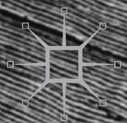
CRITICAL APPROACHES TO CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

Haru Takiuchi

BRITISH WORKING-CLASS WRITING FOR CHILDREN

Scholarship Boys in the Mid-Twentieth Century



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Scholarship Boys in the Mid-Twentieth Century

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

A cluster of working-class children's writers came to prominence in Britain during the 1960s and 1970s. This study reviews their writings and activities, the beginning of their struggles and how they gradually, but effectively, reshaped British children's literature. The majority of writers from the working class in the 1960s and the 1970s were examples of what Richard Hoggart, in *The Uses of Literacy* (1957), termed "the scholarship boy".[1] By "scholarship boys", Hoggart means British children who, during the early to mid-twentieth century, were selected at 11 years of age to be educated in grammar schools. Hoggart himself was such a child, and *The Uses of Literacy* explores how this selection process served to educate children outside their class and place them in a new kind of social space where they found themselves caught between classes. The three main writers featured in this book, Aidan Chambers (1934–), Alan Garner (1934–) and Robert Westall (1929–1993), were all scholarship boys. Their writing for children, this book will argue, has had a lasting impact on representations of class in British children's literature.

These children's writers from the working class have been highly influential, a fact demonstrated by their winning several of the most prestigious children's book awards among them: all three are Carnegie Medal winners, one of the two most prestigious children's book awards in Britain. Alan Garner was awarded an OBE in 2001 for services to children's literature. Robert Westall was one of the few writers who won the Carnegie Medal twice. These two writers also won the Guardian Children's Fiction Prize, the other most prestigious children's book award in Britain. Aidan

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Chambers is internationally popular and was awarded the Hans Christian Andersen Award by the International Board on Books for Young People in 2002. As suggested by the fact that Garner's *The Owl Service* (1967) and Westall's *The Machine Gunners* (1975) were named among the top ten medal-winning works for the 70th anniversary of the Carnegie in 2007, their works have enjoyed long-term popularity and have become classics of modern British children's literature ("70 Years Celebration").

This achievement stands out in the history of working-class writing, which generally has been seen as marginalised in British literature (Driscoll 4, 17; Hitchcock, *Working-Class Fiction* 42, 99). This trio of writers is important in understanding not only the modern history of British children's literature but also the field of British working-class literature. However, representations of class in their writing have rarely been examined. Scholars of social class have discussed this kind of critical neglect as a part of the cultural reproduction which sustains the class society.[2] According to Pierre Bourdieu, the dominant (middle-class/upper-class) culture usually defines what is meant by "good" literature and art (Bourdieu, *Distinction*; see also Williams, *Marxism and Literature* 49). This statement means that critics of the dominant class tend to respond positively to cultural products that reflect the values and tastes of their own class.[3] As this book shows, although the three scholarship boy children's writers have been highly regarded in the field of British children's literature, critics have tended to focus on their uses of middle-class/intellectual culture rather than their connection with working-class culture. Indeed, critics have often discussed representations of working-class cultures as "controversial" or "confusing" elements of their books.

Peter Hitchcock argues that scholars require a different set of tastes or theories to apprehend cultural production of a different set of tastes and distinctions, such as working-class writing (Hitchcock, *Working-Class Fiction* 21, 34). However, class has attracted much less attention than similarly weighty topics such as gender and race, and the value of working-class writing has been underappreciated in literary theory and criticism (Day 201–202; Driscoll 2; Gilmore 215; Hitchcock, *Working-Class Fiction* 9, 42; Janowitz 239; McLead 73–74; Sheeky-Bird 10; Wojcik-Andrews 117). Hitchcock's point corresponds with Pierre Bourdieu's theory of cultural production; Bourdieu considers that literary critics sustain their own positions by excluding different tastes and values that challenge the dominant culture of the field (*Field of Cultural Production* 36). In other words, because literary theories which appreciate

values of working-class cultures ultimately make established critics' own positions insecure, "Most literary critics visibly wince at the mention of working-class representation as a significant component of cultural analysis" (Hitchcock, "They Must Be Represented?" 20).

