



Ireland Literature Exchange
Idirmhalartán Litríocht Éireann

An abstract graphic on the left side of the cover features several overlapping geometric shapes. There is a large magenta circle at the top, a light green semi-circle below it, and various triangles and curved shapes in shades of pink, purple, and green extending downwards and to the right.

Irish Children's Literature

A Magical Gift

**Irish
Children's
Literature**

A Magical Gift

Siobhán Parkinson

Foreword

Ireland has long been internationally renowned as a country with a strong literary tradition and a dynamic contemporary writing scene. It is also not unusual for Irish writers to win major international prizes such as Booker Prizes, Costa Book Awards, Prix Fémina, National Book Awards, Pulitzers and TS Eliot Prizes. Irish children's writing has not always been as widely acclaimed but that situation is now gradually changing.

Ireland Literature Exchange (ILE) is the state-supported organisation which promotes Irish literature abroad. It awards translation grants to publishers, hosts literary translators in Ireland and facilitates the participation of Irish writers at international events and festivals. The promotion of Irish children's literature abroad forms an integral part of its remit.

In recent years, Ireland Literature Exchange has witnessed a growing international interest in Irish children's literature. In response to that interest, we invited Siobhán Parkinson, Ireland's first Children's Laureate, to write an essay which we entitled *Irish Children's Literature: a magical gift*. We hope that this essay will be helpful to foreign publishers and translators and will inform a greater awareness and understanding of Irish children's literature abroad.

Children's writing cannot flourish in a vacuum. Here in Ireland, it has benefited from specialist support through Arts Council

bursaries, resource organisations such as Children's Books Ireland, the Bisto Book of the Year award, the establishment of a Children's Laureate and a number of dynamic children's publishing houses including The O'Brien Press, Mercier Press and newcomers, Little Island, Cló Mhaigh Eo and Futa Fata.

Ireland Literature Exchange regularly receives translation grant applications for Irish children's writing. We created a dedicated online author database at www.irelandliterature.com, where you can learn more about translations of books by John Boyne, Conor Kostick, Celine Kiernan, Michael Scott, Eoin Colfer, Roddy Doyle, Aubrey Flegg, Siobhán Parkinson, Marita Conlon-McKenna and Oisín McGann, to name but a few.

We are grateful to Siobhán Parkinson for her elegant and expert essay and hope that you, the readers find much to inspire you.

Sinéad Mac Aodha, *Director, Ireland Literature Exchange*

When Barack Obama visited Ireland in 2011, he was presented with a gift on behalf of the Irish nation: a first edition of a book of Hawaiian folk and fairy tales retold for children by the Irish writer Padraic Colum (*At the Gateways of the Day*, 1924). This considered gift made a symbolic link between the president's personal history as a native of Hawaii and Ireland's proud literary heritage.

The fact that President Obama has children made a choice of a children's book particularly apposite, but it is highly significant, all the same, that a book for children was regarded as a worthy gift for a major world leader visiting our country. This would have been unthinkable even ten years ago, but there has been a welcome shift in attitudes towards children's literature. The view that books for children constitute an inferior genre, somewhere between school textbooks and 'low culture', is steadily being eroded.

Children's literature is often thought of as books intended for a child audience. However, when Jonathan Swift, Dean of St Patrick's Cathedral in Dublin, published *Gulliver's Travels* in 1726, it seems unlikely that he expected it to be widely read by children. It has nevertheless become securely ensconced in the canon of children's classics, and is frequently republished in abridged and illustrated forms for the child reader. It is, no

doubt, the universal appeal to children of tiny people that has claimed *Gulliver's Travels* for the nursery, but it is curious that an 18th-century political satire should have become such a classic of world children's literature. One way or another, the case of *Gulliver's Travels* undermines the position of those who consider children's literature didactic, simplistic, coy or trashy.

If *Gulliver's* refutation of condescending views on children's literature were the sum total of the contribution of Irish children's literature to the world, it would be no mean achievement. Happily that is not the case, and Irish children's literature, historical and contemporary, has much more to offer the world's children, from the exquisite art fairy tales of Oscar Wilde (*The Happy Prince and Other Tales*, 1888); the retellings of traditional tales by various writers of the Celtic Revival; through the hilarious writings of James Stephens (especially the wonderfully madcap *Crock of Gold*, 1911); the fairy tales of Sinéad de Valera; the books of Patricia Lynch and Eilís Dillon and the sumptuous illustrations of Harry Clarke; to the work of today's Irish writers and illustrators for children.

The novels of the prolific Patricia Lynch, whose books were published mostly in the 1930s and 40s, are distinctly Irish in tone, setting and subject matter. The *Turf-Cutter's Donkey* (1934), her first title, remains Lynch's best-loved book, and there are several sequels. It typifies Lynch's ability to create believable child characters in a realistic mode, and to give them fantastic and enthralling adventures. *The Bookshop on the Quay* (1956) is, by contrast, quite realistic – except for a rather strange encounter between one of the child characters and

the ghost of none other than Dean Swift, author of *Gulliver's Travels*. Modern readers are not always comfortable with the idealised picture of Ireland that Lynch's novels present, but she had a real gift as a writer and her playful use of motifs from Irish myth and legend gives her books a particular charm. Some of her novels are still in print, and others have been reissued recently.

For years, Lynch was something of a lone voice in Irish children's literature, until the arrival of Eilís Dillon, whose work for children was published mostly in the 1950s and 60s. Lynch and Dillon are often bracketed together as the precursors of the contemporary Irish children's novel, but their work is different in most respects. What they do have in common is their love of traditional Irish life, but Dillon's work is generally less fanciful than Lynch's and more demanding of its readers. *The Lost Island* (1952), *The Island of Horses* (1956) and *The Singing Cave* (1960), all adventure stories for older children, are probably her best known books. Like Lynch's, they are written in a distinctly Irish accent, but their themes are universal and their stories are adventurous and challenging. Dillon's books are a challenging read for children with developed literary tastes.

Walter Macken came a little after Dillon, and was mostly a writer for adults, but his best-known children's book, *The Flight of the Doves* (1968), an adventure story set in rural Ireland, was made into a film in the early 1970s.

Both Lynch and Dillon wrote on Irish themes and their books explore issues of national identity from an Irish perspective

(and Macken was in a similar tradition). But their work was published in Britain and clearly appealed to an audience beyond Ireland.

The publication in 1990 of Marita Conlon-McKenna's *Under the Hawthorn Tree* was a pivotal event in the recent history of Irish children's literature. This novel is set during the Irish Famine of the mid-19th century, and it was followed by two sequels, *Wildflower Girl* (1991) and *Fields of Home* (1996). Largely because it was the first attempt to mediate a central, painful event in Irish history for a young readership, *Under the Hawthorn Tree* has acquired an iconic status in Ireland, and it came to embody a new excitement about Irish-published books for Irish children. Though in fact, this was not quite a new phenomenon. The books of Tom McCaughren, whose *Run with the Wind* (1983) and sequels remain very popular, and those of Carolyn Swift and Tony Hickey, for example, had been published in Ireland in the 1980s and welcomed by Irish parents, most of whom had grown up on a literary diet of English novels written primarily for English children.

