise of poets like Alfonso Gatto and Andrea Zanzotto and writers like Italo Calvino and Luigi Malerba.\(^{39}\)

In most Western countries, it was not enough just to establish definite boundaries between adult and children’s fiction. Although publishers had originally been content to bring out either books for adults or books for children, lumping together children and adolescents, they began in the 1960s and 1970s to divide children’s literature into ever narrower categories. As Salman Rushdie put it in 1992, “the world of books has become a severely categorized and demarcated affair, in which children’s fiction is not only a kind of ghetto but one subdivided into writing for a number of different age groups.”\(^{40}\) Many children’s authors feel that these narrow age categories correspond more to commercial necessities than to any kind of psychological or sociological realities. Dominique Demers wonders, tongue in cheek, if she is supposed to write for a certain age group, for example eight to ten, in the same way that advertising agencies target suburban consumers in a particular age and salary range. She points out how ridiculous it would be to ask someone what would be a good book for a 67-year-old man. The illusion that children should be defined mainly in terms of age category constitutes, as Demers rightly puts it, “one of the great contemporary myths.”\(^{41}\) The current crossover trend is effectively deconstructing that myth.

In conjunction with a move to specialization, children’s literature annexed an increasingly large public by introducing new age categories at both ends of the spectrum, that is, for babies and for young adults or “grands adolescents” in Quebec. These new age categories were also carved out in a very specific manner, for example, twelve to eighteen months or eighteen to twenty-five years. Paradoxically, at the upper end of the spectrum, the border between children’s and adult fiction is once again blurred. The current growing intersection of readerships is in stark contrast to the narrow categorization that reduces young readers to, and confines them within, a specific age group. Young readers are becoming more sophisticated and teenagers in particular seem to be reading up. “The growing exodus of young adults to adult books,” which one critic describes in the Canadian context, is a widespread contemporary phenomenon.\(^{42}\)

In many Western countries, children’s publishing became quite profitable and often kept publishers financially viable. However, it took the runaway financial success of *Harry Potter* to change the status of children’s books in the literary world. Previously, children’s books had been excluded from “real” literature and considered a minor or sub-genre. The negative “self-image” of children’s literature is discussed at length in Shavit’s 1987 study.\(^{43}\) The low status of children’s fiction has been the subject of much debate in many countries for decades. In an article devoted, in 1956, to ten major French authors who also wrote for children, Gabriel d’Aubarède laments the fact that children’s literature is “too often considered a minor genre.”\(^{44}\) However, the author himself seems unintentionally to promote this attitude by first referring to three
members of the prestigious Académie française (Georges Duhamel, André Maurois, and Daniel-Rops), as if in a deliberate attempt to give his article more weight and the subject more credibility. The remaining authors seem to be mentioned in descending order of perceived importance, beginning with Marcel Aymé. In a similar manner, Tournier deplores the fact that “a children’s book is not considered a literary work,” while at the same time reinforcing this view of children’s literature as a minor, insignificant genre by referring to it as “pseudo-literature.” Until recent decades, children’s literature was generally excluded from serious critical and theoretical scholarship. Even in countries where children’s literature enjoyed a more respected status, as in the Scandinavian countries, it was a very distinct genre that was separated from general literature.

Until quite recently, in most countries, children’s authors had a very low status in the press as well as in literary journals. There was a widespread view that an author only became a full-fledged writer when he or she was published for adults. Children’s authors and children’s literature scholars around the globe have struggled to change this opinion. In Quebec, the children’s author Denis Côté has insistently questioned the distinction made between “les auteurs jeunesse” (children’s authors) and “les écrivains” (writers), the latter term being reserved for authors who write solely or primarily for adults. When a best-selling young adult trilogy by Dominique Demers was published for adults as *Marie-Tempête*, the author of the preface revisited the question of the existence of “children’s authors” and concluded that there are only “writers, period” (9). The British author Aidan Chambers, on the other hand, distinguishes between “writers,” who write for a specific audience and their needs, and “authors,” who write for themselves and are primarily interested in producing art and ask themselves how a story can be told in such a way that it has more layers of meaning. There have been many attempts to define the word “writer” and to establish who it should include. In a book published in France in 2000, Dominique Noguez coined the term *grandécritain*, which could be translated as “greatwriter.” She describes the *grandécritain*, a species she feels is particularly typical of France, as a writer whose greatness is recognized and mythologized during his or her lifetime and who plays a major role not only in the literary world, but also on the cultural scene and in public life in general. Although this concept might seem to exclude children’s authors, many of the French writers that, according to Noguez’s definition, would be classified as *grandécritains* have written for children as well as adults. Attitudes vary greatly from one country to another, even within the Western world. In Italy, as in France, many renowned authors of adult fiction have also been acclaimed as children’s authors.

In Italy, children’s books written by mainstream authors are cited on an equal basis with their works for adults in biographies and literary histories, but in many cultures the studies devoted to the works of major authors who have written for both audiences completely ignore their texts for children. According
to Dagmar Grenz, this is the case for Erich Kästner in Germany. On the other hand, E. T. A. Hoffmann’s two fairy tales for children have always received the same attention as his works for adults, although Grenz is quick to add that the fact they are addressed to children “has mostly been neglected or denied.”

Pointing to the example of Roald Dahl, whose children’s books are generally ignored in works devoted to the writer’s adult fiction, Peter Hunt insists that this “demonstrates how deep is the division between literature and popular culture.” This is especially true when you consider that Dahl is “probably the most successful worldwide children’s author of the twentieth-century.”

It is even more disturbing when a crosswriter neglects his own children’s books. Despite the importance that Michel Tournier attributes to his children’s texts, the only reference to them in his autobiography is a brief endnote mentioning the existence of *Friday and Robinson*.

Mainstream Italian authors who also write for young readers have never suffered noticeably from the negative image that has often stigmatized their counterparts in other countries, causing them to take a defensive stance about their writing when it is categorized for children. The Italian situation was the exception rather than the rule, however. Authors who wrote primarily for adults often tended to speak about their works read by children, regardless of their success, somewhat reluctantly, indeed apologetically. Some, like Arthur Ransome, even denied repeatedly that they wrote for children. Tournier continues to deny vehemently that he writes children’s books. Many authors who publish in both markets have taken great care not to allow themselves to be categorized as “children’s authors.” The message that had obviously reached many writers was that it was acceptable to be published for children, but, at all costs, avoid calling yourself a children’s author. The refusal to divide one’s work into adult and juvenile fiction, and the resulting ambiguity, could be interpreted as a deliberate attempt to avoid this categorization. That may still be the case for a large number of those who prefer to be viewed as “crossover authors.”

Writers who more or less willingly embraced the “children’s author” label were sometimes marginalized, even completely excluded from the canon, in spite of receiving prestigious awards for adult novels. A notable example is the French writer Henri Bosco, who has been somewhat marginalized by literary histories even though he won the prestigious Prix Théophraste Renaudot in 1945 for his adult novel *Le Mas Théotime* (*The Farm Théotime*). That same year, he published his best-known and most translated work, *The Boy and the River*, which became a French children’s classic with sales of more than three million copies. The original edition of the novel was not published for a young audience, but when Gallimard brought out a children’s edition in 1953, Bosco himself began calling it a children’s book and speaking of his status as a children’s author. A number of scholars are convinced that Bosco’s reputation as a children’s author, which was firmly established in 1959 when he won the Grand Prix de la Littérature pour les Jeunes, irreparably compromised his status in the adult canon.
Many writers adopt a pseudonym when they begin writing children’s books. One cannot help wondering if they are afraid that their status as a mainstream writer would be tarnished if their name was associated with a children’s book. It is also possible, however, that the pen name reflects a feeling of split personality. Although the majority of writers say that they do not feel any different when they write for one audience or the other, there are exceptions. Lian Hearn, the author of the bestselling crossover series Tales of the Otori, is well known in Australia as an author of children’s books under the name Gillian Rubenstein. The series was so strikingly different from anything she had written previously that she felt the need for a new name. In her case, changing genres called for a new identity. There was an added benefit for Hearn, who dislikes publicity and could now refuse interviews “because Lian Hearn doesn’t exist.” Hearn/Rubenstein did not need to worry about the stigma attached to writing children’s books, as attitudes have changed dramatically in the past few years. Commenting, in 2002, on the sudden rise in adult authors writing young adult fiction, Lois Lowry, two-time winner of the Newbery Medal, said: “In the past, there’s been an attitude that writing for children is a lesser art. So for these highly respected authors to be taking it up may indicate that that attitude is changing.” If there was still some doubt about the attitude shift in 2002, it has been clearly erased in the ensuing years. In 2003, kidult fiction was so fashionable and lucrative that Britain’s trendy Jack magazine published an article titled “Should I Quit My Job and Pursue a Career Writing Children’s Books for Adults?”

What is new about crossover literature is the hype and the media attention that it has been receiving in recent years. Crossover fiction is now recognized as a distinct literary genre and a marketing category by critics, publishers, booksellers, writers, and readers. Recent literary encyclopedias have included substantial entries on the subject. In today’s culture, crossover literature is very much in vogue. Throughout history, readers’ responses to books have often been dictated by fashion. There are trendy books, such as Dan Brown’s *The Da Vinci Code*, that you dare not admit you haven’t read. Publishers, too, are extremely fashion conscious. One journalist claims that is why, in 1996, so many publishers “turned down a struggling writer’s novel about a young wizard at a boarding school. Children’s novels weren’t fashionable. Nor were wizards. Nor boarding schools.” The unprecedented success of the Harry Potter books convinced publishers, as well as the media, to change their opinion. Full-page spreads are now devoted to authors who, not long ago, would have been royally ignored. Initially, crossover fiction was seen essentially as a financial success, epitomized by *Harry Potter*. It was not long, however, before it firmly established itself as a critical success as well, notably with the third novel in Philip Pullman’s *His Dark Materials*. *The Amber Spyglass* was followed by other award-winning bestsellers like Mark Haddon’s *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*. Even critics who generally disdain most bestsellers as pulp fiction, are now praising bestselling crossovers. They seem to overlook the fact
that prior to Pullman, earlier authors such as Jostein Gaarder had already achieved the rare combination of commercial success and the approbation of the literary establishment. Literary triumphs as well as commercial hits, crossover books have brought new energy and excitement to literature and the world of books.
Chapter One
Adult-to-Child Crossover Fiction

sometimes I apply myself so well and have so much talent that what I write can also be read by children. When my pen is less lucky, what it writes is only good enough for adults.

Michel Tournier, “Michel Tournier: avant tout, plaire aux enfants”

Until J. K. Rowling’s Harry Potter series set in motion an extraordinary child-to-adult crossover craze that took the entire world by storm, books generally crossed over in the other direction. Children have long laid claim to adult fiction, as we saw in the introduction. In fact, this type of readership transgression has been going on almost as long as books have existed. Many of the world’s great classics were appropriated very early on by children, even though they were not written with young readers in mind. Some works very quickly assumed the status of crossover works. A number of them became almost the sole property of children, a prime example being Daniel Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe*, which is read by children around the world, but very rarely by adults in any country. First published in 1719, Defoe’s most celebrated work was not meant for children, but became a classic of children’s literature and inspired countless adaptations, abridged versions, and retellings or Robinsonnades. Abridged versions of the great classics of world literature accounted for a large percentage of children’s reading material well into the twentieth century. The creation of a distinct body of children’s literature did not put an end to the process of abridgement or adaptation, which continues to be widely used to make adult fiction accessible to children. Although many of the novels mentioned below were adapted, children often read the integral texts and, in some cases, they continue to do so today.

Miguel de Cervantes’s *Don Quijote de la Mancha*, published in two parts in 1605 and 1615, is the most influential and emblematic work in the Spanish literary canon and a founding work of modern Western literature, yet it has often been adapted for children around the world. The much-shortened children’s editions of what has been called the first modern novel focus on some
of the best-known adventures of the mad knight errant and his squire Sancho Panza. Since the first part of John Bunyan’s famous Christian allegory *The Pilgrim’s Progress* was published in England in 1678, it has inspired numerous retellings and adaptations for children. Although few children read it today, it was a staple of the children’s library for more than two hundred years.

Jonathan Swift’s social satire *Gulliver’s Travels* was published for adults in 1726, but it was almost immediately abridged for children. The juvenile editions, which generally retain only the Lilliputian and Brobdingnagian sections, emphasize the adventure and fantasy elements while eliminating the social and political satire. Like *Don Quixote*, *Gulliver’s Travels* continues to be widely reissued for children today.

Throughout the nineteenth century, a large number of adult novels crossed over into the domain of juvenile literature. Sir Walter Scott’s historical novels, such as *Rob Roy* (1817) and *Ivanhoe* (1820), appealed to young readers interested in tales of medieval adventure and heroism. Mary Shelley’s gothic classic *Frankenstein*, which she completed at the age of nineteen, gained immediate popular success when it was published in 1818. What has been called the first science fiction novel continues to appeal to teenagers, who are familiar with popular versions of the myth that spawned a complete genre of horror stories and films. The situation is somewhat similar for Bram Stoker’s influential horror novel *Dracula*, published toward the end of the century, in 1897. James Fenimore Cooper’s adventure novels—in particular his most famous work, *The Last of the Mohicans* (1826)—were popular with a broad audience throughout the nineteenth century and with a narrower audience of adolescents in the twentieth century. The novels written by the Brontë sisters—Emily’s *Wuthering Heights* (1847) and Charlotte’s classic romance novel *Jane Eyre* (1847), which was a bestseller in its day—have long been among the first adult novels to be read by adolescents. Nathaniel Hawthorne’s novel *The Scarlet Letter* (1850) is still widely read in American secondary schools. Charles Dickens’s most famous novels, *Oliver Twist* (1837–39), *A Christmas Carol* (1843), and *David Copperfield* (1849–50), were written for adults, but were popular with readers of all ages. Alexandre Dumas’s immensely successful historical novels, which first appeared serially in periodicals, were quickly appropriated by young readers. *Les trois mousquetaires* (1844) became a children’s classic and one of the best-loved novels in literary history. Few children today read the integral texts of Dumas’s lengthy novels, but they know them through film or television adaptations. Herman Melville’s lengthy whaling adventure *Moby Dick* (1851) has been adapted many times for children. In her afterword to *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, Harriet Beecher Stowe suggests that children even read the novel in its original 1851 serialized version in the abolitionist newspaper *The National Era*. The highly successful and influential novel inspired numerous adaptations and abridged editions for children. H. G. Wells’s earlier science fiction novels, called “scientific romances,” have always had appeal for adolescents, notably *The Time Machine* (1895), *The Invisible Man* (1897), and *The War of the Worlds*
(1898). Another late nineteenth-century novel widely read by adolescents is Joseph Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness*, published in 1899. The nineteenth century was particularly rich in adult-to-child crossovers.

These novels were never intended to be crossover books, however. The authors did not consciously seek to address young readers, but often their books contained themes that other adults saw as useful vehicles for conveying religious, patriotic, psychological, or moral values to children. While many of these books were adapted for children in order to offer them “great literature,” it was often with a didactic intention. These adaptations therefore reveal much about contemporary attitudes and expectations with regard to young readers and childhood in general. However, as mentioned, children were not always reading these books under duress or in abridged editions. Although many adult classics were adapted for children in a process critics often refer to as “dumbing down,” a large number of integral texts were also appropriated by young readers.¹ Children may not understand all the layers of meaning in these works, but then neither do all adults, and that is not necessary when readers are gripped by the story. The Irish critic Declan Kiberd, among others, feels that subversive texts, such as *Gulliver’s Travels*, were deliberately relegated to children’s literature to get them out of the mainstream.² As we shall see, some novels are so completely appropriated by a young audience that they end up disappearing from adult catalogues. A large number of the works cited, however, have retained their popularity with both audiences. In many cases, the crossover appeal remained strong in the twentieth century due to popular film adaptations.