Providing this mechanism is at work, perhaps it is not surprising that the trend of neglect of class in children's literature has been more prominent in Britain, which is said to be more "obsessed" with class than is the United States of America (US) (Sheeky-Bird 10).[4] Even where there is an attempt to include British writers in discussions of class, these are overwhelmed by American examples, as seen in *Little Red Readings* (2014) or the *Children's Literature Association Quarterly*'s special issue on 'Children's Literature and the Left' (2005), both of which are predominantly about American children's literature. The majority of the small number of class studies of British children's literature are largely concerned with representations of class in classic middle-class books or about eighteenth- or nineteenth-century children's literature.[5] Although scholars have focussed on class attitudes and ideologies of middle-class writing, the voices of the British working class and the different set of tastes and views that working-class writers brought into British children's literature have been continually neglected.[6]

The central concern of this book, therefore, is to address this silence and to show how it has affected understanding of British children's literature from the 1960s and 1970s. Rather than looking across the range of work produced by scholarship boy writers, the focus here is on novels that feature characters who are scholarship boys, or more precisely, working-class grammar school pupils, looking closely at how the texts portray their experiences and critique their ambivalent class position. The three main writers featured in this book have been highly regarded in the field of British children's literature for their literary qualities. Ultimately, I argue that the writers' effective use of both their inherited British working-class culture and their acquired middle-class culture enabled them to be successful, and contributed to some of the radical changes, in terms of styles, vocabularies, political views and subject matter, in British children's literature during the period in question. In so doing, this book also highlights how class oppression operated in the interconnected spheres of children's book publishing and criticism, and shows how scholarship boy writers for children consciously struggled to change long-standing stereotypes and attitudes. This book is principally concerned with representations of the working class in British children's literature of the mid-twentieth century,

but it also begins to fill a gap in studies of British working-class literature of the period which, to date, have paid little attention to children's literature.

Scholarship Boy Writers

Even though authentic representation of the working class was rare until the late 1960s, British children's literature has featured the working class in some form throughout its history. In the first half of the twentieth century, although their number was very small, some children's books featured the working class as main subjects (see Dixon 1:58–70; Leeson *Children's Books and Class Society* 26, 33–40). However, although British children's literature saw a few pioneering writers from the working class, such as Richard Armstrong (1903–1986) and Frederick Grice (1910–1983), by the 1950s, the majority of books about the working class were written by middle-class authors. Such middle-class works about the working class were often initially praised by critics but began to be criticised as unrealistic by working-class writers in the 1960s and the 1970s (see Dixon 1: 59; Leeson *Children's Books and Class Society* 24, 30; Westall, "How Real" 41). For instance, Eve Garnett's *The Family From One End Street* (1937) was awarded the Carnegie Medal. The book was a "milestone in children's literature" (Dixon 1:62) simply because "so-called working-class characters occupy a central position" (Dixon 1:63) and because, as Frank Eyre states, "it was all we [children's critics] could find of that sort [books about the working class] to praise" (152) at the time. However, by the late 1960s and the 1970s, *The Family From One End Street* was already bitterly criticised for its depiction of working-class characters from "above and outside" (Townsend, *Written for Children* 1965 ed., 111), "a patronising view of the working class by a middle-class author—a view of the deserving, the poor but contented who know their place" (Dixon 1: 62–63). For Bob Dixon, a working-class, left-wing critic, it was ultimately "a condescending, demeaning and implausible book" (Dixon 1: 65). This change of evaluation of the book was brought by the increasing involvement of scholarship boys in British children's literature. The initial reception of *The Family From One End Street*, which had seen the story "as a true picture of working life", was seen by Leeson as symptomatic of the middle-class dominance of British children's literature (Leeson, *Reading and Righting* 112). The fact that the production of children's books was "almost entirely in middle-class hands… explains quite a lot as it's clearly a comfort to middle-class consciences to think of the less fortunate in the way this novel invites them to" (Dixon 1:65).

The Family From One End Street also exemplifies the kind of middle-class representation of the working class which children's writers from the working class consciously challenged and overcame in the 1960s and the 1970s. For instance, in *The Family From One End Street*, the working-class family's problems are most often solved by "charity" from generous middle-class people (Dixon 1:63). In Dixon's view, this tendency towards condescension continued in Elizabeth Stucley's *Magnolia Buildings* (1960) (Dixon 1:65). Summarising the representation of working-class characters in children's books in this period, Dixon states: "if they appeared at all, [they] appeared invariably in minor roles and in a very few categories" such as "objects of charity… repugnant characters… or menials" (Dixon 1:48). The similar criticism of class stereotypes in children's books was repeatedly made by scholarship boy writers in the 1970s (for instance, see Westall "How Real" 41; Leeson "Children's Books and Class Society" 24, 30). The scholarship boy writers broke these stereotypes in the 1970s through depictions of working-class characters as embodying a new kind of heroism. For instance, as this book shows, their working-class characters do not need middle-class "charity" to solve their problems anymore and are not subservient to the authority or the dominant class either.