If *Under the Hawthorn Tree* was the opening remark in a national conversation about Irish history and how to mediate it to Irish children, it was eagerly responded to by a host of novels for a more sophisticated, slightly older readership. *The Chieftain's Daughter* (1993) by Sam McBratney, *The Hiring Fair* (1993) by Elizabeth O'Hara, *The Guns of Easter* (1996) by Gerard Whelan, *Melody for Nora* (1994) by Mark O'Sullivan and Siobhán Parkinson's *Amelia* (1993) were written out of an Irish experience and for an Irish audience, but their appeal is

much wider than that. Like any literature written with passion and precision about the local, they transcend their local concerns and can appeal to children for whom their immediate references may appear to have little resonance.

These novels, along with others by Michael Scott, Yvonne McRory and Michael Mullen, also have a role to play in representing Ireland to international audiences. Readers can, as it were, eavesdrop on an Irish conversation about what it means to be Irish and what they overhear is bound to be more authentic than anything written specifically for foreign consumption or from an external perspective.

Retellings of Irish legends for children and Celtic fantasies for a teenage audience, such as those by Orla Melling and Michael Scott, were also popular in those heady years, when books from Irish publishers for children were sharply focused on novels about Irish history and culture. Cormac Mac Ráois's very fine Giltspur Celtic fantasy trilogy, which appeared in the early 1990s, was highly acclaimed, and is among the best writing of this type from that time. Pat O'Shea's *The Hounds of the Morrigan* (1985), an immensely engaging, lively and amusing fantasy based on a careful study of Irish folklore, is something of an anomaly. Published in the UK, it appeared to have sprung out of nowhere. O'Shea was working on a sequel when she died in 2007.

The Northern Irish writer Martin Waddell is perhaps best known for the very charming picturebook *Can't You Sleep, Little Bear?* (1992) and its sequels, illustrated by Barbara Firth,

and for the extremely stylish *Owl Babies* (1992), beautifully illustrated by Patrick Benson. Helen Oxenbury illustrated Waddell's delightful *Farmer Duck* (1992). Waddell has a spare, wry style that works very well in picturebooks and undoubtedly accounts – along with his excellent illustrators – for their widespread and enduring popularity.

Martin Waddell has also written several reflective and mostly realistic novels for older children and teenagers under the pseudonym Catherine Sefton. The Sefton novels deal with difficult issues, including the political situation in Northern Ireland (*Starry Night*, 1995 and sequels). One of his very best teenage novels, the heartbreaking *Tango's Baby* (1995), a sophisticated and empathetic study of how a teenage pregnancy can wreak havoc on the young parents, was published under his own name, and Waddell seems no longer to use the Sefton pseudonym.

Martin Waddell's international reputation was consolidated when he was awarded iBBY's Hans Christian Andersen Medal in 2004, an accolade he shares with such acclaimed writers as Margaret Mahy and David Almond.

Perhaps the best-known Irish picturebook of all time, *Guess How Much I Love You* (1994) illustrated by the Northern Irish illustrator, Anita Jeram, was written by another Northern Irish writer, the immensely prolific Sam McBratney. *Guess How Much* and its sequels have been a huge international commercial success and have been published in several formats and languages. Like Waddell, McBratney has a brief,

simple style that suits the picturebook for younger children. McBratney's historical novel *The Chieftain's Daughter* (1993), set in ancient Ireland, was published in Dublin during the 1990s boom in Irish publishing for children. It is much less well known than *Guess How Much*, but it is widely considered to be one of the finest children's books ever to have come out of Ireland.

Maeve Friel's unusual timeslip novel dealing with Viking Ireland, *Distant Voices* (1994), was part of the wave of Irish historical novels for children that were published in the early 1990s, though her other, fine historical book, *The Lantern Moon* (1996), is set not in Ireland but in 18th-century England. Friel is a sure-footed and stylish writer and her voice deserves to be more widely heard. Her more recent work has been for a younger age group and includes the *Witch in Training* and the *Tiger Lily* series.

Gerard Whelan's *The Guns of Easter* (1996), its sequel *A Winter of Spies* (1998) and his collection of short stories, *War Children* (2002) deal with Ireland's troubled history, and they have particular appeal for boy readers, complementing the historical work of female writers. *Dream Invader* (1997) is an unsettling psychological thriller, and the eerily engaging *Out of Nowhere* (1999) is best described as science-fiction.

Elizabeth O'Hara's very fine historical Sally trilogy is set in Donegal around the turn of the 20th century and consists of *The Hiring Fair* (1993), *Blaeberry Sunday* (1994) and *Penny-Farthing Sally* (1996). Elizabeth O'Hara is the pseudonym of

Éilís Ní Dhuibhne, who is also a highly respected writer for adults. Ní Dhuibhne has published two contemporary novels for teenagers in Irish, one of which, *Hurlamaboc* (2006), has also been published in English under the title *Snobs, Dogs and Scobies* (2011) and under the name Elizabeth O'Hara. Her novel *The Dancers Dancing* (1999) is considered a book for adults, but it has young characters and has appeal also for a sophisticated teenage reader.

Aubrey Flegg's *Wings over Delft* (2003) is set in 17th-century Holland and its sequels have other European settings, but he also has two Irish historical novels, *Katie's War* (1997) and *Fugitives!* (2010). Marilyn Taylor's *Faraway Home* (1999) deals with the Jewish World War II experience in an Irish setting. John Quinn's nostalgic *The Summer of Lily and Esme* (1991), though a little old-fashioned, is very well regarded. His *Duck and Swan* (1993) is a brave and funny book about intolerance and friendship.

Jane Mitchell's *Chalkline* (2009) is about boy soldiers in Kashmir. It was the surprise winner in 2010 of the first Bisto Children's Choice Award, an award made by a children's jury. The surprise, it should be said, was occasioned by the maturity of the children's judgement in choosing a book with such a tough theme over more obviously entertaining books. Toughness is characteristic of Jane Mitchell's writing for teenagers. Her *When Stars Stop Spinning* (1993) was one of the first Irish novels to deal with the realities of teenage life.

Mark O'Sullivan is one of Ireland's very finest writers for older children and teenagers. His extraordinary, experimental *Angels*

without Wings (1997), set in Nazi Germany, and his *White Lies* (1997), a novel about race and identity set in modern Ireland, are frequently cited as among the very best Irish novels for young people, and *Silent Stones* (1999), a powerful book about violence, is also impressive. He has a most elegant and understated writing style as well as an uncanny empathy for teenagers. His most recent book, *My Dad is Ten Years Old and it's Pure Weird* (2011), is a moving novel dealing, with humour and delicacy, with the subject of brain damage and the appalling effects on a family when a parent regresses after a head injury.

Eoin Colfer is undoubtedly Ireland's best-known children's writer internationally. His first three books, *Benny and Omar* (1998), *Benny and Babe* (1999) and *The Wish List* (2000), appeared during the boom years in Irish children's publishing. Colfer's great comic gift as a writer comes through loud and clear in these books, which were all published in Dublin.

It is, of course, the *Artemis Fowl* series of books (2001 onwards) for which Colfer is world famous. These hilarious and parodic spy adventure thrillers are full of action, written at a breakneck pace, and stuffed with jokes. *The Supernaturalist* (2004) is a science-fiction title, but it is his semi-historical *Airman* (2008) that has most taken readers by surprise. But nothing Eoin Colfer does should surprise anyone. He is an enormously talented and professional writer who can turn his hand to almost anything.