The crossing over of adult novels continued into the twentieth century, but it was much less prominent. In the early part of the century, many of the distinctions that would later be made between children’s and adult fiction still did not exist. Books about children were not yet generally assumed to be for children. Jack London’s novella *The Call of the Wild*, which brought the American author international fame, is often mistakenly classified as a children’s book because of its popularity with young readers. The story was serialized in *The Saturday Evening Post*, to popular acclaim, in the summer of 1903, before being published in book form by Macmillan. Like *The Call of the Wild*, *White Fang* and *The Sea-Wolf* are also generally thought to be addressed to boys and young men, but in reality, London’s authentic outdoor adventures appeal to a wide audience of readers of both sexes and all ages. His crossover appeal is due in part to the fact that he was among the first writers to work with the movie industry and saw a number of his novels made into films. *The Sea-Wolf*, released in 1913, was one of the first American feature films.

As writers and critics adopted modernism and shied away from popular authors who appealed to young readers, books about children were often marketed only for a juvenile audience by the rapidly developing children’s publishing industry. Although Lucy Maud Montgomery’s first novel, *Anne of Green Gables*, came to be considered a children’s book, it was not originally written or published as such. The L. C. Page Company in Boston issued the first
edition, in 1908, in a format clearly intended for a general audience. The sophisticated cover illustration, which portrays a mature young woman in profile, would have little appeal for children. The novel was an immediate international success with a wide and diverse readership, as were the sequels. As a popular woman’s writer whose books appealed to children, Montgomery was not viewed as a serious writer by the literary establishment. Her books continued to sell well throughout the twentieth century, but they were increasingly considered, by critics and the readers they influenced, to be primarily for a young audience.

Some books written and published for adults were read by a male or female audience of all ages. Like *Anne of Green Gables*, *Maria Chapdelaine*, another classic of Canadian literature, was particularly popular with women and girls. Written by the expatriate Frenchman Louis Hémon, the story of a young woman living on a remote farm in northern Quebec was first serialized in the Paris magazine *Le Temps* in 1914. It was first published in book form in Montreal in 1916, initially without much success, and then appeared in Paris in 1921. The novel eventually became a bestseller on both sides of the Atlantic. Translated into more than twenty languages, *Maria Chapdelaine* has enchanted millions of readers, both young and old, around the world. The novel has been made into a film several times, most recently by the famous Quebecois director and screenwriter Gilles Carle in 1983. Among the books that appealed chiefly to men and boys were the military adventure tales of C. S. Forester. The famous eleven-book series about Captain Horatio Hornblower and naval warfare during the Napoleonic era, which Forester began publishing in 1937, was a favourite with adolescent boys.

Popular genre fiction, such as horror, detective, romance, fantasy, and science fiction, has always crossed between adult and child audiences. Detective fiction fans of all ages read Agatha Christie’s Miss Marple novels or Conan Doyle’s Sherlock Holmes’s stories. The same can be said of the bestselling historical mysteries by the hugely popular Russian author Boris Akunin (pseudonym of Grigory Shalvovich Chkhartishvili), who began writing his famous Adventures of Erast Fandorin in 1998, with *Azazel*, translated into English as *The Winter Queen*. Young enthusiasts of historical fiction do not limit themselves to the children’s novels of the popular British author Eleanor Hibbert, who is better known to readers as Jean Plaidy, Victoria Holt, and Philippa Carr. The enormously popular horror stories of Stephen King, who revived interest in modern horror fiction, have a very broad readership. We know what a wide following King has among adolescents in North America, but he enjoys tremendous international popularity as well. In Germany, for example, he is the favourite author among young people.3

The fantasy genre has always had a wide crossover audience. Many fantasy authors, such as Ursula Le Guin and Madeleine L’Engle, write for both adults and children, and their most loyal fans tend to read the novels written for both audiences. T. H. White wrote a few children’s books, but he is best known for
his tetralogy *The Once and Future King*, a retelling of the legend of King Arthur. Although the later novels in the series are more adult, the first book, *The Sword in the Stone*, which was originally published in 1938 as a stand-alone work, is very popular with young readers. The novel inspired both the musical *Camelot* and Disney’s 1963 animated film *The Sword in the Stone*.

Fantasy authors who write only for adults have also had significant crossover appeal. On its website, Suite101.com makes the claim that “all ages high fantasy” is a large sub-genre of fantasy. However, many fantasy works that seem to fall into this category were not intended to be read by children. The surreal gothic-pastiche masterpiece Gormenghast books, by the English author Mervyn Peake, occupy a unique place in the world of fantasy literature. The three existing books, *Titus Groan* (1946), *Gormenghast* (1950), and *Titus Alone* (1959), are often erroneously referred to as a trilogy, but they were intended to be part of a lengthy cycle that was interrupted by the author’s untimely death. Like the books of Dickens, with whom Peake has been compared, the demanding, dark series captivates and draws into its strange world young readers as well as adults. Contrary to many fantasy authors, however, Peake was not pleased to have attracted a wide following of young readers. Conversely, Anne McCaffrey, an American author who lives in Ireland, is delighted that her bestselling science fiction and fantasy books, most of which are published for adults, are widely read by readers of all ages, including “girls of 10 and grandmothers of 90.”

In 1968, McCaffrey published *Dragonflight*, the first novel in her hugely successful Dragonriders of Pern series, an extensive fantasy/science fiction series that now consists of eighteen novels or novellas and several short stories, several of which have been collected into two compilations. Apparently, *Dragon’s Kin*, written in collaboration with her son Todd, was really meant to be a young adult novel, but because it is part of the Pern series, it was published under the standard Del Rey label.

David Gemmell is considered by many to be Britain’s finest heroic fantasy writer. His first novel, *Legend*, which introduced the eleven-novel Drenai series (1984–2004), has become a fantasy classic. Gemmell’s complaints about the low status of fantasy could be applied equally to children’s literature. At the outset of his career, his publishers warned him: “Fantasy isn’t considered literature. . . . Never win the Booker.” Gemmel points to works like J. R. R. Tolkien’s *Lord of the Rings* and Mervyn Peake’s Gormenghast trilogy to illustrate that the genre cannot be condemned on the basis of the quality of the writing. He feels that “the stigma of fantasy” continues to frighten publishers, prompting them to bill books under some other category. According to him, J. K. Rowling’s novels are marketed as crossover fiction to avoid the fantasy label. Likewise, he contends that Michael Crichton’s *Timeline*, in spite of the time travel, is marketed as a “thriller,” Philip Pullman’s trilogy as “imaginative fiction,” and Terry Pratchett’s *Discworld* series as “humour.” Fantasy was nonetheless the catalyst of the recent crossover phenomenon that has given children’s literature a new status and secured it a place in mainstream literature.
There are clear signs that the attitude toward fantasy is changing in the world of adult literary fiction as well. The British author Susanna Clarke’s debut novel, *Jonathan Strange & Mr Norrell*, a hefty literary fantasy of 782 pages published in 2004, not only won the Hugo Award for Best Novel and World Fantasy Award in 2005, but was also longlisted for the Booker and shortlisted for the Guardian and the Whitbread first novel awards in 2004. The novel garnered a vast readership among people who do not usually like fantasy. Neil Gaiman’s endorsement on the back cover describes it as “unquestionably the finest English novel of the fantastic written in the last seventy years.” The historical detail, period spellings, and copious, witty, faux scholarly footnotes bring a new slant to fantasy. During the ten years that Clarke worked on her historical fantasy about two magicians who vie for power in early nineteenth-century London, magicians became a hot literary commodity. *Jonathan Strange & Mr Norrell* was published by Bloomsbury, Rowling’s U.K. publisher, and has been widely referred to as “*Harry Potter* for adults.” A number of reviewers deny this claim and one wryly points out that “*Harry Potter* is *Harry Potter* for adults.”

There are nonetheless a number of similarities between Clarke’s novel and Rowling’s series, including an enchanting mix of magic and the mundane. *Jonathan Strange & Mr Norrell* was the object of a huge marketing campaign. This has been the case for other important debut novels, but, as a writer for The New York Times pointed out, this is unusual for one “that is uncompromisingly literary without being shy about taking the [fantasy] genre seriously.”

*Jonathan Strange & Mr Norrell* was extraordinarily successful, appearing on both the New York Times (it went to number one) and The Sunday Times bestseller lists. Although one reviewer says “it is not for children, unless they are children who really, really love footnotes,” Clarke’s wide audience of readers includes teenagers who have read *Harry Potter* and are looking for a more sophisticated take on the world of magic.

From classics to modern fantasy, today’s young readers continue to borrow fiction that was written for an adult audience. In some cases, this adoption is facilitated by publishers who repackage adult works to make them more appealing to a young audience. However, for many young readers, much of the appeal of these books lies in the fact that they are intended for adults.

**Teenagers Reading Up**

Philip Pullman reminds us that “children don’t just read children’s books.” He is firmly convinced that children should be presented with adult books, mentioning a P. G. Wodehouse book that he received when he was twelve or thirteen. For some teenagers, reading “adult fiction” is, as it has always been, a case of doing things which make them feel more grownup. The adult-to-adolescent crossover may depend more on social and behavioural factors than on literary ones. Ralf Isau refers to it as “the typical ‘I-am-not-too-young-for-that’-Syndrome.” While that may be true for more popular genres, like the
horror novels of Stephen King, it is not generally the case for literary novels. Like Pullman, whom he greatly admires, Mark Haddon believes that “bright children have always read adult books, it’s only in the last 50 years there’s been that distinction.” After devouring *The Lord of the Rings* on a long weekend when he was twelve or thirteen, Haddon felt the inexplicable need to move on to adult books and read Albert Camus’s *The Outsider*. He admits that he did not understand the novel or why it was so highly rated, but he was nonetheless unable to go back to children’s books.¹²

Many crossover authors claim that their own writing is profoundly influenced by the books they read as children, books that, for the most part, were not written specifically for a young audience. Among the names commonly cited are those of Kipling, London, and Stevenson. Authors often point out that children’s literature was virtually nonexistent when they were young. Recalling the books he read as a child, books such as London’s *The Call of the Wild*, the French author J. M. G. Le Clézio reminds us that they weren’t “children’s literature” even though they were “largely read by children.” Le Clézio borrowed his books from his grandfather’s library and claims to have read “the major part of adult literature when [he] was about ten years old, from Robinson Crusoe to Stevenson.”¹³ At ten years of age, the South African writer Leslie Wilson read Thomas Mann’s *Buddenbrooks*, Voltaire’s *Candide*, and Goethe’s *Faust* Parts 1 and 2, the latter being a feat she has never managed to repeat as an adult. She feels that she was “not untypical of the bookworm teenager.”¹⁴

Since the creation of the category of young adult fiction, there has been an increased blurring of the borders between adult and juvenile fiction and a growing intersection of readerships. There is more recognition on the part of publishers, librarians, and booksellers that a large number of adult books have crossover appeal to a young adult audience. It has also been acknowledged that adult literature may be more appealing to young teenagers than young adult literature, due to the grim content that pervades much of the latter. Many critics feel that young readers are becoming more sophisticated, and that teenagers in particular are turning to adult novels. Scott MacDonald, a staff writer for the publishing trade magazine *Quill & Quire*, thinks that young adult no longer applies to the thirteen to seventeen age range, but rather to that of eleven to fourteen. By the age of thirteen or fourteen, “most readers are advancing to the adult sections” of bookstores, he claims, concluding: “It appeals to teenagers, I think, to feel that they’re reading up.”¹⁵

This is not really a contemporary phenomenon, however. Adult books that have long been popular with teenagers include J. D. Salinger’s *The Catcher in the Rye* (1951), William Golding’s *The Lord of the Flies* (1954), Mordecai Richler’s *The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz* (1959), John Knowles’s *A Separate Peace* (1959), and Harper Lee’s *To Kill a Mockingbird* (1960), all classic coming-of-age stories written in the 1950s. Many adult novels are prescribed reading in high school, but not all are read with equal enthusiasm by young readers. As one critic reminiscing on the adult books he read as an adolescent puts it,
high-school English reading lists “included gems like *The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz*, as well as a whole lot of tedious, self-consciously portentous fiction.” Earlier examples of adult novels that became almost cult books with generations of teenagers are Alain-Fournier’s *Le Grand Meaulnes*, published in France in 1913, and Goethe’s *Die Leiden des jungen Werthers* (*The Sorrows of Young Werther*), published in Germany in 1774, both romantic stories of young love that ends tragically.

Historically, many “young adult books” began as adult offerings, especially if they deal with fairly contemporary adolescence. Three mainstream novels describing young adult life in the 1960s and early 1970s have virtually become cult novels in secondary schools in Norway: Ragnar Hovland’s *Alltid fleire dagar* (*Always another day, 1979*), Lars Saabye Christensen’s *Beatles* (*1984*), and Ingvar Ambjornsen’s breakthrough novel *Hvite niggere* (*White Niggers, 1986*) about a young outsider who leads life somewhat on the fringes of normal society. Another novel of the same period that was widely adopted by teenagers was Sue Townsend’s *The Secret Diary of Adrian Mole, Aged 13 3⁄4* (*1982*), which was the bestselling new British fiction book of the 1980s. Although it also found a teenage audience, the novel was written to amuse adults. Adrian’s astute observations about the world around him are not those of the average teenage diarist. Like the first novel, the sequel *The Growing Pains of Adrian Mole* (*1984*) was also a number one bestseller. While the first two sequels continued in the same vein, the later books depict Adrian as an adult and focus largely on political satire, limiting their appeal with a younger audience. Translated into thirty-four languages, the Mole diaries have sold over nine million copies worldwide and have been adapted for radio, television, and theatre.

As the field of young adult fiction began to develop, novels often had a rather ambivalent status. A particularly striking example is the Rainbow trilogy by the German-born Swedish author Peter Pohl. *Regnbågen har bara åtta färger* (*The rainbow has only eight colours*), about the child protagonist Henrik, was published in Sweden in 1986 as an adult novel. It later turned out to be part of a trilogy, in which the second book, *Vi kallar honom Anna* (*We call him Anna, 1987*), about the young protagonist Micke, was published as a young adult novel. It was not until the third novel *Medan regnbågen bleknar* (*While the rainbow fades, 1989*) that readers learned that Henrik and Micke are the same character (he has changed his name). Although the third novel was once again published for adults, it was quickly classified as a juvenile title, receiving a children’s book award and being reviewed as a children’s book. When the novels began to be viewed as a trilogy, they were all treated as young adult novels and the first was reissued for that audience. While some critics continue to refer to the Rainbow trilogy, others prefer to speak of the Rainbow series or suite (*svit* in Swedish), since there are now six linked books. The author points out that the stories developed in the subsequent five books are all mentioned in the first novel. *De stora penslarnas lek* (*The large brushes’ game, 1989*), a collection of stories that were originally intended to be part of the first novel, was also
published for adults. The status of Vilja växa (Wishing to grow up, 1994), which chronologically precedes the second novel in the trilogy, is unclear. Although it was published for young adults, it seems too complex for children and too easy for adults. Klara papper är ett måste (One must have clear papers, 1998), in which Micke is an adult, was once again published for an adult audience. Pohl does not establish any clear demarcation between children’s and adult fiction. All of his novels deviate enormously from the generally accepted norms of young adult fiction, as the content is quite mature and includes extreme violence. Pohl’s books are often found in both adult and young adult sections of libraries.