Another tendency of middle-class writers' books about the working class was that they "often seemed like a sociological exploration of the inadequate, whether poorly done… or well done like John Rowe Townsend's *Gamble's Yard* (1961) or Sylvia Sherry's *A Pair of Jesus Boots* (1969) (Leeson, *Reading and Righting* 122). In contrast, as is shown here, scholarship boy writers tended to depict what they knew from their own experiences rather than attempting to highlight a social problem. Thus, the working-class characters featured in their books are not "inadequate" but more often are proud of their own lifestyles and cultures. The working class could be depicted by writers of any background, but in reality, new representations of the working class emerged only after a considerable number of working-class writers began to engage in British children's literature in the 1960s and 1970s.

Although this study focuses on Aidan Chambers, Alan Garner and Robert Westall, whose contribution to and impact on British children's literature in the 1960s and the 1970s were particularly significant, these writers are seen in the context of a larger group of scholarship boy writers of the period who had similar awareness. Where possible, discussion of the focus writers is complemented and extended by reference to other scholarship boy/girl writers. In the 1960s and the 1970s, most emerging writers

from the working class in British children's literature were highly educated and had middle-class occupations, such as school teachers and journalists, when they began to write for children. For instance, Bernard Ashley (1935–), Aidan Chambers, Bob Dixon (1931–2008), Gene Kemp (1926–) and Robert Westall were teachers who received higher education, or at least were trained as teachers in colleges; Robert Leeson (1928–2013) and Jan Needle (1943–) were left-wing journalists; and Alan Garner was an Oxford dropout. These writers were not simply "the working-class", nor did they conform to working-class stereotypes. Rather, they tactically and consciously used their intellectual ability and cultural capital gained from their grammar school and higher education experiences. Many of them, as teachers and left-wing journalists, were aware of the middle-class dominance of British children's literature and entered the field at least in part with the aim of making British children's literature more accessible for state school pupils. The sustained and complementary activities of these writers are another aspect of children's publishing in this period that has received insufficient attention.

Although Richard Hoggart introduced his term "scholarship boy" in 1957, "the scholarship girl" was almost unseen until the 1980s (Kuhn 122; Steedman 15).[7] This absence reflects the fact that most of the emerging writers from the working class were white males, although there were some exceptions, such as Sheila Delaney, whose *A Taste of Honey* (1958) had considerable impact and was made into a successful film in 1961. Similar gender and racial backgrounds also shaped British children's literature. Most influential writers and critics from the working class until the mid-1970s were white males. British children's literature, historically, had seen a much higher proportion of female writers than in adult literature because children's books were regarded as belonging to the female territory of the nursery (Hunt, *Understanding Children's Literature* 1). Despite the number of female writers of children's books, however, female working-class/scholarship girl writers only emerged in the late 1970s, confirming the view that working-class girls were "oppressed both within class [by gender] and [within gender] by class" (Plummer 7). In the late 1970s, writers from the working class, such as Gwen Grant (1940–), Gene Kemp (1926–2015) and Susan Price (1955–) published novels.[8] However, few female writers for children wrote about scholarship girls, particularly in the body of writing about working-class grammar school pupils. Conversely, scholarship boy writers such as Chambers, Garner and Westall frequently featured working-class grammar school pupils. This lack of

material is reflected in this book, which also focuses on white male accounts of the scholarship boy experience.

Chambers, Garner and Westall are all from the upper sections of the white English working class (although Westall has some Scottish ancestry). Corresponding to Jackson and Marsden's findings of working-class grammar school pupils' backgrounds that many of scholarship boys are from "the sunken middle-class" or are children of foremen, all the three writers have one grand- or great-grandparent of middle-class origin, and their fathers are all skilled manual workers (Jackson and Marsden 58–73). As is shown, therefore, their depiction of the working class was not of the slums, which was, as will be argued, the preferred image of the working class in the minds of the middle class because of its "exotic" nature and the safe distance. Rather, it was quite close to the middle class, meaning that class barriers and antagonisms between the middle classes and the working classes could more closely be observed and experienced. Furthermore, because English working-class culture includes a great variety of different cultures, these three writers' works show the diversity within the white English working class, which, in contrast to racial, gender and sexual differences, have tended to be overlooked by the middle classes, who rather see the working class as homogeneous "Others".