Kate Thompson, originally English, has lived and written in Ireland for decades now, and she has been thoroughly adopted

by the Irish children's books community. Thompson has a remarkable facility as a writer for young people, and she is equally at home in realistic (*Creature of the Night*, 2008) and fantastic (*The Beguilers*, 2001) modes. *Annan Water* (2004) is one of the finest books for young people ever to be published by a writer living in Ireland. It is a haunting and tautly written love story with a tantalisingly ambivalent ending.

Thompson's most internationally acclaimed novel is her multiple award-winning *The New Policeman* (2005). It consists of an amusing fantasy framed inside a realistic story of contemporary life in rural Ireland. It could well have been influenced by *The Hounds of the Murrigan*, but its main source is undoubtedly the appealing titles of the Irish folk tunes that Kate Thompson loves to play on the fiddle. There are two sequels, *The Last of the High Kings* (2007) and *The White Horse Trick* (2010).

Although the output of children's books from Irish publishing houses started to decline around the turn of the 21st century, new writers for children continued to emerge, published in London.

Oisín McGann's speculative political satire *The Gods and their Machines* (2004) deals uncompromisingly with religious fundamentalism and terrorism, and *Small-Minded Giants* (2006) takes an equally dark, dystopian view of the relations between humans and technology. McGann has both a strong sense of story, evident in his two Irish gothic Wildernstern novels, and a sure, tough voice. His *Strangled Silence* (2009) is a superb political thriller, tightly written and unsentimental and

with lots of appeal especially for teenage boys, a notoriously difficult readership to engage.

Conor Kostick appeared on the children's literature scene in the first decade of the 21st century, and his extraordinarily powerful novels take Irish writing for young people to a new level. His futuristic trilogy *Epic* (2004), *Saga* (2006) and *Edda* (2010) take place partly in a virtual world. *Move* (2008) has a contemporary Dublin setting and links into a distorted realm. Another writer to be recommended especially for teenage boys.

Roddy Doyle is one of only a few Irish writers for adults to have turned his hand to books for children. His first children's books (the Giggler series) were light-hearted, clever stories that will entice even reluctant younger readers. His later books for older children and teenagers, the adventurous *Wilderness* (2007) and the nostalgic and ghostly *A Greyhound of a Girl* (2011) are sophisticated and elegant novels.

The adult novelist Deirdre Madden's very charming foray into children's literature, *Snakes' Elbows* (2005), was warmly received and has been reissued. Enda Wyley is better known as a poet, chiefly for adults, but she has also published a delightful children's novel, *The Silver Notebook* (2007).

John Boyne's Holocaust novel *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas* (2006) has been a huge commercial success, and was made into a film. Boyne had been writing adult books for years, but it was the publication of *The Boy* that shot him to fame. The novel is very popular, though it is regarded with suspicion by some critics, who feel that the very sensitive subject matter is

inappropriately handled. Although he sees himself primarily as an adult author, John Boyne has brought out a second novel for children, with the glorious title of *Noah Barleywater Runs Away* (2010), a story with fantastic elements.

Siobhán Dowd grew up in England, but she is considered an Irish writer (at least in Ireland), partly because of her Irish parentage and partly because she wrote about Ireland. She shot onto the scene in 2006 with *A Swift Pure Cry*, a story based on two notorious cases of problem pregnancy and infant death in Ireland in the 1980s. Possibly because she was living outside Ireland, she was able to tackle this sensitive subject with a searing honesty.

Siobhán Dowd died soon after the publication of her second book, *The London Eye Mystery* (2007) and her two subsequent books, *Bog Child* (2008) and *Solace of the Road* (2009), were published posthumously. The multiple award-winning *Bog Child* was probably her finest book. It deals with political events in the Northern Ireland of the 1980s and again, as a partial outsider, Dowd was able to take on subjects that writers living in Ireland found daunting. Siobhán Dowd was both a committed writer with a wonderfully poetic style and a warm and engaging person, and her death was a great loss to Irish books for young people.

As the interest in children's books has grown over the past decade or so, Irish writers of popular and genre fiction for young people have also emerged. Darren Shan writes horror stories and fantasies which are hugely popular with young readers, especially

boys. A character by the name of Darren Shan also appears in the vampire series, *The Saga of Darren Shan* (2000 onwards). Shan's contemporary Derek Landy writes hilarious and clever stories featuring a detective who happens to be a skeleton glorying in the name of Skulduggery Pleasant (first eponymous novel 2007). Very popular with teenage girls are the novels of Judi Curtin, Judy May and Sarah Webb. A new writer for girls is Anna Carey, whose amusing *The Real Rebecca* (2011) has done very well.

Deirdre Sullivan's hilarious *Prim Improper* (2010) is also decidedly a book for girls; it deals with serious issues but in a light-hearted and stylish way. Sheena Wilkinson's first novel for teenagers is set in her native Belfast, but is not about the Northern Ireland 'situation'. *Taking Flight* (2010) is a pacy, gritty urban novel. Paula Leyden's first book, for older children, *The Butterfly Heart* (2011), is set in her native Zambia and deals, with great delicacy and elegance, with the issue of child marriage.

When novels for children first started to be published in Ireland, picturebooks were considered too expensive for Irish publishers to produce, and that is generally still the case.

Our leading illustrator, PJ Lynch, has published mostly outside of Ireland. His style is painterly and is particularly suited to the illustration of fairy tales, legends and classics. He has illustrated the tales of Oscar Wilde (1990) and Dickens' *A Christmas Carol* (2006). His *The Christmas Miracle of Jonathan Twomey* (1995) and *When Jessie Came across the Sea* (1997) are more domestic and realistic in style. His work is highly regarded at home and abroad.

The text of Marie-Louise Fitzpatrick's first picturebook, *An Chanáil* (1988), which is still a firm favourite, is in the Irish language. *The Long March* (1998), also published in Ireland, continues to be held in very high esteem. Fitzpatrick was taken up later by British and American publishers and has gone on to have a sparkling career as a writer/illustrator with such titles as *You, Me and the Big Blue Sea* (2002), *I Am I* (2006) and the philosophical *There* (2009). She has recently moved into writing novels for older children.

Niamh Sharkey's bright and sparky work as an illustrator has also been published mostly out of Ireland. Her earliest books were illustrated versions of traditional stories (such as *Tales of Wisdom and Wonder* and *The Gigantic Turnip*, both 1998), but she moved on very quickly to writing her own material. *The Ravenous Beast* appeared in 2003 and the humorous *On the Road with Mavis and Marge* (2011) is proving very popular. *I'm a Happy Hugglewug* (2006), for very young children, is currently being turned into an animated series by Brown Bag Films.

Mary Murphy writes and illustrates boldly colourful books for very young children. Her *I Like it When...* (1997) and *I Kissed the Baby* (2003) have proved hugely popular with young children and their parents. Her Christmas book, *Little Owl and the Star* (2003) has a perennial charm.

In the last few years, we have had a sudden explosion of illustrator talent in Ireland. Oliver Jeffers' sweet and fey books featuring a small puzzled child (*How to Catch a Star*, 2004, *Lost and Found*, 2005, and sequels) have enjoyed huge popularity,

as have his *The Incredible Book Eating Boy* (2006), *The Great Paper Caper* (2009) and the philosophical *The Heart and the Bottle* (2010) for somewhat older readers. More recently still, Kevin Waldron (*Tiny Little Fly*, 2010) and Chris Haughton (*A Bit Lost*, 2010) have taken the Irish children's books world by storm. Chris Judge's *The Lonely Beast* (2011) looks set to do the same.