The internationally renowned American young adult author Robert Cormier redefined the genre with his dark, controversial novels. His first novel, Now and at the Hour, was published for adults, to critical acclaim, in 1960, but it was reissued as a young adult novel in 1991 by Laurel-Leaf, a paperback imprint that, according to the Random House website, is committed to providing teens with quality literature in an accessible, mass-market format.” Like Pohl and Cormier, the American writer Francesca Lia Block is best known as a young adult author. However, the first novel in her popular Weetzie Bat series, set in a fantasy world in Los Angeles, was published for adults in 1989. The remainder of the series was initially published for young adults, who enthusiastically embraced the trendy books. The British author Tanith Lee also writes fiction that blurs the borders between adults and young adults. For example her collection of retold fairy tales Red as Blood, or Tales from the Sisters Grimmer (1983), which the back cover blurb warns are not for children, appeal to a wide crossover audience of teenagers and adults.

It is not only in the Western world that adult novels sometimes strike a chord with an entire generation of teenagers. The well-known Japanese author Haruki Murakami, who is highly influenced by Western culture—especially its literature and music, is widely read by a juvenile audience even though all his books are published for adults. The author himself does not think his work is particularly Westernized, but feels that it is merely the result of globalization. However, his success with Japanese young people is largely due to the Western influence in his works, notably his Westernized style that is much freer and simpler than that of traditional Japanese writing. His fiction has often come under criticism for being “pop” literature by Japan’s literary establishment. In fact, the apparent simplicity of his work is quite deceptive, masking a profound complexity. Murakami was inspired to write his first novel, Kaze no uta o kike (Hear the wind sing, 1979), while watching a baseball game. It was followed by 1973-nen no pinbōru (Pinball-1973, 1980) and his critically acclaimed Hitsuji o meguru bōken (A Wild Sheep Chase, 1982), which together constitute the Trilogy of the Rat. The three novels were published, with extensive notes, in an English edition in Japan, as part of a series intended for students learning English, but the first two have not been released in English outside Japan because the author feels they are weaker than his other works.
Murakami achieved widespread national acclaim with the publication, in 1987, of *Noruwei no mori* (Norwegian Wood), whose title is taken from the Beatles’ 1965 song of the same name. In the 1970s and early 1980s, the Japanese author owned a jazz bar in Tokyo, and music is a recurring motif in his novels, whose titles are often borrowed from songs, another reason for his popularity with a young audience. Murakami claims he was “an avant-garde ‘cult’ author popular among young readers” prior to *Norwegian Wood*, which “was picked up by readers across generations” and “became a phenomenal bestseller.” He attributes the novel’s widespread success to the fact that this nostalgic story of a college student’s romantic coming of age is his only purely realistic novel. It is not surprising that one of the writers who influenced Murakami was J. D. Salinger. It was the Japanese equivalent of *Catcher in the Rye*, read by most young people. Several million copies of *Norwegian Wood* were sold to Japanese young people, turning the author into a kind of superstar. It was especially popular with young women in their teens and twenties. The book was printed in two separate parts that were sold together; the first volume had a red cover and the second a green one. Some hard-core fans wore green or red clothing to show their preference for that particular part. In 1989, *Norwegian Wood* was published in English in Japan by Kodansha as part of the Kodansha English Library series, although this translation has now been discontinued in Japan. Like other books in this pocket-sized series, it was intended for Japanese students of English. This edition retained the two volume division and the colour scheme of the original Japanese version, as did the new translation published in Britain and the United States in 2000. *Norwegian Wood* is an anomaly in Murakami’s fiction, as his other novels all have a dreamlike, surreal quality, as well as a distinct humour and powerful nostalgia. In works that capture the spiritual emptiness of his generation, Murakami criticizes Japan’s capitalistic society. His moving depiction of alienation and loneliness resonates quite strongly with both adults and teenagers, not only in Japan and other parts of Asia, but also in Europe and North America. One of his short stories, “Töni Takitani” (“Tony Takitani,” 1990), was adapted into a 75-minute feature film that has played at various film festivals and was released in New York and Los Angeles in 2005. The non-fiction work *Andaguraundo* (Underground, 1997–98), for which the author interviewed victims of the sarin gas attacks in the Tokyo subway system in 1995, as well as his story collection *Kami no kodomo-tachi wa mina odoru* (After the Quake, 2000), based on the 1995 Kobe Earthquake, also garnered a wide general readership, especially in the post-September 11 world. After winning the Franz Kafka Award in 2005 for his novel *Umibe no Kafka* (Kafka on the Shore, 2002), this popular author, who had attracted the criticism of the literary establishment and become a superstar with Japanese youth in the 1980s, was considered a possible candidate for the Nobel Prize in Literature.

Some authors intend their novels published for adults to be read by a juvenile audience as well. Once authors have crossed over, either deliberately or
unintentionally, they may wish to reach young readers in their subsequent adult novels. Michel Tournier is a member of the prestigious Académie Goncourt and one of the best-known and most successful contemporary French novelists. His first two novels, written for adults, won France’s two most important literary prizes, but his interest in a crossover audience is evident from the outset of his career. Tournier believes that a book, in particular a novel, is worth very little “if its author cannot communicate its substance to an audience of ten-year-olds,” an idea that he has continued to reiterate throughout his career. He aspires to join the ranks of the great literary “geniuses” who write so well that they can be read “by everyone, even children!” Recounting his own discovery of literature at nine years of age, thanks to what he calls his first “literary shock,” The Wonderful Adventures of Nils by Selma Lagerlöf, he concludes: “Books that can be read only at twenty are failures.”

More recently, Tournier’s view is echoed by Philip Pullman, who takes issue with the comment of a reviewer of a Louis de Bernières book: “It’s not very good, but might be suitable for children.” Pullman thinks it would be a refreshing change to see a review that says: “This is such an interesting book, children might enjoy it as well.”

When La goutte d’or (The Golden Droplet) was published for adults in 1986, Tournier’s aspiration was that it could be read by twelve-year-old children, a goal that he later told me he felt he had achieved. At the International Festival of Authors at Harbourfront Centre in Toronto after the release of the English translation of his novel Le chercheur d’or (1985), The Prospector, in 1993, J. M. G. Le Clézio told me that it could no doubt be read by a juvenile audience, but he reminded me that he makes no distinction between adult and children’s literature. While he would like to appeal to all readers, Le Clézio is particularly interested in readers aged ten to twelve, who should be addressed, he feels, in the same manner as adults. He insists that writers must never lose sight of the fact that they are always also addressing “children on the threshold of adolescence,” whom he considers to be the only “true readers.” In recent years, there has been a great deal of criticism of adult fiction that is caught up in form and no longer tells a story. Much of this criticism has been voiced by successful crossover authors like Philip Pullman and Mark Haddon. In the 1980s, a number of acclaimed novelists, such as Tournier and Le Clézio, began to move toward a simpler, less abstract and more elemental narrative that is accessible to younger readers. The narrator of Le Clézio’s L’Inconnu sur la terre (The unknown on the earth), published in 1978, expresses the author’s ideal: “My language would no longer be that of men and their books, but would address anybody on earth, and anybody would be able to understand it” (314). Very early in his career, Tournier rejected the “gibberish” of the rather abstruse sentences of which he had once been so proud, to adopt a style “aimed at twelve-year-old children.” “At the outset of my work, I had Thomas Mann for ideal, today it is Kipling and London,” he admitted in 1986.

The Afrikaans novel Dinge van ’n Kind (Childish Things) by Marita van der Vyver, a very well-known author for both children and adults, is a rather unique
example of an adult-to-child crossover, in that it was intended for a crossover audience, but deliberately published as adult fiction because it would have a much larger promotion budget. Van der Vyver’s novel was one of the earliest examples of crossover fiction in South Africa. Her story about four white teenagers growing up in the 1970s reaches its climax on the day of June 16, 1976, when the Soweto uprising was started by black teenagers. Chapters dealing with the issues of apartheid and border wars alternate with chapters about one of the characters who lives in London and writes letters to a child in South Africa (only later do readers realize that the addressee is the child of one of her friends). *Childish Things* has been described as an initiation novel on a number of levels: sexual, moral, and political. Some reviewers remarked that it was a book for adults who were reliving their teenage years. The author says the novel was not written specifically for children or juveniles. Van der Vyver had just moved into what she calls, tongue-in-cheek, “the glittering world of adult fiction” after about a decade as a children’s author. Her first adult novel, *Griet skryf ’n sprokie*, translated into English as *Entertaining Angels* in 1994, was a literary sensation, winning the M-Net Book Prize, the Eugène Marais Award, and the ATKV Prose Award in 1992. The bestselling novel was translated into about a dozen languages. The author’s intention in writing the novel is a revealing statement concerning the status of children’s literature in the early 1990s. In an e-mail message to me on June 20, 2007, she explained: “I was outraged with all the glory suddenly bestowed on me, as if I’d somehow ‘arrived,’ as if adult fiction was higher, better, . . . more developed than juvenile fiction. So I decided to blur the distinctions between the genres and write a book ostensibly ‘for adults,’ which would be marketed as adult fiction (meaning a much bigger promotion budget), but which actually told a story about adolescents and could be read by adolescents OR adults.” *Childish Things* is a true crossover work that the author describes as “a children’s book for adults or an adults’ book for children.” Well before the current crossover craze, Van der Vyver’s novel was considered “a pioneering work shifting the borders between adult and youth fiction,” according to the Stellenbosch Writers website. The Afrikaans author continues to write fiction for readers of all ages.

In the majority of cases, there is no authorial intention when adult fiction crosses over to young readers. Important contemporary examples of adult-to-child crossovers can be found in many countries and cultures, and the examples mentioned below, published since 1980, constitute only a very small sample. In 1981, the Japanese actress Tetsuko Kuroyanagi published *Madogiwa no Totto-chan*, a very popular autobiographical work about her childhood that appeared the following year in English, under the title *Totto-chan: The Little Girl at the Window*. Although it was published for adults, it also appeals to young readers, particularly teenagers. Students of English read it in the Kodansha English Library series edition, published in 1984. In the case of this particular book, the celebrity factor undoubtedly played a role in the book’s appeal to a broad audience. The English-language Japanese edition is popular with young
readers learning English. Adult novels that cross over very often deal with childhood and adolescence. Sandra Cisneros’s internationally acclaimed novel *House on Mango Street*, which was published in 1983, describes the life of a young Mexican-American girl growing up in a working-class Chicago neighbourhood. The novel became the representative Chicano work in the canon, but it was also adopted by both Latino and non-Latino teenagers, and is now widely taught to middle and high school students. The same is true of the novel *Bless Me, Ultima* (1972), by the acclaimed Chicano author Rudolfo Anaya. His coming-of-age story of a young Mexican-American boy is included in anthologies for young readers.

The 1990s saw an increasing number of adult novels and short story collections adopted by young readers. The collection of short stories *Dulle Griet* (Mad Meg), whose title is borrowed from Pieter Breughel the Elder’s famous painting, was published by the Afrikaans author Riana Scheepers in 1991. According to the author, the collection is widely read by young people, especially for the sex and erotic content. For the same reason, her novella *Die heidendogters jubel* (The daughters of the heathen Jubilate, 1995), about three girls captured and held willingly in an army camp, was appropriated by young readers, in particular girls from sixteen to eighteen years of age. The public outcry against the sex in the book (the three girls also engage in lesbian sex) no doubt increased its appeal with young readers, and the author believes it has a wider audience among young readers than adults.25 *The Dancers Dancing*, by acclaimed Irish novelist Éilis Ní Dhuibhne, was published for adults in 1999, but it is read by teenagers and found in the young adult section of some bookstores. It tells the story of a group of pubescent Irish girls who leave their homes in Dublin and Derry, in 1972, to study the Irish language in Donegal, where their newfound freedom allows them to grow up. In 1992, the Danish author Peter Høeg published the international bestseller *Frøken Smillas fornemmelse for sne* (Miss Smilla’s Feeling for Snow), a thriller, in which the protagonist investigates the death of a neighbour’s child. Although the novel was marketed for adults, it was widely read by teenagers, particularly in the Nordic countries. Some critics have said that the 1994 novel *De rode strik* (The red bow), by the Dutch author Mensje van Keulen, could be read by people from the age of eight to eighty. The author herself does not agree because she feels the book is too cruel for children, but she admits it could be read by adolescents. David Guterson’s award-winning bestseller *Snow Falling on Cedars*, which was also published in 1994, is a popular novel in high school English classes throughout the United States, despite the violence and sexual content that caused it to be banned in some places. Influenced by *To Kill a Mockingbird*, Guterson’s novel deals with racism in a fictional community of the Pacific Northwest, where Kabuo Miyamoto, a Japanese American, is accused of killing a fisherman amid post-World War II anti-Japanese sentiments. The 1999 film adaptation of the novel, which was nominated for an Academy Award for Best Cinematography, was rated PG-13.
In 2001, the Italian author Niccolò Ammaniti published the thriller *Io non ho paura* in Einaudi’s Stile Libero series, which is devoted to emerging authors of fiction. The English translation, *I’m Not Scared*, appeared in 2003 as general fiction by Canongate, although it was hailed as a crossover novel. Ammaniti had already published several works for adults, but it was *I’m Not Scared* that earned him the reputation of Italy’s best novelist of his generation and spawned comparisons with Italo Calvino. Set in the summer of 1978, the year in which Italian kidnappings reached an all-time high of nearly 600, including the famous case of Aldo Moro, the novel tells the gripping story of a nine-year-old boy who discovers a child chained up at the bottom of a hole near his small rural hamlet. The powerful coming-of-age story recounts the loss of innocence of the young boy when he learns that those closest to him are Mafiosi involved in kidnapping. *I’m Not Scared*, which has sold more than one million copies, remained on bestseller lists in Italy for several years after its release. It has also won many literary awards, including the prestigious Viareggio-Rèpaci Prize, which Ammaniti was the youngest author ever to win in 2001. Publication rights were bought in about twenty-four countries worldwide and *I’m Not Scared* was not long becoming an international bestseller as well. Critics everywhere have given the novel rave reviews, praising its literary quality and notably the lyrical, elegant prose. The film version, by Oscar-award winning Italian director Gabriele Salvatores, has also been a huge success and explains the novel’s record-breaking presence on bestseller lists. Two days after the film premiered at the Berlin Film Festival in February 2003, thirty-two countries had purchased the film, which constituted the country’s official entrant for Best Foreign Film at the Academy Awards in 2004. The film’s crossover appeal was acknowledged, although it was rated R for disturbing images and language. In English-speaking countries, the screen adaptation was released by Miramax Films prior to the book, so many readers came to the novel after seeing the film.