Robert Westall grew up in the Tyneside area of the North-East. He attended a grammar school as a scholarship pupil under the education system before 1944. Alan Garner, whose father was a craftsman in Alderley Edge in Cheshire, received his education under the 1944 Education system. However, he attended not an ordinary state-maintained grammar school but the elite, direct-grant Manchester Grammar School. Aidan Chambers also grew up in the North-East of England, in County Durham. Differing from the other two writers, who were academic high-flyers, initially he failed to pass the eleven-plus examination, but was transferred to a grammar school when he was 13 years old. Although Garner and Westall enrolled at universities, which was relatively rare for scholarship boys of their generation (see Chap. 4), Chambers was not able to apply for university, and instead attended a teacher training college; in short, Chambers was closer to the average scholarship boy. These three writers, through their recognition of their scholarship boy experiences, have created texts which illustrate both the variety and typicality of experiences of scholarship boys. As is shown, the scholarship boy experience is characteristically represented in their Young Adult novels, because the class tension between working-class community, family and the middle-class world represented

by school is generally most intense in adolescence. This difference makes their novels even more illustrative texts to understand scholarship boy experiences than books that are *for* adults, and *about* adults.

The emergence of scholarship boy writers in British children's literature was closely related to adult literature and larger social changes. British literature for adults saw a sudden and short-lived growth of writers from the working class between the 1950s and the early 1960s. Critics dubbed them "Kitchen Sink" writers and "Angry Young Men".[9] For instance, novelists such as Alan Sillitoe (1928–2010), Keith Waterhouse (1929–2009), John Braine (1922–1986), Stan Barstow (1928–2011), Barry Hines (1939–2016), David Storey (1933–), and playwrights such as Shelagh Delaney (1938–2011) and Arnold Wesker (1932–2016), belonged to these groups.[10] Among these writers, Braine, Barstow, Hines, Storey and Delaney attended grammar schools. Most left education early, and regarded themselves as outsiders to the dominant culture. Although a considerable number of working-class writers from this period were scholarship boys, the question of how scholarship boys' class position and education formed their writing has received little sustained critical attention. Moreover, none of the studies about working-class/scholarship boy literature in the period pays attention to children's books. Although literary criticism has shown limited interest in the figure of the scholarship boy, the group has attracted much more attention in the fields of sociology and education. This book, therefore, frequently draws on studies in these fields to explore the experiences of scholarship boys.

Theorising Working-Class Literature

As has been discussed, British working-class literature is a critically neglected area. The notable exception is in the sphere of socialist and Marxist criticism. As a result, the majority of studies about the working class in Anglophone literature (for both adults and children) have taken a broadly Marxist approach. However, John F. Lavelle (2011) argues that traditional Marxist literary criticism is almost by definition limited in analysis of novels which present lived experiences of working-class people. Traditionally, Marxists have defined class by focussing on economic relationships to the means of production (Cannadine 7–17). This approach is not helpful when considering the working-class/scholarship boy literature in mid-twentieth century Britain, which involves directing attention to working-class culture (Day 180). Indeed, scholars of British working-class culture rarely

define class solely in terms of economic standards, because class in Britain has always been understood as incorporating psychological and cultural elements alongside economic matters. According to Andrew Milner (1999), the three founders of Cultural Studies, Richard Hoggart, E. P. Thompson and Raymond Williams, were all "suspicious of supposedly 'objective' notions of class, as a 'category or 'structure'" (Milner 111).[11] They therefore developed a "culturalist" approach (Milner 111). For example, Hoggart's *The Uses of Literacy* (1957) offers no objective or economic definitions of the working class because, in his view, working-class people are those who "feel rather that they are 'working-class' in the things they admire and dislike, in 'belonging'" (*Uses* 19). Therefore, Hoggart identifies a series of class indicators, such as where a person lives, housing, occupations, education, speech and voice, and clothing (*Uses* 20–21). Raymond Williams' theory of *hegemony*, which he developed from Antonio Gramsci's hegemony as an alternative to the Marxist notion of "base and superstructure", is based on a similar view (Williams, *Problems in Materialism* 31–37). Hegemony is a concept which includes culture and ideology and sees the relationships of domination and subordination in forms of the whole process of living (Williams, *Marxism and Literature* 108–110). For Williams, hegemony "is a whole body of practices and expectations" and "is a lived system of meanings and values" (*Marxism and Literature* 110).