Apart from the output of Julie O'Callaghan (*The Book of Whispers*, 2006) and Matthew Sweeney (*Up on the Roof*, 2001), there has not been a great deal of children's poetry published by Irish poets. A most honourable exception has been the wonderfully produced and illustrated large-format *Something Beginning with P* (2005), which contains a hundred newly commissioned poems by Irish poets, compiled by Seamus Cashman and illustrated by Alan Clarke, Corrina Askin and Emma Byrne.

The 1990s boom in Irish children's publishing had run to ground by the early years of the 21st century. However, the excitement generated by the boom period had huge beneficial effects. Lots of new writers for children had emerged, and there was a new confidence about writing for children and the central importance, culturally and commercially, of books for children.

The feverish output of the publishing houses in recent decades has been accompanied by vigorous developments in the infrastructure of children's literature in Ireland: Children's Books Ireland (CBI), iBbY Ireland and the Irish Society for the Study of Children's Literature all joined the long-standing Reading

Association of Ireland as organisations that lent support and encouragement to Irish writing, illustrating and publishing; the CBI/Bisto Book of the Year awards were developed; first the colleges and departments of education and later the English departments in Irish universities started to teach courses in children's literature; studies of Irish children's literature started to be published; Irish children's literature professionals started to make international links; and Ireland has now come to be recognised as a country with a rich and lively children's literature.

Siobhán Parkinson

Siobhán Parkinson (b. Dublin, 1954) studied English literature and German at Trinity College, Dublin, and went on to take her PhD at the same university in 1981. She has been writing for children since the early 1990s and has also written two novels for adults. Her best-known books are *Sisters – No Way!* (1996), *Four Kids, Three Cats, Two Cows, One Witch (maybe)* (1997), *The Moon King* (1998) and *Something Invisible* (2006). She translates children's books from German and is the publisher of Little Island Books, a small children's publishing house. She was appointed Ireland's first laureate for children's literature in 2010. Her most recent novel, *Bruised* (2011), is for young teenagers.

爱尔兰儿童文学： 一份神奇的礼物

西旺·帕金森

序言

长久以来，爱尔兰一直是举世公认的具有深厚的文学传统和活跃的当代文坛的国度。爱尔兰作家也屡屡斩获主要国际文学奖项，包括布克奖、柯斯达图书奖、费米娜奖、美国国家图书奖、普利策奖和艾略特诗歌奖。爱尔兰儿童文学以前并未得到广泛认可，但这种情形现在正在逐渐发生改变。

爱尔兰文学交流会(ILE)是一家政府机构，致力于向海外推广爱尔兰文学。爱尔兰文学交流会向出版社颁发翻译项目基金，在爱尔兰国内接待文学翻译，支持爱尔兰作家参加国际文学活动和文学节。对外推广爱尔兰儿童文学也是爱尔兰文学交流会使命的重要组成部分。

近年来，爱尔兰文学交流会已经注意到国际上对爱尔兰儿童文学的兴趣日益浓厚。作为回应，我们特邀首位获得爱尔兰儿童文学桂冠作家殊荣的西旺·帕金森女士为我们特别撰写《爱尔兰儿童文学：一份神奇的礼物》一文。我们希望这篇文章能够对国外出版社和译者有所帮助，并且加深海外朋友对爱尔兰儿童文学的认识和了解。

离开浇灌它的土壤，儿童文学创作就不能茁壮成长。在爱尔兰，儿童文学创作从方方面面的组织机构中受益，包括爱尔兰艺术理事会基金的专业扶持，爱尔兰儿童图书协会和比斯托年度图书奖提供的资源，爱尔兰儿童文学桂冠作家的设立和包括欧布莱恩出版社(The O'Brien Press)、默西埃出版社(Mercier Press)和新晋的小岛图书(Little Island)、梅奥出版社(Cló Mhaigh Eo)和小小激动出版社(Futa Fata)等诸多欣欣向荣的儿童文学出版社的成立。

爱尔兰文学交流会定期接收爱尔兰儿童文学翻译项目基金的申请。我们在官方网站(www.irelandliterature.com)上创建了在线作家数据库，您可以了解更多爱尔兰作家作品的翻译出版情况，其中包括约翰·波恩(John Boyne)、康纳·科斯特克(Conor Kostick)、赛琳·基尔南(Celine Kiernan)、迈克·斯科特(Michael Scott)、尤恩·考尔法(Eoin Colfer)、罗迪·多伊尔(Roddy Doyle)、奥布瑞·弗莱格(Aubrey Flegg)、西旺·帕金森(Siobhán Parkinson)、玛丽塔·科龙-马克肯纳(Marita Conlon-McKenna)和奥辛·迈克刚(Oisín McGann)等。

我们非常感谢西旺·帕金森女士优美专业的文章，希望作为读者的您能从中获得启迪。

Sinéad Mac Aodha, 爱尔兰文学交流会主任

2011年访问爱尔兰时，美国总统奥巴马得到了爱尔兰民族的一份礼物：初版《在白昼的门口》（*At the Gateways of the Day*, 1924），那是一本适合儿童阅读的夏威夷民间及童话故事集，由爱尔兰作家帕德里克·科龙（Padraic Colum）改编。这份精心挑选的礼物象征性地将奥巴马总统出生于夏威夷的个人经历和令人自豪的爱尔兰文学遗产连接了起来。

奥巴马总统育有子女，这一事实使我们选择儿童书籍尤为恰当，但这本书作为国礼要配得上访问我国的世界重要领导人，这也是至关重要的。即使是10年前，做到这一点恐怕还是无法想像的，但此后人们对待儿童文学的态度发生了可喜的转变。儿童图书属于一种低下的文类，介于中小学课本和“低俗文化”之间，这种观点正在逐步消蚀。

通常，人们以为儿童文学就是指写给儿童阅读的书籍。然而1726年，当乔纳森·斯威夫特（都柏林圣帕特里克大教堂的堂长）出版《格列佛游记》的时候，他期待着这部小说广受儿童的喜爱，这恐

怕是不可能的。不过，这部小说还是稳稳当当地步入了儿童文学经典的行列，而且经常以适合儿童阅读的简写本、插图本的形式再版。毫无疑问，让《格列佛游记》成为托儿所必备书籍的，是小人国的袖珍人对儿童具有广泛的感染力这一事实。可是，一部18世纪的政治讽刺作品竟然成了一部世界儿童文学的经典，这还是令人诧异的。无论怎样，这一案例动摇了以为儿童文学总是说教性、简单化、忸怩作态或者一无是处的那些人的立场。

《格列佛游记》对贬低儿童文学的观点提出了驳斥，假如这是爱尔兰儿童文学曾经对世界文坛做出的所有贡献的话，那么这一贡献并非微不足道。幸而，情况并非如此，而且无论过去的还是当代的，爱尔兰儿童文学还有更多的宝藏献给世界儿童：从奥斯卡·王尔德的那些唯美的童话故事（《快乐王子及其他故事》，1888年），到凯尔特文化复兴时期众多作家改写的历史故事，再到詹姆斯·斯蒂芬那些谐趣横生的作品（尤其是想象狂放的《金坛子》，1911年）；从西内·德·维雷拉的童话故事，到帕特里夏·林奇、伊利·迪伦的儿童图书（配上了哈里·克拉克的华丽插图），再到当代爱尔兰作家和插图画家创作的儿童作品。