The German-based Bosnian writer Saša Stanišić was born in Višegrad, in what is now Bosnia-Herzegovina, and emigrated with his family to Germany at the age of fourteen, during the Yugoslavian civil war. In 2005, Stanišić won the readers’ choice award in the Ingeborg Bachemann Competition, the most important literary competition in the German-speaking countries, held yearly in Austria. The competitors are generally young authors, many of whom are about to, or have just recently, published their first book. Public interest in the competition is immense and Stanišić drew a large following in Germany and Austria, where he is currently official writer for the town of Graz. His first novel, *Wie der Soldat das Grammofon repariert* (How the soldier repairs the gramophone), was considered the literary debut of fall 2006. It met with wide critical acclaim and was shortlisted for the Deutscher Buchpreis, awarded to the best novel written in German. The novel was brought out by Luchterhand Literaturverlag, a German publisher of adult fiction that has no special place in its program for young adult books. Stanišić’s novel was therefore unique in their publishing program, as many of his readers are adolescents. The
autobiographical novel tells the story of Aleksandar, who, as a child growing up in Višegrad, has difficulty keeping his imagination in check and conforming to the provincial town’s conventions. When the war begins, his family flees to Germany, where his gift for storytelling keeps Bosnia alive for them. As an adult, he returns to his childhood home, where he must confront the aftermath of a devastating war. The tragi-comic novel about one child’s experience of the Bosnian war appeals to both adults and young readers. Karsten Rösel, in charge of press and publicity at Luchterhand Literaturverlag, told me in an e-mail message on September 11, 2007 that the audience at the author’s readings is largely made up of young people, especially between the ages of twenty and thirty, but also consists of older adults interested in that period of Yugoslavian history.

Awards and reviews often play a role in the crossover of adult novels to a young adult audience. K. Sello Duiker, a South African author born in Soweto at the height of apartheid, published his debut novel *Thirteen Cents* in 2000. The coming-of-age story about a young Cape Town street child named Azure, who is a helpless victim of adult exploitation, got very positive reviews, in which there was no indication that it was intended for teenagers. The novel was nonetheless entered for the Noma Award for African Literature in the children’s and young adult section. Many readers read the book in that context, but a number of critics felt that it should not have been entered since it was definitely not a book for young people. This view seemed to be confirmed when the novel won the 2001 Commonwealth Writers’ Prize for Best First Book, Africa Region. The somewhat ambivalent status of this disturbing novel resulted in an audience of both adults and teenagers.

Duiker’s second novel, *The Quiet Violence of Dreams*, about a young black man from a middle-class family who comes to terms with his sexuality, was awarded the Herman Charles Bosman Prize and was runner-up for *The Sunday Times* Literary Award in 2001. The author told his Dutch publishers that, in the South African context, he was writing “for people between 23 and 30 years of age—people in [his] age group” because they have to confront so many changes. Through the eyes of a young black man, Duiker explores contemporary youth culture. The author considered it “a rite-of-passage novel” which shows that young Africans are not really any different from young people elsewhere. Duiker’s third novel *The Hidden Star*, published posthumously by Umuzi in 2005, recasts African folklore in a modern realistic setting, telling the story of a young girl who finds a magical stone. On their website, the publisher markets it as “a timeless tale that will appeal to adults and children alike.” This deliberate marketing for both readerships may reflect the publisher’s attempt to find as large a market as possible for Duiker’s final novel. At the time of his death in 2005 (he committed suicide), the 27-year-old author was considered the most promising of the emerging generation of post-apartheid black writers, and had a wide and loyal following, particularly among a younger generation of readers.
In 2002, *Books for Keeps*, a British magazine that reviews children’s books, added to their review section a fourteen-plus category, which includes adult titles in addition to young adult titles. In her editorial for that issue, Rosemary Stone explains the change: “This has been prompted by new developments in publishing for older readers which have seen the emergence of ‘crossover’ titles which are marketed to appeal to both teenage and adult readers and by the increasing number of novels with ‘contentious’ subject matter.” She rightly points out that this new category once again raises the question of “the usefulness and validity of such inevitably arbitrary divisions.”

In fact, *Books for Keeps* had always included adult titles from time to time. The first issue, published in 1980, reviewed Douglas Adams’s science fiction comedy *The Hitch-Hiker’s Guide to the Galaxy* (1979), which developed into an international multimedia phenomenon. *Books for Keeps* has always considered the age categories used in their review sections as somewhat artificial, just as they do the division between children’s and adult books.

This view is shared by the American Library Association, which states on their website that they created the Alex Awards “to recognize that many teens enjoy and often prefer books written for adults.” First given in 1998, they became an official ALA Award in 2002. The awards recognize ten books “written for adults that have special appeal to young adults, ages 12 through 18.” Often the novels awarded have young protagonists and many are coming-of-age stories that appeal to teenage readers. Orson Scott Card’s *Ender’s Shadow* (1999), a 2000 winner, is a science fiction novel about a young orphan recruited to attend the elite Battle School where future warriors are trained who will lead humanity’s fleets against alien invaders. A number of the winners are much-acclaimed literary novels. The 2001 list included Tracy Chevalier’s *The Girl with a Pearl Earring* (1999), narrated by the sixteen-year-old servant Griet, who serves as Vermeer’s model for the famous painting. In 2004, Mark Haddon’s celebrated novel *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* received the award. The 2006 list featured a number of notable novels, including Judy Fong Bates’s *Midnight at the Dragon Café*, which tells the story of a young Chinese girl whose life is torn apart by dark family secrets in a small Ontario town in the 1950s, and Kazuo Ishiguro’s *Never Let Me Go*, which was also shortlisted for the Booker Prize. Another title on the 2006 list was *Anansi Boys*, by Neil Gaiman, who had already received the award in 2000 for *Stardust*, a novel that makes fantasy accessible to a wide audience. Some teenagers had already read Gaiman’s first adult novel *Neverwhere*, published in 1996, and many more were familiar with his popular series of graphic novels, *The Sandman*, which one critic has called “the best piece of fiction” of the day. The fact that many teenagers are reading adult novels is certainly nothing new, but they are now actively being encouraged to do so by critics, organizations, publishers, and bookstores.
The Marketing of Adult Books for Young Readers

In the past, many adult novels have been adopted by children and young adults without any effort on the part of publishers. In recent years, however, publishers have begun taking a very proactive role in promoting adult fiction to young readers, sometimes with massive marketing campaigns. The role of publishers and the marketplace will be dealt with in chapter six, but it is useful to examine a few notable titles within the context of other adult-to-child crossovers. A notable recent example is Yann Martel’s *Life of Pi* (2001), which won the Man Booker Prize in 2002. It turned a previously unknown Spanish-born Canadian author into a bestselling author whose novel has sold in excess of six million copies in forty territories worldwide. The novel sold exceedingly well in both the adult and young adult markets. Jamie Byng, whose Scottish publishing house Canongate brought out the novel in Britain, rejoiced that a book capable of changing a person’s way of thinking was “out-selling all the commercial trash” and “enjoying such an enormous readership.” Putting it in the tradition of works like *Robinson Crusoe*, *Gulliver’s Travels*, and *Moby Dick*, Margaret Atwood describes *Life of Pi* as “a boys’ adventure for grownups.” However, the magic realist fable about a sixteen-year-old boy, Pi Patel, and a 450-pound Bengal tiger, Richard Parker, adrift at sea on a lifeboat for 227 days was praised for its ability to charm young and old alike. In the United States, Harcourt classified the novel as both fiction and juvenile fiction. The Harvest Books imprint published a student edition in 2004. In 2005, the Croatian artist Tomislav Torjanac won an international competition to illustrate the novel and the result was a lavishly produced edition with forty colour illustrations. Martel’s novel was adapted as a play that was classified as “family theatre” for eight years of age to adult by the Brewery Theatre in the United Kingdom, and as a film that is scheduled to be released by Fox 2000 Pictures in 2009. “*Life of Pi* has reached far beyond the market for the most successful literary fiction and become a phenomenon with entirely its own momentum,” said David Graham, managing director of Canongate. Unlike any previous Booker Award winner, *Life of Pi* had wide appeal for young readers.

The Man Booker Prize-winning novel the following year, D. B. C. Pierre’s debut novel *Vernon God Little* (2003), also crossed over to a young adult audience. A customer review on Amazon.com on July 6, 2006, by a male young adult reader from Australia using the name Hackshadows, pronounced it “one of those rare books that would appeal to young adult male readers.” Pierre deals with the almost taboo subject of school violence in this story of a marginalized Texas teenager running from the law in the wake of a Columbine-style school shooting. The novel is a darkly comic satire of American society that was likened by the Booker judges to Salinger’s *Catcher in the Rye*. The postmodern novel is narrated in the idiomatic adolescent voice of fifteen-year-old Vernon Gregory Little, whose vision of the adult world that surrounds him is savagely satiric. Martel’s and Pierre’s novels indicate that the gap is narrowing between award-winning literary fiction and popular crossover fiction.
In 2002, with a great deal of hype, Bloomsbury, the U.K. publisher of the Harry Potter books, published *The Little Friend*, the long-awaited follow-up to Donna Tartt’s 1992 debut novel and literary sensation *The Secret History*. The Southern gothic novel is a combination of thriller and Bildungsroman about a very unusual twelve-year-old girl, who is obsessed by death and with solving her brother’s murder, which took place when she was just a baby. *The Little Friend* has been described as “a grownup book that captures the dark, *Lord of the Flies* side of childhood and classic children’s literature,” and also as a book that “can sometimes seem more like a young-adult adventure novel.”

Despite reviews connecting it to the young adult novel, *The Little Friend* did not capture a large crossover market.

Also in 2002, the Canadian screenwriter Lori Lansens published her first novel, *Rush Home Road*, to a great deal of international critical acclaim. The story of an elderly black woman who finds an abandoned five-year-old on the steps of her trailer park home had sold in eleven territories before the manuscript was even edited. When Lansens published her second novel, *The Girls*, in 2005, she assumed it was for the same adult readership. Inspired by a documentary on the conjoined Schappell sisters, Lansens tells the story of Rose and Ruby Darlen, craniopagus twins from a small town in Ontario. Composed as a memoir that marks the sisters’ thirtieth birthday, it is a remarkable dual narrative told from the perspectives of both girls, who have very different personalities although they share the same body. The book was an almost instant success. During promotional tours across Canada, Lansens learned that the 457-page novel was appealing to a younger audience of girls, who liked the confessional format, particularly the twins’ memories of their childhood. An anecdote related by the author underscores its crossover appeal. One thirteen-year-old told Lansens that “it was the first hardcover she ever bought . . . with her own money,” and asked her to sign it to her grandmother. Lansens suggested to her publisher, Knopf Canada, that the book also be promoted to a young adult audience, so when Vintage Canada printed *The Girls* in paperback in 2006, it was also pitched at a young adult market.

Adult novels are also being promoted for a young adult audience in many bookstores. That is not only true of award-winning bestsellers like *Life of Pi*, but also lower profile adult novels of high literary quality. These books are often rites-of-passage novels with adolescent protagonists. For example, Miriam Toews’s *A Complicated Kindness* (2004), the irreverent coming-of-age story about a wry sixteen-year-old who rebels against the conventions of a strict Mennonite community in rural Manitoba, is displayed in young adult sections of some Canadian bookstores.

In a 2006 article devoted to “How Publishers are Re-branding Adult Fiction for Younger Readers,” Andre Mayer rightly states that “the fact that teenagers are picking up ostensibly grown-up fiction is hardly novel.” Evoking his childhood memory of spending recesses in Grade 7 “thumbing through Sidney Sheldon’s salacious trash with other curious 12-year-olds,” he points out that
“the difference nowadays is that publishers and vendors are becoming more proactive with young bookworms.”\textsuperscript{33} Many contemporary adult novels are being successfully marketed for young readers. Marion Garner, publisher at Vintage Canada, agrees that “it isn’t a new phenomenon in terms of seeing that there’s an appeal, but consciously deciding to target those readers is relatively new.”\textsuperscript{34} Although there is now much more hype and high-profile marketing in promoting a promising adult-to-child crossover, publishers have, in fact, long been involved in this kind of border crossing, as we shall see in the following sections.

\textbf{From Adult Novel to Children’s Series}

A number of modern children’s classics were originally published for adults and subsequently marketed for children as well. One such novel provides a particularly interesting case of an adult novel becoming a children’s classic, because it also constitutes the first novel in a very popular five-book series for children. The first edition of Heni Bosco’s \textit{The Boy and the River}, published by Charlot in Algiers in 1945, was not intended for children. There was no indication that the author considered it suitable for young readers until the discovery, in 1995, of a letter he had written to a friend on July 11, 1945, shortly after the book’s appearance. The letter describes the novel’s intended audience as “children, adolescents, and poets.” The first children’s edition was not published until 1953, when it was taken over by Gallimard and appeared in their children’s series \textit{La Bibliothèque blanche}. Although Bosco’s \textit{The Boy and the River} has remained unchanged since its publication at the end of the war, except for modifications of a paratextual nature, its physical appearance and its image in the minds of readers, critics, and perhaps even the author, evolved significantly over the years. Since 1953, Bosco’s novel has appeared in most of Gallimard’s important series of children’s fiction, generally as one of the first titles to launch the new series. At the same time, the bestselling “children’s book” has never stopped appealing to a crossover audience, and it continues to be reissued for adults as well.

The success of the first children’s edition of \textit{The Boy and the River} seems to have inspired Bosco to continue the story because, between 1956 and 1958, he published the four remaining novels of what is generally referred to as the Pascalet cycle. The first sequel written by Bosco was \textit{La clef des champs} (The key to the fields), which was published in Algiers in 1956. Like the original edition of \textit{The Boy and the River}, it was not targeted at young readers. It is a beautiful bibliophilic edition, illustrated with original watercolours by Jacques Houplain. Two years later, \textit{La clef des champs} was republished, under the title \textit{Pascalet}, in \textit{La Bibliothèque blanche} series, where it became the fifth novel in the cycle. Thus the opening and closing stories of the series both have a crossover readership. Although \textit{The Boy and the River} continues to appear in editions for both adults and children, since \textit{Pascalet’s} appearance in the children’s series, the novel has
not been reissued for adults. Because the rare, original edition is unobtainable, *La clef des champs* has been effectively eliminated from the adult catalogue.

Three of the sequels, *Le renard dans l’île* (*The Fox in the Island*, 1956), *Barboche* (1957)—later published as *Le chien Barboche* (*The dog Barboche*), and *Bargabot* (1958), were undoubtedly written specifically for Gallimard’s children’s series and have appeared only in children’s editions. However, the highly poetic *Barboche*, which tells the story of the dreamlike journey that Pascalet makes with his dog Barboche and his aged Tante Martine to the village of her childhood, just as his own childhood comes to an end, is generally considered to be the most difficult novel of the series and consequently the least accessible to young readers. The French author Samivel, who also wrote for both children and adults, suggested perspicaciously that *Barboche* is only considered difficult for children because adults commonly underestimate young readers.35

Furthermore, it was for this novel that Bosco was awarded the Grand Prix de la Littérature pour les Jeunes in 1959. The author nonetheless intended *Barboche* to be a crossover novel that would be read by adults as well. The manuscript is preceded by a page entitled “foreword for grown-ups,” which was eliminated, probably by the editor, when the book was published.36

Almost twenty years after its release for adults, Bosco’s *L’Âne Culotte* (*The donkey Culotte*, 1937) was also published in a children’s edition by the Club des Jeunes Amis du Livre. Unfortunately, this edition, which has been out of print for years, is the only integral version of *L’Âne Culotte* published for children. Like *The Boy and the River*, this novel continues to be reprinted regularly for both children and adults. From the 1950s onward, the author would speak of *L’Âne Culotte* as his first “children’s book,” stating that if the tale has the good fortune to appeal “to grown-ups,” it is nonetheless “a children’s book.”37

However, *L’Âne Culotte*’s status as a crossover text is clearly indicated in Bosco’s adult novel *Un rameau de la nuit* (*The Dark Bough*), which was published in 1950, several years before the former appeared in a children’s edition. The author embeds in *The Dark Bough* *a mise en abyme* of the reception that he envisaged for the novel: the adult protagonist carries a copy of *L’Âne Culotte* in his knapsack on a long walking tour and reads it to his hostess and her young nephew, who are equally enchanted by the story.38

The appropriation of *L’Âne Culotte* by young readers is a rather curious phenomenon and its status as a children’s book highly problematic. Whereas *The Boy and the River* introduces a cycle in which all the novels were published in children’s editions, *L’Âne Culotte* is the first volume of a trilogy in which the other two novels are exclusively for an adult readership. In fact, the first sequel, *Hyacinthe*, is one of the author’s most difficult novels. Bosco’s trilogy constitutes a rare example of a series of books in which one is published for children and the other two for adults only.
An Interwoven Oeuvre of Texts for Diverse Readers

*L’Âne Culotte* is a unique crossover text because its equal appeal for adult and child readerships seems to have engendered a series for adults (the Hyacinthe trilogy) and a series for children (the Pascalet cycle). Shortly after finishing the Pascalet cycle, Bosco wrote in his journal that *L’Âne Culotte* had produced “two families of works.” Although the true sequels to *L’Âne Culotte* are *Hyacinthe* and *Le Jardin d’Hyacinthe* (Hyacinthe’s garden), Bosco annexes *L’Âne Culotte* to the Pascalet cycle. Despite the fact that the connections between the novels of the trilogy and the cycle are very oblique, Bosco suggests that all the works can be organized into “a single, more or less coherent cycle” by placing the Pascalet cycle immediately after the last novel of the Hyacinthe trilogy. Thus the author easily envisages a cycle composed of books published for different audiences. This obviously poses problems from a pragmatic point of view. Most adults, with the exception of loyal Bosco fans, are unlikely to read the sequels to *The Boy and the River*, which are available only in children’s editions. While adult readers may not even know of their existence, they do have access to the entire Pascalet cycle. Children, on the other hand, cannot read the whole Hyacinthe trilogy and will definitely be unaware of the sequels for adults. The novels of the Pascalet cycle constitute the only sequels to *L’Âne Culotte* accessible to young readers. In the case of Francesca Lia Block’s *Weetzie Bat* books, the first of which was initially published for adults, the entire series is accessible to, and has been published for, both adults and young adults.

