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Australian Culture in Children's Literature:
Reflections and Transmissions.

by

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Preface.

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Abstract.

In this study of the relationship between children's literature and Australian culture I make a close textual analysis of the works of Ivan Southall, Eleanor Spence, Colin Thiele and Patricia Wrightson. This analysis is based on a framework of areas of culture as defined in anthropological terms, and includes such categories as the Environment, Social Organization, the Life Cycle, the Family and World View. Each author's work is analysed according to this framework. In a final section on each author I draw together the themes and developments in each author's writing and discuss the cultural insights they provide. In these textual analyses the emphasis is on identifying the culture which these authors reflect in the twenty to twenty-five year period in which they have been writing. I am also interested in identifying those cultural values which the authors promote or attempt to transmit to their readers. In the final chapter I undertake a comparative analysis. First I identify the areas of overlap or of greatest concern on which the four authors focus. These I identify as the Environment, the Family, Adolescence, Consumerism, the 'Other' Australians and Religion. I then compare these areas of focus and the attitudes and cultural values which the four authors reflect and transmit in these areas, with generalizations revealed in other interpretative analyses of Australian culture, including those of Craig McGregor and

Ronald Conway. The result of this comparative analysis is striking in terms of the significant aspects of Australian culture which all the authors reflect. At the same time they bring their own personal perspectives to bear on the cultural values which they seek to transmit.

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