多产作家帕特里夏·林奇（Patricia Lynch）的作品多发表于20世纪30至40年代，她的小说在语气、

场景和主题上都具有浓郁的爱尔兰特色。处女作《割泥炭的人的驴子》（*The Turf-Cutter's Donkey*, 1934）一直是她最畅销的作品，而且还有数部姊妹篇。该作品充分体现了林奇用现实主义模式刻画可信的儿童人物，却又让他们经历奇异而引人入胜的历险的能力。相比之下，《码头上的书店》（*The Bookshop on the Quay*, 1956）的现实主义色彩就十分浓厚了——除了一个儿童人物同斯威夫特堂长（《格列佛游记》的作者）本人的魂灵离奇相遇的情节。对林奇小说所展现的理想化的爱尔兰景象，现代读者未必总会感觉受用，但她具有真正的作家天赋，她对爱尔兰神话和传奇题材的戏仿使她的作品具有一种特别的魅力。她的一些小说仍在再版，其他作品最近也在重新发行。

此后多年，林奇替爱尔兰儿童文学发出的声音还有些孤单，这种情况一直延续到伊利·迪伦（Eilís Dillon）的崛起——迪伦的儿童作品多数发表于20世纪50至60年代。人们常把林奇和迪伦相提并论，称她们为当代爱尔兰儿童小说的先驱，但是在大多数方面，她们的作品是不同的。她们的共同点是对传统的爱尔兰生活的热爱，但总的来说，迪伦的作品没有林奇的作品那样充满幻想，对读者的要求也比较高。《失落的岛屿》（*The Lost Island*, 1952）、《马岛》（*The Island of Horses*, 1956）以及《唱歌的

洞窟》（*The Singing Cave*, 1960），这些少年历险故事恐怕是她最著名的作品。跟林奇的作品类似，这些故事也是用地道的爱尔兰英语写成，但主题却是世界性的，情节一波三折，充满冒险和挑战。对于具有较高文学品位的少年儿童，选择迪伦的作品无疑是一个挑战。

迪伦之后的沃尔特·麦肯(Walter Macken)主要是为成年人写作的作家，但是他最著名的儿童文学作品《青青河畔草》（*The Flight of the Doves*, 1968），讲述的是一个发生在爱尔兰乡村的冒险故事，并在20世纪70年代早期被拍成电影。

林奇和迪伦都就爱尔兰题材进行创作，她们的书从爱尔兰的视角探索了民族身份的问题（麦肯也延续了类似的传统）。可是，她们的作品是在英国出版的，针对的明显是爱尔兰之外的读者。

1990年，玛丽塔·科龙-马克肯纳（Marita Conlon-McKenna）的作品《在山楂树下》（*Under the Hawthorn Tree*）出版，这在当代爱尔兰儿童文学史上是一件大事。该小说以19世纪中叶的爱尔兰大饥荒为背景，此后还有两部姊妹篇：《野花姑娘》（*Wildflower Girl*, 1991）和《家园》（*Fields of Home*, 1996）。在很大程度上，《在山楂树下》是第一部力图向年幼的读者群讲述爱尔兰历史上一

个令人揪心的重大事件的作品，因此在爱尔兰获得了偶像般的地位，渐渐掀起了一股由爱尔兰人出版爱尔兰儿童作品的热潮。当然，事实上这并不是一个全然新生的现象。比如汤姆·马克科仁（Tom McCaughren）的作品——他1983年出版的《随风而跑》（*Run with the Wind*）及系列作品一直非常畅销，以及卡洛林·斯威夫特（Carolyn Swift）和汤尼·西奇（Tony Hickey）的作品，20世纪80年代就在爱尔兰出版了，而且竟然受到了爱尔兰家长们的喜欢——要知道，那些家长是靠主要针对英国儿童创作的英国小说的养份长大的。

在就爱尔兰历史和向爱尔兰儿童讲述历史的方式所展开的全民对话中，假如《在山楂树下》是一段开场白的話，那么说它立刻就得到了针对略懂世故、年纪稍大的读者群创作的众多小说的热烈响应。山姆·马克瑞特尼（Sam McBratney）的《酋长的女儿》（*The Chieftain's Daughter*, 1993），伊丽莎白·奥哈拉（Elizabeth O'Hara）的《雇佣场》（*The Hiring Fair*, 1993），杰拉德·威兰（Gerard Whelan）的《复活节的枪声》（*The Guns of Easter*, 1996），马克·奥萨利文（Mark O'Sullivan）的《献给诺拉的曲子》（*Melody for Nora*, 1994），以及西旺·帕金森（Siobhán Parkinson）的《阿米莉亚》（*Amelia*, 1993），都是依据爱尔兰的经历写成，也是针

对爱尔兰读者的，但这些作品的魅力绝不仅仅如此。像深情地创作、精确地描绘了地方风俗的任何文学作品一样，这些作品超越了乡土主题，令那些切身经历仿佛不会和作品产生什么共鸣的儿童也爱不释手。

这些小说连同迈克·斯科特 (Michael Scott)、伊万·马克罗伊 (Yvonne McRory)、迈克·穆伦 (Michael Mullen) 的小说一道，在向国外读者展示爱尔兰的过程中起着重要作用。读者仿佛可以无意中听到一场爱尔兰人就爱尔兰性展开的对话，而且他们无意中听到的肯定比特意替外国市场或者从外部视角创作的作品真实得多。

由爱尔兰传奇改写而成的儿童故事，以及由凯尔特幻想小说改编而成的少年读物——例如奥拉·梅林 (Orla Melling) 和迈克·斯科特的作品——在那火热的年代也深受读者喜爱，那时爱尔兰书商出版的儿童图书完全以有关爱尔兰历史和文化的小说为重心。科马克·麦克·拉奥斯 (Cormac Mac Raois) 的杰作“吉尔茨普” (‘Giltspur’) 凯尔特幻想三部曲，在20世纪90年代初期一经推出便广受赞誉，现在依然是那个时期同类型题材中最优秀的作品。帕特·奥西尔 (Pat O’Shea) 的《幻影女王的猎犬》 (*The Hounds of the Morrigan*, 1985) 是一部以仔细研读爱尔兰民间故事为基础的幻想小

说，情节引人入胜，叙述生动活泼，虽然内容有些不合常规，但读起来妙趣横生。该作品在英国出版，仿佛是天外飞来之作。2007年去世前，奥西尔还在创作一部姊妹篇。

北爱作家马丁·威德尔（Martin Waddell）最著名的作品，兴许是那部迷人的图画书《小熊，你睡不着吗？》（*Can't You Sleep, Little Bear?*, 1992）及其由巴巴拉·菲斯（Barbara Firth）创作插图的姊妹篇，以及那部极为时尚的《猫头鹰宝贝》（*Owl Babies*, 1992）——该书由帕特里克·本森（Patrick Benson）配上了精美的插图。海伦·奥克森贝利（Helen Oxenbury）给威德尔充满欢快气息的《农场主鸭子》（*Farmer Duck*, 1992）配上了插图。威德尔简练而揶揄的风格在图画书中十分奏效，这一点——连同那几位插图作者的优秀作品——无疑就是这些作品畅销国内外而且长盛不衰的保障。