A few years after the publication of the fifth novel in the Pascalet cycle, Bosco felt the need for a sixth novel, which would be “a sequel (and an ending).” The promised sequel to the series turned out to be the adult novel *Mon compagnon de songes* (My dream companion, 1967). Five years after the publication of the novel that was to serve as an “ending,” Bosco took up the story again in *Tante Martine*, the last adult novel published before the death of the author. *Tante Martine* was therefore the final novel in this elaborate sequence of works—written over a period of more than thirty-five years—that the author considered a whole, regardless of the fact that some were published for children, some for adults, and some for both audiences. In his mind, the books address all ages, as Bosco tells the story, first and foremost, for himself and for the child double within that he calls his “dream companion.” Perhaps no other author has created an oeuvre in which the works for children and those for adults are intertwined in such a complex manner.

Although not to the same degree as Bosco’s ten novels dealing with the Hyacinthe myth, a number of other authors have published adult novels that are linked to children’s novels by intratextual allusions. Bettina Kümmerling-Meibauer has argued convincingly that Erich Kästner’s adult works and his children’s novels are “complementary to each other, thus building a cluster of intertextual references.” She uses the example of his adult novel *Fabian: Die Geschichte eines Moralisten* (*Fabian: The Story of a Moralist*, 1931), which was
one of the canonical novels of the Neue Sachlichkeit (New Realism) movement in Germany, and his famous children’s novel *Emil und die Detektive* (1929), translated into English as *Emil and the Detectives* in 1930. In a similar manner, the adult and children’s books of the Swedish author Peter Pohl construct a cluster of works by means of intratextual references. Jostein Gaarder’s novel *Maya*, published for adults in 1999, also contains extensive intratextual allusions to his novel *Kabalmysteriet* (*The Solitaire Mystery*), even though the latter was published for young readers. Although some readers as young as ten have enjoyed *Maya*, it is not read extensively by a juvenile audience, unlike some of Gaarder’s other novels published for adults that were successful crossovers. In an e-mail message to me on July 24, 2007, the author said he would never recommend *Maya* to anyone under fifteen years of age, whereas *Kabalmysteriet* is suitable to anyone over the age of ten. An author’s adult works often throw light on his books for young people, but some authors actually connect their novels for adults and young readers in such a manner that they constitute an interwoven oeuvre that cannot be divided into two separate corpuses. It is obvious that these authors do not draw distinct lines of demarcation between adult and children’s/young adult fiction.

**From Adult Fiction to Children’s Book**

Many so-called children’s books, like Bosco’s bestseller *The Boy and the River*, are actually texts that were originally published for adults. A number of major novelists have published extensively and successfully for children, even though almost all their works were initially targeted at adults. Two of France’s most acclaimed novelists are well known for their “children’s books” that are, for the most part, adult-to-child crossovers. J. M. G. Le Clézio became a literary sensation when he won the prestigious Prix Théophraste Renaudot in 1963, at the age of twenty-three, for his novel, *Le Procès-verbal* (*The minutes*), while Michel Tournier was awarded the Grand Prix du Roman de l’Académie Française and the Prix Goncourt respectively for his first two novels. Nevertheless, they both have quite an extensive list of “children’s books,” which are, in fact, adult texts published for young readers with only paratextual changes. In Le Clézio’s case, all but one of his children’s books initially appeared for adults before being published in children’s editions.

In a 1999 paper, entitled “La littérature jeunesse: littérature ou sous-littérature” (*Children’s literature: literature or sub-literature*), Laurent Chabin, a French Canadian author who writes for both children and adults, expressed his opinion that acclaimed writers who are published for both audiences, like Le Clézio and Daniel Pennac, are not obliged to follow the norms that usually govern children’s literature. In many cases, the initiative for the so-called children’s books by mainstream writers comes from a publisher anxious to capitalize on its stable of most celebrated and bestselling authors. In some cases, it is not so much a commercial endeavour as a sincere attempt to bring together
great authors and young readers. Pierre Marchand, the founder of Gallimard’s children’s division, seems to have truly felt that Le Clézio wrote more for young people than for adults when he suggested that some of his adult works be published for children.

The texts of a large number of children’s books were originally published for adults. It may initially seem surprising that texts written and published for adults have been adapted in picturebook format for even very young children. However, as Jochen Weber of the International Youth Library in Munich points out, closer inspection shows that these texts “fit perfectly.” He sees this as “a completely new facette of the picturebook genre.” Although it may have become a significant, widespread trend only in recent years, it is not a new phenomenon. The examples in the following sections illustrate the variety of ways in which adult fiction has been adapted for children over the past few decades.

The Crossover of Excerpts from Adult Novels and Novellas

Passages are sometimes excerpted from adult novels and published as children’s books. Some authors see this practice of taking a passage from an adult novel and repackaging it for young readers as an effective introduction to longer books. In 1993, Le Clézio expressed his view that this strategy may encourage children to tackle lengthier books, as he felt that children were easily deterred by the number of pages and no longer able to read long novels like *The Three Muskateers*. Although the Harry Potter books have demonstrated that this is certainly no longer the case for millions of children, it is no doubt still a valid argument in many cases. In our multimedia age, where many other forms of entertainment vie for children’s attention, the time devoted to reading may be quite limited. In any case, passages are still being excerpted in this manner. Gallimard adopted this strategy for novels published by both Le Clézio and Tournier in 1980, a few years after the creation of their children’s department.

According to Le Clézio, it was Gallimard who suggested that a passage be taken out of his novel *Désert* (Desert)—which received the Grand Prix Paul Morand of the Académie Française in 1980—and turned into a children’s book in 1985, with the artistic collaboration of the well-known children’s illustrator Georges Lemoine. Although the copyright page indicates that *Balaabilou* is a “nouvelle” (short story) extracted from *Désert*, it is actually an oriental tale—crossover genre par excellence—in the tradition of the *Arabian Nights*, which is embedded in the novel by the anonymous narrator. The tale of “Balaabilou” is told by the old fisherman Naman as he caulks his boat on the beach, to the young heroine Lalla and the other village children who listen spellbound around the fire. *Balaabilou* appeared in a hardback picturebook edition with exquisite illustrations by Georges Lemoine in 1985, and has since been reissued in the Folio Cadet paperback series.
The same strategy had already been successfully applied to one of Tournier’s novels. Contrary to Le Clézio, Tournier claims that it was his own idea to extract the chapter “Barbedor” (“King Goldbeard”) from his novel *Gaspard, Melchior et Balthazar* and publish it separately, again with illustrations by Lemoine, in Gallimard’s children’s series Enfantimages. In this case, the children’s book appeared the same year as the adult novel. Tournier is careful to point out that although it can be read as an autonomous text, “Barbedor,” a tale about succession (it was subtitled “Ou la succession” in the adult novel), was far from superfluous in its original context, a novel about kings. Like *Balaabilou*, *Barbedor* is an oriental tale, one of the seven partially interwoven stories that make up Tournier’s adult version of the story of the Magi. In *The Four Wise Men*, the tale of the mythical king Nabunassar III, known as Barbedor because of his luxuriant golden beard, is told to Herod and his guests by an Indian storyteller, Sangali. When Tournier rewrote the novel for children, both the chapters on “Barbedor” and “Herod” were eliminated, but a footnote was added retrospectively to *Les Rois mages* (1983) to refer its readers to Tournier’s first collection of short stories for children, *Sept contes* (Seven tales, 1984), which included the tale that the author had mentioned only in passing in the novel. Once in the domain of children’s literature, the appropriated tale was targeted at several different age groups, first as a picturebook in the Enfantimages series, then in a collection of short stories for older children in the Folio Junior paperback series, and, most recently, in the Folio Cadet series for young children. Paradoxically, this tale diverted from an adult novel and published for children by an author who seeks to eliminate the boundaries between different categories of readers has been released by his publisher for ever more specific age groups.

Many of Tournier’s novels contain interpolated stories that, according to the author, could be isolated and published for young readers. On more than one occasion, he suggested to me that the two oriental tales intercalated in *The Golden Droplet*, “Barberousse” (Redbeard) and “La Reine blonde” (The blonde queen), would lend themselves to such a transposition. However, he claimed that was not his desire because they do not meet the criteria of the concise, distilled, pure tale that young readers deserve. Almost ten years later, the two tales nonetheless appeared together in a volume of the Folio Junior series that bore only the title *Barberousse* on the cover. Tournier has also mentioned the example of the two tales embedded in the first part of *Le roi des aulnes* (translated in Britain as *The Erl-King* and in the United States as *The Ogre*), his darkest adult novel, but as yet they have not appeared in a children’s edition.

In the case of Valentin Rasputin’s children’s book *Na reke Angare* (On the Angara River), published in 1980, the situation is somewhat different. Although the story is based on a four-and-a-half-page passage from the popular adult novella *Vniz i vverkh po techeniiu* (Downstream, upstream), which appeared in Moscow in 1972, the text was not reproduced unchanged but
underwent some rewriting for the new audience. The excerpt became a thin soft-cover book for young children. Because the rewriting process of the excerpt was not extensive, *Na reke Angare* has been included here rather than in the chapter devoted to the rewriting of texts for another audience. Rasputin was one of the major writers of Russian literature during the Soviet period, and the adult novella deals with the decline of the traditional Russian village in the wake of Soviet “improvements.” Five years after his native Siberian village was flooded as part of a hydroelectric project, the protagonist of “Downstream,” a frustrated writer who has been criticized by the Writers’ Union, travels down the Angara River and recalls moments of his past. Viktor’s most vivid memory, which constitutes an analepsis in the novella, is his nocturnal trip to the river on his sixth birthday to watch the annual breakup of the ice. The narrator explains the significance of this precious memory, which would later become the subject of the children’s book: “Memories linked to the river lived within him distinct from other memories; they lived like a warm, heartfelt sorrow beside which he would often rest and warm himself before moving on. He understood: childhood had preserved them—everything relating to first impressions is preserved for a long time, perhaps forever, but the crux of the matter was that out of many other things childhood had set precisely these apart” (387). The children’s story contains none of the sadness, frustration, and anguish of the novella, as it focuses on the young Viktor and his idyllic, carefree childhood on the Angara River, in particular the anticipation of the ice breakup.

In 2003, an excerpt from John Irving’s adult novel *A Widow for One Year* (1998) was published by Diogenes, with illustrations by the Swiss illustrator Tatjana Hauptmann, as *Ein Geräusch, wie wenn einer versucht, kein Geräusch zu machen*. The picturebook appeared the following year in English, under the title *A Sound Like Someone Trying Not to Make a Sound*. The Swiss publisher suggests that nothing could be more natural than a children’s book by John Irving, in light of the importance of the themes of childhood, adolescence, and coming of age in his adult novels. The blurb on the Diogenes website states that “sometimes children’s stories are hidden within stories for adults—one has only to discover them.” It was Diogenes director Winfried Stephan’s idea to extract from *A Widow for One Year* the “children’s story” that the fictional, unsympathetic children’s author Ted Cole tells his daughter. The rather strange tale deals with the fears that children experience at night. The young protagonist Tom wakes up frightened after hearing a strange noise. Much of the story’s charm derives from the boy’s extraordinarily descriptive imagination, as he attempts to explain to his father what the noise sounded like. After several absurd possibilities, such as “a monster with no arms and no legs,” he describes it as “a sound like someone trying not to make a sound.” His father’s simple explanation—there is a mouse in the wall—reassures Tom, but terrifies his younger brother who doesn’t know what a mouse is and stays awake imagining his own monster. Tatjana Hauptmann, who has been working with Diogenes for many years, was commissioned to do the illustrations for the picturebook.
because they considered her style most in tune with the story. Anna von Planta, editor at Diogenes, told me in an e-mail message on February 5, 2007, that Irving himself loved Hauptmann’s illustrations. In her shadowy, moonlit pencil drawings of Tom wandering through the dark, sleeping house, attentive viewers will notice bulges in the wall and fluttering clothing that suggest hidden horrors in keeping with the boy’s strange descriptions. The Swiss publisher does not specify an age category for the picturebook, but the American publisher indicates ages four and up, and reviews generally recommend it for preschool to about age six. A number of critics feel that the text is too complex for the intended audience, while some also believe that, in spite of the father’s reassuring explanation, there is too much emphasis on frightening details for this age category. In any case, the picturebook that turned Irving into a children’s author has strong appeal with adults.

The Crossover of Novellas for Adults

Sometimes an entire adult novella is repackaged for children. Le Clézio’s *Pawana*, a work originally written for the stage and published for adults in 1992, was reissued for children in 1995, with illustrations by Georges Lemoine. It appeared in Gallimard’s Lecture Junior series for children nine years old and up. The story has been more successful in the children’s edition than in the adult edition, reminding us of the appropriation by young readers of novels such as *Robinson Crusoe* and *Treasure Island*, which Le Clézio himself devoured as a child. The crossover novella *Pawana* reflects the aspiration that Le Clézio has harboured since childhood, that of writing an adventure story in the manner of Jules Verne, Robert-Louis Stevenson, Jack London, and Herman Melville.

*Pawana* combines a quest for treasure reminiscent of Stevenson and a story of nineteenth-century whalers not unlike Melville’s (*pawana* is a Nattick word for whale). Like Captain Achab of *Moby Dick*, the captain of the *Léonore*, based on the historical figure Charles Melville Scammon, is obsessed by a quest, in this case for the secret lagoon in Baja California where the grey whales come year after year to give birth to their young. John of Nantucket embarks, as a cabin boy, on Captain Scammon’s whaler, where he will be initiated not only to his profession as a harpoonist, but also to love (by the native girl Araceli) and death (the massacre of the whales and the murder of Araceli by the Spaniard who had bought her as his mistress and a slave for his prostitutes). The passage to adulthood that Le Clézio depicts in almost all of his fiction explains much of *Pawana*’s appeal for young readers. In his watercolours, Lemoine does not underplay the violence or sex in the text, devoting a troubling doublespread in red hues to the bloody carnage in the lagoon and, a few pages later, presenting a striking nude portrait of Araceli.

Gallimard also published a children’s edition of an adult novella by the celebrated French author Marguerite Yourcenar, who was the first woman to be elected to the Académie Française. In 2003, *Une belle matinée* (A lovely
morning) appeared unchanged for young readers in the Folio Junior series, with illustrations by Lemoine. Previously, the short text of eighty pages had not been published separately, having first appeared, along with Anna, soror ... and Un homme obscur (An obscure man), in Comme l'eau qui coule (Two Lives and a Dream) in 1982, and then subsequently with only Un homme obscur. The novella is a coming-of-age story about Lazare, a twelve-year-old boy, in seventeenth-century Amsterdam, who meets an aging English actor and acquires from him a passion for the theatre, in much the same way that Ling’s meeting with the old artist Wang-Fô gives birth to the young man’s passion for painting in Yourcenar’s tale Comment Wang-Fô fut sauvé (“How Wang-Fo Was Saved”), which will be examined in chapter two. The repackaging for children of adult novellas or excerpts from adult novels is much less common than the publishing of children’s editions of adult short fiction.

The Crossover of Adult Short Fiction

The conciseness of the short story genre lends itself well to a transposition from adult fiction to children’s book, and generally only paratextual changes are made to facilitate the crossover. The French publisher Gallimard used this strategy extensively after the official founding of their children’s department in 1972. A large number of short stories by some of their most renowned authors appeared in the Enfantimages picturebook series, in which “the great writers meet the best illustrators.” The series was created in 1978 to present integral texts by “prestigious authors, illustrated with refinement.” However, it is especially in Folio Junior, a paperback series launched the year before and destined to become the most important illustrated children’s paperback series in France, that the largest number of adult authors were published for children. The attractive Enfantimages series no longer exists, but many of the titles by mainstream authors were picked up in the Folio Cadet softcover series, created in 1983 for ages seven to eleven. Gallimard has continued to publish short stories by major adult authors in many of their children’s series.

Three stories from adult collections by Marcel Aymé were grouped in a volume of Folio Junior in 1980. The title story, “Les bottes de sept lieues” (“The Seven League Boots”) as well as “Le Proverbe” (The proverb) were taken from the well-known adult short story collection Le passe-muraille (The man who could pass through walls), published in 1943. The title tale was no doubt chosen to facilitate the crossover, by linking the volume to the world of fairy tales. The young protagonist and his friends dream of possessing the boots in the window of an eccentric shopkeeper, convinced that they are the magic seven-league boots of fairy-tale fame. Antoine’s poor, unwed mother (the French term fille-mère, literally girl-mother, implies that she is a kind of child-adult), who is treated like a child and marginalized by the other parents but shares a special relationship with her son (friend as well as mother), is the parent who ultimately buys the coveted boots because she can share her son’s dreams. The magical
ending of the tale suggests the superiority of the child’s view of life, which does not distinguish between reality and fantasy, over the adult’s rationalistic view. The other story, “A et B” (A and B), was excerpted from *Le puits aux images* (The well of images, 1932). In Aymé’s work, there is no division between writing for adults and writing for children. As he puts it, a book that is “deadly boring for middle-aged people is for children as well.”

Marguerite Yourcenar’s tale “Notre-Dame-des-Hirondelles” (“Our-Lady-of-the-Swallows”) appeared as a picturebook with illustrations by Georges Lemoine in 1982. The tale was taken from her well-known collection *Nouvelles orientales* (*Oriental Tales*), originally published more than forty years earlier in 1938. Contrary to her tale “How Wang-Fo Was Saved,” “Our-Lady-of-the-Swallows” was not rewritten to adapt it to a young audience. Although this would seem to suggest that the author felt the text was already perfectly accessible to a child, in actual fact, this picturebook seems to have had a rather limited success with young readers. Unlike most of the titles in the Enfantsimages series, *Notre-Dame-des-Hirondelles* was not reissued in any of Gallimard’s other children’s series. In a letter to Lemoine in 1980, the author expressed her pleasure that the illustrator liked “Wang-Fo,” which he had illustrated the previous year, enough to want to illustrate her work further. It seems that Lemoine had hoped to persuade Gallimard to publish an illustrated edition of the entire volume of tales, which had been reissued in the L’Imaginaire series in 1978. It was no doubt this adult edition that gave Pierre Marchand the idea of publishing Yourcenar in picturebook format. Lemoine felt that several stories in *Oriental Tales* especially deserved to appear in an illustrated version. One of those tales was “Le dernier amour du prince Genghi” (“The Last Love of Prince Genji”), but Yourcenar expressed her doubt that it was suitable for the Enfantsimages series due to the rather sophisticated psychology of love. The idea of having other tales appear in an illustrated edition nonetheless appealed to the author, presumably because they would attract a wider audience. *Notre-Dame-des-Hirondelles* appeared two years later, but no further tales from *Oriental Tales* have been illustrated.

*Notre-Dame-des-Hirondelles* is a mythological tale inspired by the enchanting name of a small Greek chapel. Lemoine’s illustrations for this text, with the decorated initial and framed pages richly adorned with birds and flowers, were inspired by illuminated manuscripts from the monasteries of Mount Athos. The beautiful initial letter of the first page is formed by an image of the monk Thérapion, who is the tale’s protagonist. Like Wang-Fô, *Notre-Dame-des-Hirondelles* presents a very old protagonist, which is not generally the case in children’s tales. There are nonetheless child characters with whom young readers can identify: the boys who spy on the Nymphs or the children who are their victims. In spite of their women’s bodies, which so disturb Thérapion, the Nymphs themselves resemble children, and that is how the Virgin Mary envisages them when she turns them into swallows in order to protect them from the monk who is determined to annihilate them. The fairy-tale qualities
of Yourcenar’s tale, including the metamorphosis of the Nymphs, appeal strongly to young readers. At the same time, “Our-Lady-of-the Swallows” has a sensuality that was rare in children’s books in the early 1980s. The author made no attempt to mitigate the sexual discourse for the children’s edition; the nymphs disturb the monk like a “flock of prostitutes,” and even the Virgin Mary is described in a sensual manner. In his visual interpretation of the text, Lemoine does not try to tone down the sensuality, on the contrary. The fact that this tale has had less success in the children’s edition than the story of Wang-Fo may simply be because it shocked adult readers, who considered it inappropriate for a young readership.

Seven of the fourteen stories in Tournier’s adult short story collection *Le Coq de bruyère* (*The Fetishist*, 1978) were eventually published for children, either individually and/or in the children’s collection *Sept contes* (Seven tales, 1984). *The Fetishist* is a collection of “contes et récits” (tales and stories), but the texts that appeared in the children’s anthology were selected only from the *contes*, a genre Tournier feels is especially appropriate for children. Several of the stories from *Le Coq de bruyère* that were repackaged for children will be examined in a subsequent section, as they had previously been published in magazines. Like a number of other tales, *Que ma joie demeure* (“Jesu, Joy of Man’s Desiring”) was published for children both as a picturebook and in the collection *Sept contes*. For young readers, the title may have a familiar ring, but probably only older readers will recognize the allusion to Bach’s celebrated composition. Tournier tells the story of a young musician of great promise whose family name, Bidoche, seems tragically to predestine him for a career as a musical clown and to preclude that of a great musician, even though his given name, Raphael, places him under the protection of the most melodious of the archangels. The tale ends with Bidoche the clown fervently playing Bach’s famous chorale on a battered old piano in front of a silent circus crowd, spellbound by the divine melody. “La Fin de Robinson” (“The End of Robinson”), Tournier’s third Robinsonnade, was also reissued in the children’s anthology. Modelled, not on Defoe’s novel, but on Saint-John Perse’s *Images à Crusoe* (Images to Crusoe), it is the depressing, cynical story of Robinson as an old man and a drunkard who has become part of the local folklore back home, forty years after his shipwreck. Of all the tales republished for children in *Sept contes*, “The End of Robinson” is the only one that has not been published separately as a picturebook, suggesting that it has the least appeal for young readers.

Almost all the titles in Le Clézio’s corpus for young readers are taken from two short story collections. The idea of publishing some of his works for children appealed to Le Clézio, whose goal had always been to address everyone. As in the case of Tournier’s *The Fetishist*, four short stories from Le Clézio’s *Mondo et autres histoires* (Mondo and other stories, 1978), published the same year, were eventually issued separately in children’s editions. The first story chosen to cross over in 1980 was *Lullaby*, which, like Tournier’s first children’s book *Amandine ou les deux jardins* (“Amandine, or The Two Gardens,” 1977),
is the story of a young girl’s initiation. With the exception of *Lullaby*, which is longer than the others, Gallimard has published Le Clézio’s short stories in pairs in the Folio Junior series. *Celui qui n’avait jamais vu la mer* (The boy who had never seen the sea) is the only title that appears on the cover of a volume that also contains “La montagne du dieu vivant” (The mountain of the living god). Daniel, the young protagonist of the first story, dreams of the sea and wishes his name was Daniel Sinbad. When the hero and his treasured book about the voyages of Sinbad disappear one day without a trace, the boy does indeed become, in the eyes of his classmates, Daniel Sinbad, a legendary figure whose fictitious voyages haunt their imagination. Like the first story, “La montagne du dieu vivant” is an initiatory tale that deals with a boy’s coming of age, in this case a young Icelandic boy, Jon, who encounters a luminous, smiling child, not unlike certain images of Buddha, on the summit of Reydarbarmur Mountain. Jon’s spiritual adventure provides an excellent example of the encounter with the “other side” of reality that Le Clézio wishes to offer all his readers, both young and old. Le Clézio obviously felt that other stories from *Mondo* had crossover potential. In a letter to Georges Lemoine in 1990, Le Clézio suggested the possibility of illustrating “Hazaran” or “La roue d’eau” (The water wheel), both set in North Africa, for the Folio Junior series. According to Lemoine, Gallimard will finally publish an illustrated edition of *Mondo* in 2008.50

Several short stories were also excerpted from a second collection of short stories for adults, *La ronde et autres faits divers* (The round and other trivial events), published in 1982. In 1990, *Peuple du ciel* (Sky people), a beautiful tale from *Mondo* about a blind Hopi girl, and *La grande vie* (The good life), an initiatory story from *La ronde* about twin French girls who run away, were packaged together in the paperback series. The following year, *Peuple du ciel* was also published separately in the same collection as *Balaabilou*, with stunning illustrations by Lemoine. The letters Le Clézio sent to Lemoine in 1988 and 1990, which the illustrator kindly shared with me, show how seriously the author took the matter of addressing the story to a young audience in picture-book format.

The stories mentioned thus far were published in children’s editions in France in the 1970s and 1980s, all by the important publishing house Gallimard. Similar projects were occurring in many countries, however. Some of the adult short stories published in picturebook editions for children are extremely challenging. That is the case for “Fita verde no cabelo” (Green ribbon in the hair), a retelling of the story of Little Red Riding Hood by the internationally renowned Brazilian author João Guimarães Rosa. The story was included in *Ave, palavra*, a posthumous collection of poems, tales, and meditations published for adults in 1970. The text had clearly not been written for children, as it first appeared in the literary supplement of the newspaper *O Estado de S. Paulo* on February 8, 1964, just a few months prior to the author’s death. In 1992, the story was extracted from the adult collection and issued as a picturebook with illustrations by Roger Mello. The illustrated edition was undertaken
by the Brazilian scholar Gloria Pondé, to mark the twenty-fifth anniversary of
the death of a major author who had never distinguished between young and
adult audiences. Mello was an appropriate choice as illustrator because he
believes that a good story should always interest adults as well as children.51

Guimarães Rosa is a difficult author even for adults, so *Fita verde no cabelo*
is a very challenging text for young readers, even with the assistance of Mello’s
visual interpretation. The words “nova velha estória” (new old story), which
appear in parentheses under the title of “Fita verde no cabelo” in *Ave, palavra*,
receive the status of a subtitle in the picturebook. They alert readers to the
intertextual play in this story about a little girl who is called Green Ribbon (*Fita-
Verde*) because she wears an imaginary green ribbon in her hair. In this enig-
matic retelling, Guimarães Rosa approaches the story of Little Red Riding Hood
from an existentialist perspective, and Mello deliberately highlights this aspect
of the text in his illustrations for the 1992 edition, even though it is targeted at
young readers. In the crucial bed scene, Green Ribbon confronts death in the
form of her grandmother, and experiences the angst that results from sudden
awareness of the absurd human condition. Young readers will not understand
all the levels of meaning in Guimarães Rosa’s sophisticated retelling (nor will
many cultivated adults), but it illustrates how complex metaphysical issues can
be communicated to readers of all ages through a familiar tale like “Little Red
Riding Hood.”

The German-speaking market also offers examples of adult short fiction
repackaged for children. The picturebook *Einer, der nichts merkte* (The man
who noticed nothing), illustrated by Käthi Bhend, was published in 2003 by
Atlantis in Switzerland. It is an excerpt from the prose text “Lampe, Papier und
Handschuh” (Lamp, paper and glove), which the Swiss modernist writer Robert
Walser published for adults in *Der Spaziergang* (The Walk) in 1917. Walser is
considered a major writer throughout continental Europe, but he is virtually
unknown in the English-speaking world and the picturebook did not appear in
an English translation. A master of short fiction, Walser wrote miniature texts
in terse, solid prose, so it is perhaps not surprising that Bhend conceived the idea
of illustrating this text for children. However, the whimsical story of a strange,
distracted man who is completely unaware of everything around him, including
his wife and children, seems little suited to children. There is even an allusion
to his ignored wife’s adulterous behaviour. Bhend’s dreamy, rather surreal
illustrations render, in a sophisticated and evocative manner, the apparently
simple narrative of a man who becomes increasingly detached from the world
around him, eventually disappearing completely. The use of traditional plano-
graph technique, in which colours are printed separately, makes each book “an
original,” as the publisher points out on the copyright page. Today the use of
this technique in books is rare, but it has been used to great effect in a number
of recent German-language books, whose high aesthetic quality is appreciated
by readers of all ages. The age recommendation is six years and up, and the
picturebook is promoted “for all ages.” The publisher places this picturebook in
what they call a “typical Swiss literary tradition,” one that includes the “children’s stories” by Peter Bichsel and Jürg Schubiger, texts that appeal to adults as well as children. While most critics think Bhend’s illustrations make the text accessible to children, at least one reviewer wonders if such a “rarity” as this “Robert Walser picturebook” can really find a permanent place in children’s literature.52

In the charming picturebook *Die Prinzessin kommt um vier* (The princess comes at four, 2000), the well-known illustrator Rotraut Susanne Berner illustrates a parable by the German author Wolfdietrich Schnurre. He was one of the founding members of the famous Gruppe 47, a post-war literary association in Germany that included such well-known authors as Heinrich Böll, Gunter Grass, and Erich Kästner. In addition to numerous short stories and other texts for adults, Schnurre began, in the 1960s, to write children’s books, which he partially illustrated himself. The short story, originally titled simply “Die Prinzessin,” was published for adults in 1959 in the volume *Das Los unserer Stadt* (The lot of our city). Again, this is not a story that would seem particularly appropriate for children. As in Walser and Bhend’s picturebook, the protagonist is a man rather than a child, although his short stature and his clothes give him a childlike look in Berner’s illustrations. For contemporary German readers, the rhythmic text has a very special tone that is elegant and somewhat old-fashioned, as is the protagonist himself.53 It is, as the new subtitle, “Eine Liebesgeschichte,” indicates, “a love story,” although it is by no means an ordinary love story. This startling, unsentimental love story between a bachelor and a lonely female hyena who claims to be an enchanted princess, is illustrated with humour and tenderness by Berner. Like Bhend’s illustrations for Walser’s text, Berner’s also use original planograph technique, and the exceptional aesthetic quality of this picturebook adds to its appeal with young and old alike. Berner seems to situate the picturebook in a crossover context by filling the protagonist’s library with books by authors read by both children and adults, for example, Calvino, Carroll, Grimm, London, Melville, and Orwell. A copy of *Alice in Wonderland* lies conspicuously on the floor by the bookshelf, emblematic of the strange world into which this story draws young and old alike, while the copy of the Grimms’ fairy tales on the couch suggests that this strange love story is a fairy tale for all ages.