马丁·威德尔还借用凯瑟琳·瑟夫顿（Catherine Sefton）的笔名，替年纪稍大的儿童和少年创作了数部多现实主义色彩的反省小说。瑟夫顿的系列小说以难解的问题（包括北爱地区的政治局势）为主题，例如1995年出版的《星光之夜》（*Starry Night*）及其姊妹篇。那部令人心碎的《探戈的宝贝》（*Tango's Baby*, 1995）是他最优秀的少年小说之一，该小说采用移情的手法，从过来人的角度

探究了少年怀孕会怎样毁了未成年父母的人生。小说出版时用的是他的真名，此后他似乎就不再借用“瑟夫顿”这个笔名了。

2004年获得由“国际儿童图书理事会”(iBBY)颁发的“国际安徒生文学大奖”(Hans Christian Andersen Medal)时，马丁·威德尔的国际声誉就得到了巩固——他是同玛格丽特·马伊(Margaret Mahy)、大卫·阿蒙德(David Almond)这些广受赞誉的作家一道获得该项殊荣的。

迄今为止，最著名的爱尔兰图画书也许是《猜猜我有多爱你》(*Guess How Much I Love You*, 1994)，该书的插图由北爱艺术家阿尼塔·杰拉姆(Anita Jeram)创作，文字内容由另一位北爱作家、极其多产的山姆·马克布拉尼(Sam McBratney)创作。《猜猜我有多爱你》及其姊妹篇在国际市场上获得了巨大的成功，已经翻译成多种语言，采用数种版式在海外出版。像威德尔一样，马克布拉尼的风格简洁、朴实，适合用于供较小儿童阅读的图画书。马克布拉尼的历史小说《酋长的女儿》以古代爱尔兰为背景，20世纪90年代出版于都柏林，正值爱尔兰儿童文学出版的繁荣期。该小说远不如香飘墙外的《猜猜我有多爱你》那么出名，但却是公认的爱尔兰曾经出版的最优秀的儿童图书之一。

梅伍·夫瑞尔 (Maeve Friel) 的作品《遥远的声音》 (*Distant Voices*, 1994) 是一部不同寻常的小说。该小说以维京时期 (公元800年至公元1150年) 的爱尔兰为题材, 长于时空穿梭, 是20世纪90年代早期爱尔兰儿童历史小说浪潮的组成部分, 只是她的另一部优秀的历史小说《灯笼月》 (*The Lantern Moon*, 1996) 不是以爱尔兰为背景, 而是聚焦于18世纪的英格兰。夫瑞尔是一位步履稳健、独具风格的作家, 她的声音值得更多的读者倾听。她的近期作品针对的是年纪稍小的群体, 包括《小小魔法师》 (*Witch in Training*) 和《泰格·莉丽》 (*Tiger Lily*) 两个系列。

杰拉德·维兰的《复活节的枪声》、姊妹篇《寒冬谍影》 (*A Winter of Spies*, 1998) 及短篇小说集《战争儿童》 (*War Children*, 2002), 都以爱尔兰的灾难历史为主题, 尤其深受男孩的喜欢, 填补了女性作家创作历史小说的空白。《侵入梦中的人》 (*Dream Invader*, 1997) 是一部震撼人心的心理惊悚小说, 而情节怪诞却引人入胜的《天外来客》 (*Out of Nowhere*, 1999) 最好归入科幻小说的行列。

伊丽莎白·奥哈拉 (Elizabeth O'Hara) 的优秀历史小说“萨莉”三部曲以20世纪之交的丹尼戈尔郡为背景, 包括《雇工场》、《蓝草莓星期天》

(*Blaeberry Sunday*, 1994) 和《低薪家教萨莉》(*Penny-Farthing Sally*, 1996)。伊丽莎白·奥哈拉是艾莉西·贵伍纳 (Éilís Ní Dhuibhne) 的笔名, 她同时也是一位深受推崇的成人文学作家。贵伍纳已经用爱尔兰语出版了两部当代少年小说, 其中的《闹哄哄》(*Hurlamaboc*, 2006) 已经译为《势利眼、流浪狗与可怜虫》(*Snobs, Dogs and Scobies*, 2011) 用英文出版。她的小说《姑娘们, 舞起来》(*The Dancers Dancing*, 1999) 有人认为是针对成人创作的, 但其中的人物有几位是少年儿童, 因此也深受略懂世事的少年读者的喜欢。

奥布瑞·弗莱格 (Aubrey Flegg) 的《飞过代尔夫特》(*Wings over Delft*, 2003) 以17世纪的荷兰为背景, 其姊妹篇则以欧洲的其它地方为背景, 但作者还出版了两部爱尔兰历史小说: 《凯蒂的战争》(*Katie's War*, 1997) 和《逃亡!》(*Fugitives!* 2010)。玛丽琳·泰勒 (Marilyn Taylor) 的《遥远的故乡》(*Faraway Home*, 1999) 讲述的是二战期间犹太人在爱尔兰的经历。约翰·昆 (John Quinn) 的怀旧小说《丽莉和艾斯米的夏天》(*The Summer of Lily and Esme*, 1991) 虽说不太新潮, 却照样深受好评。他的《鸭子与天鹅》(*Duck and Swan*, 1993) 是一部以偏狭与友谊为主题的大胆、俏皮的作品。

简·米切尔 (Jane Mitchell) 的小说《白垩线》(Chalkline, 2009) 讲述的是克什米尔的男孩从军的故事, 2010年出人意料地获得了“比斯托儿童文学评选奖”(那是一项由儿童评审团评出的大奖)。应该说, 这个奇迹印证了儿童判断力的成熟——他们选择了一部讲述如此凶险的主题的作品, 而不是娱乐性更明显的作品。凶险是简·米切尔少年文学作品的特点。她的《星星不再旋转的时候》(When Stars Stop Spinning, 1993) 是最早讲述少年生活现实的爱尔兰小说之一。

马克·奥沙利文 (Mark O'Sullivan) 是爱尔兰最优秀的针对较大儿童及少年进行创作的作家之一。他的《没有翅膀的天使》(Angels without Wings, 1997) 以纳粹德国为背景, 是一部杰出的实验小说, 而《善意的谎言》(White Lies, 1997) 则以现代爱尔兰为背景, 讲述种族与身份的问题。这两部小说经常被誉为爱尔兰最优秀的少年儿童作品之一, 而《无言的石头》(Silent Stones, 1999) 则以暴力为题材, 也是一部影响广泛、令人瞩目的作品。他有一种极其文雅、含蓄的写作风格, 又有一种奇异地潜入少年内心世界的移情能力。他的最新作品《老爸才十岁, 真是奇了怪了》(My Dad is Ten Years Old and it's Pure Weird, 2011) 是一部新奇、感人的作品, 情节幽默, 措

词老练，以父亲大脑损伤为故事的起点，讲述了父亲生理的退化给家庭带来的骇人影响。

尤恩·考尔法 (Eoin Colfer) 无疑是最具国际声誉的爱尔兰儿童文学作家。他的头三部作品《本尼与奥马尔》 (*Benny and Omar*, 1998)、《本尼与宝贝》 (*Benny and Babe*, 1999) 及《心愿单》 (*The Wish List*, 2000)，是在爱尔兰儿童文学出版的兴盛期面世的，而且都是在都柏林出版的。在这几部作品中，考尔法突出的喜剧创作天赋展现得淋漓尽致。