The preceding examples constitute only a very small sampling of the many adult tales and short stories that have been repackaged for children. While some works cross over to very young children in picturebook format, others appear in juvenile collections of short fiction for older readers. As in the case of several of Tournier’s stories, some adult texts appear in multiple formats for young readers of different age groups.
The Crossover of Stories from Magazines, Journals, and Newspapers

Stories published for adults in magazines, literary journals, or newspapers sometimes appear subsequently for young readers. An early example of this transposition in England is Reverend Charles Kingsley’s children’s novel *The Water-Babies: A Fairy Tale for a Land-Baby*, which was written in 1862–63 as a serial for *Macmillan’s Magazine*. Kingsley’s satirical views seem to be aimed at the readers of *Macmillan’s Magazine* rather than at children, although the story of Tom the chimney sweep was written for his four-year-old son. Published in its entirety as a children’s novel in 1863, it was very popular and remained a mainstay of children’s literature well into the twentieth century.

A similar phenomenon occurred in nineteenth-century America. Several works by Samuel Clemens, who wrote under the pen name Mark Twain, were serialized in magazines before appearing in book form. When Twain began *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* (1876), he did not consider that he was writing for children. After William Dean Howells, editor of the *Atlantic Monthly*, convinced him that it was a boys’ book, the author promoted it as a book for readers of all ages. Although sales of *Tom Sawyer* were initially rather lukewarm, by the time of the author’s death it was both a bestseller and an American classic. A sequel, *Tom Sawyer, Detective* (1896), was serialized in *Harper’s Magazine*, which Twain considered to be one of the most important forums for his work. Like *Tom Sawyer*, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* also appealed equally to children and adults. Excerpts were first published in serialized form in *The Century Magazine* in 1884–85 and the following year it appeared in book form as the first production of Clemens’s own publishing company. Unlike *Tom Sawyer*, in which a mature narrator recalls his youth, *Huckleberry Finn* is narrated in the first person by the teenage Huck, which increases its appeal for young readers. Generally considered to be Twain’s masterpiece, the book has never been out of print and has sold well over twenty million copies in over fifty languages. Clemens consistently refused to write exclusively for one audience or the other.

In the twentieth century, many children’s books had their origins in adult texts originally published in newspapers, journals, or magazines. Italo Calvino’s Marcovaldo stories offer a unique variation on this type of crossover. The first stories were published in the daily Communist newspaper *L’Unità* between 1952 and 1956 for a general adult readership. In 1963, additional stories, written specifically for children, were published in the leading children’s newspaper *Il Corriere dei Piccoli*. Later Calvino collected all of the Marcovaldo stories, wrote four more, and published them in a volume in 1963. The book was published in two different versions, an edition for adults and an illustrated edition for children. Calvino’s Marcovaldo stories were therefore written and published for both adult and child readerships.

Several of Tournier’s texts initially crossed over in this manner, including “Amandine ou les deux jardins” (“Amandine, or The Two Gardens”), one of his
most popular tales, and, in the author’s view, one of his best works. “Amandine” appeared in the magazine *Elle* in 1974, before being published for children by Editions G. P. Rouge et Or in 1977, with illustrations by Joëlle Boucher. It was the author’s first work to appear for a dual readership of children and adults. A year after the picturebook was published, Tournier included “Amandine” in his adult collection *The Fetishist*, where it was subtitled “an initiatory tale.” Without understanding the transformation, the ten-year-old protagonist experiences the onset of menstruation, a scene that the author anticipated would cause the “censors to murmur in protest.” For the most part, however, the sexual initiation is presented indirectly, through the maturation of Amandine’s two cats, who turn out to be female cats in spite of their androgynous names. Only young readers who are emotionally ready will decode the subtle sign that Amandine has reached puberty.

Another of Tournier’s well-known children’s stories, “La Fugue du petit Poucet” (“Tom Thumb Runs Away”), was also originally published in *Elle* in 1972, under a slightly different title. It subsequently followed the opposite route to “Amandine,” appearing for adults in *The Fetishist* a year before it came out as a children’s book in 1979, with illustrations by Alain Gauthier. “Tom Thumb Runs Away” offers a modern, provocative, and, for some, scandalous reading of Perrault’s well-known tale, a homage to the author who appears at the head of the novelist’s list of the world’s greatest writers. Tournier has said that he would gladly trade all of the theatre of the great French classic dramatist Pierre Corneille for Perrault’s “Puss in Boots.” In his subversive retelling of “Little Thumbling,” Pierre Poucet abandons his insensitive Parisian parents and runs away to the forest, where he is taken in by M. Logre (from l’ogre, “the ogre” in French) and his seven charming daughters. Tournier’s ogre is a gentle, androgynous hippy-like figure who promotes vegetarianism, ecology, and pacifism, and frightens adults rather than children.

Thus “Amandine” and “Tom Thumb Runs Away” were not only published as children’s books after appearing in an adult magazine, but they were also issued in collections of short fiction for adults. Nor was that the end of their crossover. Subsequently they both appeared in collections for children, first in the paperback *Sept contes*, then in *Le miroir à deux faces* (The mirror with two sides, 1994), a lavish picturebook published by Seuil Jeunesse with sumptuous illustrations by Alain Gauthier. The tale “Le Miroir à deux faces” appeared in a journal before it became the title tale of the picturebook of the same name and was therefore previously familiar only to a very limited adult audience. The author also told me he was considering including it in an adult version of *La couleuvrine*, thus reversing the procedure that had produced *Barbedor*. Tournier is a master at recycling his fiction for readers of all ages.

Robert Cormier’s anthology *Eight Plus One*, published for young adults in 1980, contains short stories that originally appeared in such publications as the *Saturday Evening Post*, *The Sign*, and *Redbook*. In later years, many of the stories in the collection were published in school textbooks and anthologies for young
readers. A series of monthly stories that Bart Moeyaert wrote about his six older brothers and himself for the *Nieuw Wereldtijdschrift* (New World Magazine), the leading literary journal of Flanders, and the newspaper *De Standaard der Letteren*, were later adapted for the stage before being published, in 2000, as a young adult book entitled *Broere: de oudste, de stilste, de echte, de verste, de liefste, de snelste en ik* (*Brothers: the oldest, the quietest, the realest, the farthest, the nicest, the fastest, and I*). In 2001, the book won the Woutertje Pieterse Prize, which is awarded to the best young people’s literary book in the Dutch language. The prize and the foundation that awards it were established by a number of critics who felt that children’s books should be assessed with the same criteria as adult literature. Woutertje Pieterse is the name of the eponymous child protagonist of a famous nineteenth-century Dutch novel for adults. The crossover appeal of Moeyaert’s work is indicated by the success of both the book and the stage production, in which the author himself played the narrator. A CD with the studio recording of the theatre production was sold with the first edition of the book, and, by popular demand, it was again included with the fifth edition.

For the most part, the short fiction considered thus far was all written, illustrated, and published in the same country. That is not always the case, however. Some adult texts spawn picturebooks in other countries. The text of the award-winning picturebook *La composición* (*The Composition*), published in 2000, was written for adults by the Chilean author Antonio Skármeta, under the title “Tema de clase” (*Class topic*), at the height of Pinochet’s military dictatorship in Chile in the late 1970s. The first version was published in a Sunday edition of the French newspaper *Le Monde*, but subsequently appeared in newspapers in many other countries, as well as in short story collections for adults. A radio version of the story was selected “Radio Drama of the Month” in Germany, where Skármeta spent many years in exile, and was also a finalist in the Prix Italia. In an article entitled “Cuando la ficción nace del infierno” (*When fiction is born of hell*), the author says that he would like *The Composition* to be read as fiction, but states that compositions of this type were quite common and are remembered by adults who were children under Pinochet’s reign. Although the text was originally published for adults, the author seems to address his Chilean compatriots of all ages. The idea of turning the story into a children’s book originated with Verónica Uribe, co-founder of Ediciones Ekaré, the first Venezuelan publishing house to specialize in children’s books. The author made minor changes to the text for the picturebook edition, which is recommended for nine years and up. The terrifying impact of a repressive dictatorship on children and their families is powerfully presented in deceptively simple prose, which is quite accessible to children. *The Composition* won the 2003 UNESCO Prize for Children’s and Young People’s Literature in the Service of Tolerance in the category of books for children under thirteen years of age. Skármeta demonstrates that political reality can be dealt with very successfully in a picturebook, just as Roberto Innocenti does in *Rosa*
Blanca, in which a German girl discovers the horror of Nazi concentration camps. The Spanish artist Alfonso Ruano uses a stark, harsh hyperrealism, not unlike that of Innocenti’s, in his edgy, detailed illustrations that create a dramatic, tension-filled atmosphere into which readers of all ages are drawn.

Specific commissions by journals or magazines have resulted in a number of successful crossover texts. Although Tournier feels that children should be given contes rather than nouvelles, since the latter is a “brutal, realistic genre” that lacks profound meaning, he nonetheless includes two nouvelles from The Fetishist in children’s editions. The first was “L’aïre du Muguet” (“The Lily of the Valley Rest Area”), which appeared in 1982, prior to his collection of contes for children, in the Folio Junior series with illustrations by Georges Lemoine. The story was the result of a disconcerting commission the author received from a luxury magazine requesting a page based on an aerial photograph of a highway that cut through rural Normandy. It is the story of Pierre, a twenty-year-old long-haul trucker who, at a truck stop, sees Marinette in a field on the other side of the fence that separates their worlds. Hoping to meet her, he leaves his world of the highway to take the small country roads of her world, with tragic results. The rather lengthy, 71-page story, with its adult protagonist and tragic ending, tends to be read by older children.

L’homme qui plantait des arbres (The Man Who Planted Trees) was the result of a commission that Jean Giono, a member of the prestigious Académie Goncourt, received in 1953 from The Reader’s Digest to write a story for their series “The Most Unforgettable Character I’ve Met.” Giono tells the story of a gentle shepherd, Elzéard Bouffier, who, throughout two world wars, continues patiently and persistently to plant trees, miraculously transforming a desolate, barren landscape into one filled with renewed life and hope. The story has a rather unusual publication history. When the publisher, who wanted a true story, objected to Giono’s fictional piece, the author waived his rights, making the story available to anyone who wished to publish it. In March 1954, it appeared in Vogue as “The Man Who Planted Hope and Grew Happiness.” Within a few years, the story had been translated into more than a dozen languages, and was inspiring reforestation efforts around the world. The Man Who Planted Trees is a simple, timeless ecological fable that demonstrates, in a powerful and unforgettable manner, what one person can do to save the earth. Although Giono is the author of a large body of acclaimed adult fiction, he is probably best known to English-language readers for this relatively short story that has been published for both children and adults. The first trade edition of The Man Who Planted Trees was published in the United States by Chelsea Green in 1985, and since that time it has sold more than a quarter of a million copies. To mark National Arbor Day 2005 in the United States, Chelsea Green released a special twentieth anniversary edition with a new foreword by Wangari Maathai, winner of the 2004 Nobel Peace Prize and founder of the African Green Belt Movement. When the Guardian in Britain asked well-known authors, prior to Christmas 2006, what book they would recommend as the • Crossover Fiction
“greatest gift,” Michael Morpurgo chose *The Man Who Planted Trees*, which he had read as a young man. Paradoxically, Giono’s internationally acclaimed story was not well known in France until it was published for children by Gallimard in 1983. *The Man Who Planted Trees* has been far more successful as a children’s book than the only text Giono wrote specifically for young readers, *Le petit garçon qui avait envie d’espace* (The little boy who longed for space), commissioned by a Swiss chocolate company in 1949. The highly acclaimed Canadian animated short children’s film adapted from *The Man Who Planted Trees* by Frédéric Back in 1987 (the film won an Oscar that year) undoubtedly helped to turn the adult short story into a very successful crossover work. A children’s edition was published with Back’s pastel and pencil drawings for the film in 1989.

“Auggie Wren’s Christmas Story,” published in *The New York Times* by Paul Auster on Christmas Day 1990, is an unusual, highly unsentimental Christmas story, told to the narrator of the frame story by a colourful character who works in a cigar shop. In 1998, the French author-illustrator Jean Claverie illustrated the tale for children, and, in 2003, the publisher Sudamericana brought out the innovative picturebook *El cuento de Navidad de Auggie Wren*, illustrated by the acclaimed Argentine illustrator Isol. Despite the shift in target audience, the textual layering becomes even more complex in the Argentine picturebook, because the illustrations are inspired not only by Auster’s tale, but also by Wayne Wang’s award-winning 1995 film adaptation, *Smoke*, which was an enormous box-office success in Europe and Asia. Adults who are familiar with the film will recognize the actors William Hurt and Harvey Keitel in Isol’s caricatural representation of the main characters. A more subtle allusion to the film is found in her palette, composed mainly of various shades of brown that evoke a smoke-filled atmosphere. Although Isol has said that she does not work with children in mind because she cannot know what they think, she admits that her own child influences her work. For some critics, Isol’s collaboration makes *Auggie Wren’s Christmas Story* a children’s book (it is recommended for nine years and up), while for others, Auster’s text makes this book too difficult for children. The English edition, which appeared in 2004, is rightly catalogued as general fiction by Henry Holt, because readers of all ages will return to the charming parable Christmas after Christmas. Isol’s playful and quirky, yet sophisticated and thoughtful treatment of Auster’s text results in a picturebook with strong crossover appeal.

One very unusual example of this type of crossover can be found in the writing of the highly regarded Danish author Louis Jensen, who began his career writing experimental poetry for adults. In 1983, he wrote his first children’s story, and he now writes for children, young adults, and adults. Although Jensen’s work is crossover literature, it is not generally discussed as such. His magnum opus is a collection of 1001 short stories, reminiscent of *The Thousand and One Nights*. Some of these stories are published monthly in a magazine directed primarily at adults, but in book format they are published for children.
The author’s intention is to publish ten volumes of one hundred stories each, plus one additional story. To date, Jensen has published six volumes of one hundred stories each; the first, titled simply *Hundrede historier* (A hundred stories), appeared in 1992, while the most recent, *Hundrede helt & aldeles firkantede historier* (A hundred completely and entirely square stories), was published in 2007. Lise Kildegaard published translations of three square stories from the fourth volume in a 2007 issue of *Translations*, an academic journal that does not typically publish children’s literature. Jensen has created a new subgenre, the quintessential short story. Each of Jensen’s hundreds of stories is composed of a few sentences arranged in the shape of a perfect square in the centre of a page. Story and graphic design are intimately linked in these poems that give a modern form and new meaning to the literary tradition of the fairy tale. There is something for everyone in these magical stories, with their wide range of tones (from absurd to serious) and subjects (from rubber boots to giants). Children and adults alike will delight in the love story about a small loaf of rye bread and a French baguette. Rather than writing in “a particularly child-orientated way,” Jensen strives for “that combination of simplicity and complexity which would enable anyone to read the story. Children and adults.” Jensen himself acknowledges that his square stories are enjoyed by multiple audiences. Accompanied by two musicians, the author does readings intended for adults.