当然，使考尔法享誉世界的是《阿特米斯·福尔》 (*Artemis Fowl*) 系列作品 (2001年以来)。这些间谍冒险类的惊悚小说情节欢快、嬉闹，叙述紧张、快捷、动作丰富、笑料不断。《超自然主义者》 (*The Supernaturalist*, 2004) 是一部科幻小说的书名，但最让读者惊讶的还是他的半历史小说《空中飞人》 (*Airman*, 2008)。不过，尤恩·考尔法的现实行为却丝毫都不叫人惊愕。他是一个具有非凡天分的专业作家，几乎任何题材都可以信手写来。

凯特·汤姆森 (Kate Thompson) 原籍英国，迄今已在爱尔兰生活和创作数十年，完全融入了爱尔兰儿童图书创作的队伍。汤姆森有一种儿童文学创作的突出才能，无论现实主义模式——如2008

年的《夜的幽灵》（*Creature of the Night*），还是幻想模式——如2001年的《魅人的幻影》（*The Beguilers*），她都能写得得心应手。她的《安南·瓦特》（*Annan Water*, 2004）是居住在爱尔兰的作家所出版的最佳儿童作品之一。这个爱情故事情节紧张，结局充满悬念，令读者爱不释手。

汤姆森在国际上最受赞誉的小说是荣获了多项大奖的《新来的警察》（*The New Policeman*, 2005）。该小说以讲述当代爱尔兰乡村生活的现实主义故事为框架，里面再嵌入一个趣味横生的幻想故事。它很可能受到了《幻影女王的猎犬》的启发，但最主要的源头无疑还是作者喜欢在小提琴上演奏的爱尔兰民间乐曲的曲名。姊妹篇有两部：《凯尔特末代大王》（*The Last of the High Kings*, 2007）和《白马计》（*The White Horse Trick*, 2010）。

在21世纪之交，虽然爱尔兰出版界推出的儿童图书在数量上有所减少，但新的儿童文学作家仍在涌现，他们的作品主要在伦敦出版。

奥辛·迈克刚（Oisín McGann）充满思辨的政治讽刺作品《神及其机器》（*The Gods and their Machines*, 2004）毫不妥协地讥讽了宗教基要主义和恐怖主义思想，而《心胸狭隘的巨人》（*Small-*

Minded Giants, 2006) 也对人类与科技的关系持同样悲观的反乌托邦观点。迈克刚既有一种很强的故事意识（这一点在他的两部爱尔兰“维尔登斯登”歌特小说中体现得很明显），也表达了一种坚定、强悍的声音。他的《窒息的沉默》(*Strangled Silence*, 2009) 是一部优秀的政治惊悚小说，情节紧凑，语气冷峻，尤其深受十多岁的男孩的喜爱——那个年龄阶段的男孩可是一个难以取悦的读者群。

康纳·科斯迪克 (Conor Kostick) 21世纪初在儿童文学界崭露头角，他轰动一时的小说将爱尔兰儿童文学的创作提高到了新的水平。他的未来主义三部曲《史诗》(*Epic*, 2004)、《传奇》(*Saga*, 2006)、《文集》(*Edda*, 2010)，有部分情节发生在幻想的世界。《宇宙穿梭》(*Move*, 2008) 以当代都柏林为背景，但现实的世界中又融入了一个变异的世界。他是又一个尤其值得向十多岁的男孩推荐的作家。

罗迪·多伊尔 (Roddy Doyle) 是少数几位由成人文学转向儿童文学的爱尔兰作家之一。他早期的儿童作品（“痴笑者”系列）(*Giggler*) 是一批轻松、机智的短篇故事，即使是勉强一读的年幼读者也会着迷。他后来针对较大儿童和少年创作的小说——如历险小说《荒野》(*Wilderness*, 2007) 和《女孩

的灵缇》（*A Greyhound of a Girl*, 2011）——是一批主题深奥、文笔优雅的作品。

成人小说作家迪尔德丽·马登（Deirdre Madden）闯进儿童文学领域的步伐令人瞩目，她的转型作品《蛇的肘部》（*Snakes' Elbows*, 2005）深受读者喜爱，很快就要再版了。英达·威利（Enda Wyley）以诗歌著称，主要针对成人进行创作，但她也出版了一部欢快的儿童小说《银色笔记本》（*The Silver Notebook*, 2007）。

约翰·伯恩（John Boyne）的“大屠杀”小说《穿条纹衣服的男孩》（*The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas*, 2006）在商业上获得了巨大的成功，已拍成了电影。伯恩曾创作成人作品多年，但使他声名鹊起的却是这部儿童作品。虽说有批评家持怀疑态度，认为这部小说对十分敏感的题材处理不当，但它却依然非常畅销。尽管他认为自己主要是个成人文学作家，伯恩却又出版了一部儿童小说，该小说的内容异想天开，书名也荣耀之至——《诺亚·巴力瓦特逃走了》（*Noah Barleywater Runs Away*, 2010）。

西旺·都德（Siobhán Dowd）在英格兰长大，可她（至少在爱尔兰）却被看作是爱尔兰作家，因为她的父母是爱尔兰人，而且她创作的题材也是爱尔兰。2006年，她凭《一声短促、纯粹的哭

泣》(A Swift Pure Cry) 闯入儿童文学界，该小说以20世纪80年代发生在爱尔兰的两个恶名远扬的早孕、夭折案例为题材。兴许是因为当时住在国外，都德才能如此冷静、坦率地处理这一敏感的题材。

西旺·都德在第二部作品《伦敦眼之谜》(The London Eye Mystery, 2007) 出版后不久就去世了，后续两部作品《湖沼之子》(Bog Child, 2008) 和《索拉丝寻母记》(Solace of the Road, 2009) 是在她身后推出的。荣获多项大奖的《湖沼之子》可能是她最优秀的作品，该作品讲述的是20世纪80年代发生在北爱的政治事件；在此，作为没有完全置身局外的人，她再次选取了住在国内的作家觉得令人畏手畏脚的题材。西旺·都德既是一位文笔充满诗意的忠诚作家，也是一个热情、可爱的女士，她的去世是爱尔兰儿童文学界的巨大损失。

在过去的大约十年里，随着人们对儿童图书的兴趣日益浓厚，爱尔兰还涌现了一批通俗及风俗小说作家。达伦·山(Darren Shan)创作的恐怖故事和幻想作品深受少年儿童(尤其是男孩)的喜爱。“达伦·山”甚至还成了吸血鬼系列《达伦·山传奇》(The Saga of Darren Shan, 2000年以来)中的一个人物。同时代的德瑞克·兰迪(Derek

Landy) 创作的是欢闹、机智的故事，那些故事围绕一名侦探展开，而该侦探竟然是因化名“娱人诡计” (*Skulduggery Pleasant*) (第一部同名小说，2007年) 而自鸣得意的一架骷髅。茱迪·克亭 (Judy Curtin)、茱迪·梅 (Judy May) 以及萨拉·维布 (Sarah Webb) 创作的小说也让少女们爱不释手。安娜·凯瑞 (Anna Carey) 是一新的少女文学作家，她的小说《真正的丽贝卡》 (*The Real Rebecca*, 2011) 趣味横生，畅销各地。

迪尔德丽·沙利文 (Deirdre Sullivan) 欢闹、轻松的《普琳的日记》 (*Prim Improper*, 2010)，也绝对是少女文学作品。这两部作品虽然以严肃的问题为题材，讲述的方式却轻松、时尚。西娜·威尔金森 (Sheena Wilkinson) 的少年文学处女作以她出生的贝尔法斯特为背景，却没有以北爱“局势”为题材。《逃跑》 (*Taking Flight*, 2010) 是一部从容不迫、坚毅果敢的城市小说。保拉·莉登 (Paula Leyden) 的处女作《蝴蝶心》 (*The Butterfly Heart*, 2011) 是针对较大儿童创作的，该作品以她出生的赞比亚为背景，用精巧、细腻的文笔讲述了童婚的问题。

儿童小说刚开始在爱尔兰出版时，人们认为图画书过于昂贵，让爱尔兰出版商无法付印。大致说来，这种情况依旧存在。

我们首屈一指的插图作家P·J·林奇（PJ Lynch）的作品多数在国外出版。他的风格类似油画，特别适合用作童话、传奇和经典作品的插图。他已给奥斯卡·王尔德的童话（1990年）、狄更斯的《圣诞颂歌》（*A Christmas Carol*, 2006）配上了插图。他的《乔纳森·图米的圣诞奇迹》（*The Christmas Miracle of Jonathan Twomey*, 1995）和《杰西渡海而来的时候》（*When Jessie Came across the Sea*, 1997）多以爱尔兰为背景，风格也更接近现实主义。他的作品在国内外都深受赞誉。

玛丽-路易斯·菲茨帕特里克（Marie-Louise Fitzpatrick）的图画处女作《运河》（*An Chanáil*, 1988）是一部经久不衰的作品，该作品的文字内容采用的是爱尔兰语。《长征》（*The Long March*, 1998）也是在爱尔兰出版的，一直以来都深受好评。后来，菲茨帕特里克和英美出版商签了约，在国外也成了一位耀眼的作家兼插图画家，出版了诸如《你、我及蓝蓝的大海》（*You, Me and the Big Blue Sea*, 2002）、《我是我》（*I Am I*, 2006）以及富于哲理的《那儿》（*There*, 2009）等作品。最近，她已经转向针对较大儿童的小说创作。

尼安·夏奇（Niamh Sharkey）明快、活泼的插图作品也多半是在国外出版的。她的早期作品是一些传统故事的插图改写本，如《智慧与奇迹的故事》

(*Tales of Wisdom and Wonder*)、《巨大的萝卜》(*The Gigantic Turnip*) (都是1998年出版),但她很快就转向了独立创作。《贪婪的野兽》(*The Ravenous Beast*) 2003年出版,幽默的《和梅维斯、马吉一起上路》(*On the Road with Mavis and Marge*, 2011)也正在畅销。针对幼儿创作的《我是一个快乐的小东东》(*I'm a Happy Hugglewug*, 2006)现在正由“棕袋子电影”(Brown Bag Films)改编成动画版系列。

玛丽·莫菲(Mary Murphy)针对幼童进行创作,作品的插图色彩亮丽。她的《.....的时候我就喜欢它》(*I Like it When ...*, 2005)及《我吻了小宝贝》(*I Kissed the Baby*, 2003)深受幼童及其父母的喜爱。她为圣诞节创作的《小猫头鹰与星星》(*Little Owl and the Star*, 2003)有着长盛不衰的魅力。

在最近的几年里,爱尔兰忽然涌现出大量的插图作家。奥列佛·杰斐斯(Oliver Jeffers)那些温馨、傻气的作品——《怎么逮住星星》(*How to Catch a Star*, 2004)、《失而复得》(*Lost and Found*, 2005)及其姊妹篇——以一个困惑不解的小孩为主角,深受读者喜爱;他的《难以置信的吃书男孩》(*The Incredible Book Eating Boy*, 2006)、《纸做的大马槟榔》(*The Great Paper Caper*, 2009)以及富于哲理的

《心与瓶子》（*The Heart and the Bottle*, 2010）也是深受较大读者的青睐。时间再晚一些，凯文·沃顿（Kevin Waldron）2010年的《小小的小苍蝇》（*Tiny Little Fly*）和克里斯·霍顿（Chris Haughton）2010年的《有些迷惑》（*A Bit Lost*），已让爱尔兰儿童图书市场为之震动。克里斯·佳吉（Chris Judge）的《孤独的野兽》（*The Lonely Beast*, 2011）看来也会引起轰动。

除了朱丽叶·奥卡拉汉（Julie O'Callaghan）2006年的《悄悄话宝典》（*The Book of Whispers*）和马修·斯韦尼（Matthew Sweeney）2001年的《爬上屋顶》（*Up on the Roof*）等作品，爱尔兰诗人出版的儿童诗歌数量还不多。一个最受推崇的例外是装订精美的插图大开本《以P开头》（*Something Beginning with P*, 2005），该书收录了爱尔兰诗人新近创作的一百首诗歌，由西莫斯·卡西曼（Seamus Cashman）汇编，由阿兰·克拉克（Alan Clarke）、克瑞纳·阿斯肯（Corrina Askin）和爱玛·伯恩（Emma Byrne）创作插图。

到21世纪初，20世纪90年代爱尔兰儿童文学出版的繁荣期就宣告结束了。然而，那段时期所带来的兴盛却有着巨大而有益的影响。许多新的儿童文学作家涌现出来了，人们对儿童文学创作和儿童书籍在文化上、商业上的重要性又增添了新的信心。

出版机构蜂拥而上，出版了大量儿童文学作品，随之而来的是儿童文学的根基在爱尔兰获得了大踏步的发展：作为支持和鼓励国内创作、插图和出版的机构，“爱尔兰儿童图书”协会、“国际儿童图书理事会（iBBY）爱尔兰分会”和“爱尔兰儿童文学研究会”都加入了经久不衰的“爱尔兰读书联合会”；设立了“比斯托年度图书奖”；爱尔兰综合大学的教育院系和英语院系都先后开设了儿童文学课程；爱尔兰儿童文学研究的成果开始发表；爱尔兰儿童文学专业人士开始和世界接轨；作为儿童文学极为繁荣和活跃的国家，爱尔兰的地位已经得到了广泛认可。

西旺·帕金森

西旺·帕金森 (Siobhán Parkinson, 1954年生于都柏林) 曾于都柏林三一学院学习英语文学和德语, 后继续在母校攻读, 1981年获博士学位。从20世纪90年代初开始, 她就一直在创作儿童文学, 还出版了两部成人小说。她的代表作有《姐妹们——没门儿!》(Sisters - No Way!, 1996)、《四个小朋友、三只小猫咪、两头小母牛、一个老巫婆(也许吧)》(Four Kids, Three Cats, Two Cows, One Witch (maybe), 1997)、《月亮王》(The Moon King, 1998) 和《看不见的东西》(Something Invisible, 2006)。她还翻译德国儿童文学, 而且是“小岛图书”(Little Island Books) (一家小型的儿童文学出版社) 的出版商。2010年, 她被授予爱尔兰第一位“儿童文学桂冠作家”的称号。她的最新作品《擦伤》(Bruised, 2011) 是一部写给小小少年阅读的小说。

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爱尔兰儿童文学： 一份神奇的礼物



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