Stories published for adults in magazines, journals, and newspapers have resulted in a wide variety of children’s stories, many published in picturebook format. Often these texts cross cultural borders in the crossover process. Giono’s story was written for the adult readers of an American magazine, but became a children’s film in Canada and a children’s book in France. Skármata’s story was first published for adults in a French newspaper, then became a radio drama in Germany, before being published for children as a picturebook in both France and Venezuela. Auster’s story was published in an American newspaper, but appeared as a picturebook in Argentina. In the case of these texts, the crossover from adult to child does not result from the crossing of cultural borders, as it does with some of the works discussed in chapter six. After its publication for children in Argentina, the picturebook *Auggie Wren’s Christmas Story* was published with equal success in the English-speaking market.

The Crossover of Adult Poetry and Songs

Many poets are read by a wide crossover audience. This is particularly true of well-known poets published for adults. A notable nineteenth-century example is Edgar Allan Poe, who even managed to cross cultural borders as a crossover poet. In many cases, major national poets are read by all ages, sometimes even by more than one language group. Johan Ludvig Runeberg, a nineteenth-century Finno-Swedish poet, is considered the national poet of Finland, where he is read by all ages. Many adult poets have been deliberately published for children, either in anthologies or separately in picturebook format. That is
the case for the popular French poet Jacques Prévert, who was always a great favourite with teenagers in the Francophone world. Since his death in 1977, Prévert’s poetry has been the object of numerous books for very young readers. The following examples demonstrate the diverse ways in which poetry initially published for adults has crossed over to a young audience.

Tournier adds Victor Hugo to the list of “masters” who represent his literary ideal, that is, “authors who never write for children,” but who “write so well that children can read them.” In a rather unusual example of another author’s text appearing in a compilation of short stories by a single author, Tournier includes Hugo’s “L’Aigle du casque” (“The Eagle on the Helmet”)—part of the famous epic La Légende des siècles (The Legend of the Centuries)—along with his retelling, “Angus,” in the children’s collection Les contes du médianoche (Tales of the midnight love feast). A rereading of the poem on the hundredth anniversary of Hugo’s death in 1985 inspired Tournier to write the tale “Angus” to fill in an important “blank” left by the poet. Angus was first published as a children’s book in 1988, with illustrations by Pierre Joubert and an afterword in which the author explains its genesis and begs Hugo’s spirit to forgive the poetic licence he has taken in a tale meant to be “a humble act of homage to the greatest of all French poets” (Midnight 163). The afterword was appended to the tale, in the form of a long note, in both of Tournier’s collections, thus inviting adult and juvenile audiences alike to read or reread the poem that had inspired “Angus.” However, by including Hugo’s poem in the children’s collection and thus facilitating a comparative reading of the original and the hypertext, Tournier creates a text which has, in the author’s own words, “pedagogical” potential.

The works of numerous celebrated poets for adults have found their way into children’s literature many years after their initial publication. My Life with the Wave, based on a surrealist prose poem by the acclaimed Mexican poet Octavio Paz, was translated and adapted for children by Catherine Cowan and published in the United States in 1997, a few years after he had won the Nobel Prize. In the poem, which first appeared in the collection ¿Aguila o sol? (Eagle or Sun?) in 1951, a man, while at the beach, is seduced by an ocean wave that insists on following him home to Mexico City. Their turbulent love affair turns ugly after the wave nearly drowns him; when the cold weather turns her into “a statue of ice,” he sells the frozen wave to a barman friend who chops up the ice to keep bottles cold. In Paz’s fantastic prose poem, the wave is a metaphorical image of a woman in love. In the picturebook, the man is replaced by a boy who takes the she-wave home as a pet, but she proves to be an unpredictable playmate. Buehner’s dynamic and dramatic spreads in rich oil and acrylic paint convey the power and movement of the free-spirited blue-green wave. The story loses its anguish and cruelty in Cowan’s adaptation, because, although the boy gets angry with the wave, he is quite sad when the statue of ice is merely returned to the sea. Cowan renders the ending even more reassuring for children by adding a final scene in which the boy, who misses his capricious friend, dreams of
bringing home a cloud. For the attentive viewer, however, the illustrator adds
a disturbing note in a visual detail that will bring a smile to the lips of adult
co-readers. As the boy imagines “soft and cuddly” clouds that would be much
better behaved than a wave, decidedly ominous shapes appear in a patch of sky
glimpsed through a window.

In 1996, Beltz & Gelberg started the current German trend of publishing
adult poetry for children with a series of picturebooks based on poems by the
Austrian poet Ernst Jandl and illustrated by the German illustrator Norman
Junge. One of the most important German-language lyric poets of our time,
Jandl is considered to be the founder of German nonsense poetry. He plays
with the German language in many different ways, often on the level of single
letters or phonemes. Jandl’s minimalist poems are simple enough for the earliest
readers. However, since most of his poems are better heard than read, they are
ideal as picturebook texts for pre-readers. In the final years of his life, Jandl
seems to have taken an interest in children’s books, working with Junge on the
picturebooks. The first poem to undergo this transformation was *Immer höher*
(Higher and higher, 1996), an accumulative poem in which a man stands on an
armchair, the armchair on the table, the table on the house, the house on a
mountain, the mountain on the world, and the world on the night. Junge’s
illustrations of a little man in a suit standing very straight on the armchair as
objects climb one on top of another are quite comical for readers of all ages.

The next picturebook, *Fünfter sein* (Fifth), based on a 1970 poem by Jandl,
acted a great deal of attention when it was published in 1997. It appeared in
English as *Next Please* in 2001 in Britain and in 2003 in the United States. Junge
had originally created the images when the poem was made into an animated
film for television in 1993. The book won the international Bologna Ragazzi
award in 1998 and was also nominated for the Deutscher Jugendliteraturpreis.
Five broken toys sit on straight-backed wooden chairs in a dark waiting room,
lit only by a bare, swinging light bulb. They apprehensively wait their turn to
go through a mysterious closed door, from which light pours each time it opens
to allow a repaired toy to exit and a new patient to enter. With remarkable
simplicity and sobriety, the author and illustrator create the atmosphere of
anxiety and apprehension that pervades a doctor’s waiting room. The illustrator
humorously captures the range of emotions of an anxious child on the faces and
in the body language of the waiting toys. Only when the fifth and last toy, a
Pinocchio puppet with a broken nose, is called, is the viewers’ perspective
shifted to allow them to see inside a brightly lit office where a jolly doctor smiles
reassuringly at his next patient in front of shelves of toy parts. The text is com-
plemented perfectly by Junge’s rather ominous, yet comical pen and coloured-
pencil art that uses cross-hatching as well as varying degrees of light and shadow
to create a very atmospheric story.

Jandl’s third poem to be published as a picturebook by Beltz & Gelberg was
*Antipoden: Auf der anderen Seite der Welt* (Antipodes: On the other side of the
world, 1999). The picturebook suggests how easy it is to reach the people on
the opposite side of the earth: by going straight down. Instead of going higher
and higher, Jandl goes lower and lower in this poem: under several sheets of
paper is a table, then a floor, then a room, then a cellar, then a globe, then a
ceiling, then a room, then a floor, then a table, then sheets of paper. Junge’s illus-
trations once again place the poem in a child’s context. The cover illustration
depicts a little girl who has sawed a hole in her floor and seems to have come up
under the feet of the kangaroo with boxing gloves that is pictured beside her.
Jandl’s most famous poem, “Ottos Mops,” which was written in 1963, appeared
as a picturebook in 2001, a year after the poet’s death. This dazzling masterpiece,
about the dog Mops and his master Otto, uses only the vowel “o.” The challenge
of translating such a poem no doubt explains why the picturebook has not
appeared in English. However, in order to honour what would have been Jandl’s
eightieth birthday in 2005, a competition was held to find the best English
translation of “Otto’s Mops.” The popularity of the poem was indicated by
the number of submissions that poured in from all corners of the globe, and
not only in English. The poems were judged according to “their respect of the
single-vowel principal, basic narrative thrust and general Mopsian spirit.” The
title of the winning poem was “Fritz’s Bitch,” by Brian Murdoch, while the
runners up were “Prue’s Poodle,” “Mao’s Chow,” and “Doug’s Pug,” any of
which respect more faithfully Jandl’s wordplay than the title “Bob’s Pug,” which
appears on the Beltz & Gelberg website.

In 1998, one year before the 250th anniversary of Germany’s most important
poet, the children’s publisher Carl Hanser published the picturebook Das
Hexen-Einmal-Eins (The Witch’s One-Time-One), an excerpt from the tragedy
Faust, Goethe’s most famous work and, according to many, the greatest work
of German literature, illustrated by one of Germany’s best loved illustrators,
Wolf Erlbruch. In the first book, published in 1808, Mephisto lets a witch
rejuvenate the love-sick Faust, rekindling the sexual fire of youth. Most children
will have no knowledge of the poem’s context, but that does not detract from
their enjoyment of the magical counting spell that the witch recites as she
prepares the potion. The mysterious beings and objects associated with the
witch’s incantatory verses in Goethe’s description of the witch’s kitchen are
scattered across the pages, as Erlbruch offers readers of all ages a magical world
to explore, whether they are familiar with Faust or not. A review in Der
Tagesspiegel, cited on the Carl Hanser website, calls the picturebook “Goethe for
children,” and it was awarded the Bologna Ragazzi award in 1999. However,
the publisher emphasizes the book’s crossover appeal for a particular group
of readers, one that is not determined by age, but rather by perspective. As the
publisher puts it, “For those who, like Faust, look closely enough, suddenly
everything becomes very light and playful. A fantastic game begins, for grown-
ups, too...”

In 2004, the German publisher Aufbau brought out the picturebook Das
große Lalula (The Big Lalula), based on a poem by Christian Morgenstern and
illustrated once again by Norman Junge. Written in 1890 and published in the
collection *Galgenlieder* (Songs of the gallows) in Monaco in 1905, “Das große Lalula” is one of Morgenstern’s most important and most popular poems. Along with many of his “Galgenlieder,” it acquired an essential place in the German lyrical canon. Morgenstern was a master of language play, and in this case the wordplay appeals to readers of all ages. This striking example of a phonetic poem or sound text retains the characteristic features of a traditional stanza poem, but the content is void of meaning. The majority of the sound sequences show very little affinity with the German language, but there is a recognizable similarity with those of nursery rhymes. The result is a playful, nonsensical poem that charms children. According to the author, the Lalulä song encodes a chess endgame, but even with the poet’s precise explanation, adults familiar with the game of chess will have difficulty reading the poem in this manner. Junge’s wonderful visual interpretation of the phonetic rhapsody, a joyful succession of fanciful images, is a brilliant blend of childlike fantasy, humour, playfulness, and the grotesque. In the picturebook, Junge brings to Morgenstern’s nonsensical poem a similar ludic, joyful quality that charms all ages.

A striking example of adult-to-child crossover poetry was brought out by the Portuguese publisher Caminho in 2005. The innovative picturebook *Palavra que voa* (*A word that flies*), is based on the poem “Papagaio” (*Kite*) by João Pedro Mésseder, who has published extensively for both adults and children, and illustrated by the Mozambique-born illustrator Gémeo Luís (the pseudonym of Luís Mendonça). The title of the picturebook is taken from the first two lines of the poem: “Há palavras feitas p’ra voar” (There are words made to fly). The twenty-five lines of the poem are distributed over twelve alternate pages, while the facing pages each contain a delicate illustration that uses the technique of paper cutting. By refusing the conventional graphic disposition of poetry, wings are given to the words which appear all over the page, justifying the title, which means kite. The kite that Mésseder offers readers of all ages is made of words. Not until the final page do readers discover that the words on the previous pages constitute a poem. The delicate monochromatic illustrations by Luís are paper cutouts that share the white space of the page with the few words of text. The minimal text and the small pictures leave a great deal of blank space, encouraging readers of all ages to fill it with their imagination.

The publication of modern poetry illustrated by established picturebook artists is currently a widespread trend. Junge’s illustration of Jandl’s poems in Germany and Luís’s illustration of Mésseder’s poem in Portugal demonstrate that this is not limited to the English-speaking world. While it was not a common occurrence in the past, this form of crossover is not an entirely new phenomenon. The whimsical poems in T. S. Eliot’s *Old Possum’s Book of Practical Cats* were written to amuse his godchildren and friends, but they were originally published for adults in 1939. The cat poems, which became a children’s classic, were illustrated in 1940 by Nicolas Bentley and then in 1982 by Edward Gorey’s famous pen-and-ink drawings. Andrew Lloyd Webber’s
brilliant musical *Cats*, based on the beloved poems, had the same crossover appeal. Although the content of some of Ogden Nash’s comic poetry is quite adult, much of it has wide appeal with young readers whether it was written for them or not. The cover illustrations for some of his books were done by Maurice Sendak. *Crow: From the Life and Songs of the Crow* (1970), one of the best-known works by the English poet and children’s writer Ted Hughes, was published for adults, although he once claimed to have begun it as a children’s story. The illustrations are by the American sculptor and artist Leonard Baskin, who illustrated books for both children and adults. Hughes began the work at Baskin’s suggestion, as the artist wanted a text to accompany some of his bird drawings. The *Crow* poems have been dramatized and set to music many times and are familiar to a juvenile audience as well as adults. When a children’s illustrator offers a visual interpretation of an adult poet, it is generally for a children’s edition, although that is not always the case. Even when the book is aimed at children, the text and the quality of the illustrations often gives it adult appeal as well.

In a similar manner to poetry, songs for adults also find their way into picturebooks for children. *Mi laberinto* (*My labyrinth*), a Spanish picturebook published by Kókinos in 2003, is based on the words of a song by Pablo Guerrero. Illustrated with simple colour pictures by the well-known picture-book artist Emilio Urberuaga, *Mi laberinto* is a more conventional picturebook than those previously mentioned. A doublespread accompanies each line of the song:

If I am a taxi driver I take you to the sea in my taxi  
If I am a pianist I sing to the rhythm of your heart.  
.............................................  
And as I am only a child I give you the key to my labyrinth.

Urberuaga gives new dimensions to the text by applying it fondly and humorously to the inner world of a child’s thoughts, feelings, and imagination. The child in the story becomes, in turn, a taxi driver, a pilot, a tramp, a bricklayer, a writer, and so forth. This is a picturebook that can be read, told, or sung by/to all ages.

The works discussed in this section demonstrate that texts originally written for adults can be appreciated by very young children when published in picturebook format. At the same time, the majority of these books are not published only for young readers. Many of these adult-to-child crossover texts are picturebooks for all ages. The literary texts and sophisticated illustrations of these works extend the picturebook market to a very diverse audience of young and old alike.

Adult-to-child crossover is an important, if neglected, aspect of the crossover phenomenon. Although children’s literature that crosses over to an adult audience has been getting all the attention and hype in the current crossover
craze, adult fiction has been crossing in the other direction ever since books were first published with an adult-only audience in mind. In the past few years, publishers seem to have rediscovered the potential of this crossover market. There is now a more concerted effort on the part of publishers in many countries to deliberately publish and/or market adult fiction for a younger readership.