Pierre Bourdieu theorises this element of class in more detail. Bourdieu considers that class is defined by class *habitus*, the internalised form of class condition which generates things such as feelings, tastes and everyday practices (Bourdieu, *Distinction* 101–102, 169–172). Bourdieu's concept of class, which is not solely defined by economic capital, but also by, at least, cultural and social capitals, is relational (Bourdieu, *Distinction* 101–102, 114). The concept of class in classical Marxism, which "implies an ability to imagine society as a structured whole based on particular economic relations" (Day 201), is sometimes pointed to as a reason of the decline of class studies, because such a notion is inconsistent with ideas of poststructuralism/postmodernism (Day 201; Driscoll 1–3; Haywood 142; Janowitz 239–241). However, class analysis and postmodernism/poststructuralism are not necessarily in conflict (Lavelle 1, 9–10). Rather, the lack of class studies arises from the fact that, as Driscoll argues, critics have used postmodern theories "to erase the category of class" (Driscoll 3), to achieve the monopoly in defining the legitimate taste (Driscoll 19–21). Indeed Bourdieu's theory of class, which mainly focusses on cultural and relational aspects of class, can

sidestep the kinds of problems associated with classical Marxist theory (see Devine and Savage, *Rethinking Class* 1; Bourdieu and Wacquant, *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology* 15–19, 133). It can be used to analyse complicated and fluid relationships between class strata within or outside of the three-tier class system (see Bourdieu and Wacquant, *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology* 15–19).[12] As this book demonstrates, Bourdieu's concept of class enables more effective analysis of the class position and the social and psychological experiences of scholarship boys.

However, an even greater problem with classical Marxism in relationship to the evaluation of scholarship boy writing is the fact that the realities of the working class—as observed by writers from the working class—do not always serve to reaffirm Marxist doctrine. For instance, one of the problematic tendencies of Marxist/socialist criticism is that it is prone to emphasising "the working class" as a unified social group (Lavelle 2). Although this book uses the term "the working class", it has to be noted that, as Bourdieu argues, "Classes in Marx's sense", such as the working class, are "*to be made*", which have to be "made through a political work" (Bourdieu, *In Other Words* 129). Until the early 1960s, many British saw Britain as characterised by "a hierarchical and deferential caste of mind" rather than social classes in the Marxist sense (Cannadine 162). Throughout the 1950s and the 1960s, however, the political work to create "the working-class" was built up by socialists and left-wing scholars, such as E. P. Thompson (1963) and Richard Hoggart (1957). Such works ultimately succeeded in creating "the working-class". During the period covered by this book, the 1960s and the 1970s, polarised or triadic models of class predominated, meaning that most people saw their lives and society in terms of "them and us", "the working-class, the middle-class, and the upper-class" (Cannadine 164). In the 1960s and the 1970s, the writers featured in this book frequently referred to "the working-class" and "the middle-class" in their essays and correspondence when discussing children's literature and their own backgrounds. They show that they were fully aware of the diversity and conflicts within the working class. Yet, these writers also shared a sense of solidarity as writers from the working class when it came to resisting what they saw as the oppressive middle-class cultural dominance of children's literature. In this respect, for them the working class existed, and, as is shown, this class consciousness served an important function.

However, the existence of class consciousness does not mean that "the working class" exists as a unified homogeneous social group. In fact, for

anyone who has looked closely at British working-class culture, its diverse nature, "the great number of differences, the subtle shades, the class distinctions, within the working-classes themselves" (Hoggart, *Uses* 21) is always apparent. Some scholars, particularly those who are themselves of the working class, have blamed some socialist/Marxist intellectuals for circulating the image of a united homogeneous working class by choosing to focus on a limited group and set of attitudes in their discussions of the working class (Lavelle 1–2). Valerie Walkerdine points out that in some ways ideas about the working class constituted a kind of middle-class fantasy:

> Whether The Working-class is seen as the 'bedrock of the revolution'… or as an authoritarian class who are reactionary… the issue is similar. All these positions attest not to the 'reality' of working-class life but to bourgeois fantasies that are incorporated into 'truths' through which The Working-class is created as an object, governed and regulated. (205)

Scholars such as Walkerdine argue that whatever their political beliefs, middle-class people (including those who regard themselves as socialists) constructed working-class people as "the Other", or as a way of fulfilling middle-class desires. As a consequence, they created the fantasy of the unified working class.

Scholarship boy writers depicted what they saw as the realities of working-class lives, which often contradicted the united homogeneous image, or the middle-class left-wing fantasy of the working class. For instance, as is shown in Chap. 9, Robert Westall depicted antagonisms between class strata within the working class in a small geographic area. His novels often illustrate conflicts within the working class at a variety of levels, such as antagonisms between rural and urban, or rivalry between specific streets and districts or between races. Furthermore, scholarship boy novels often feature aspiring working-class characters who desire to be middle class, or who experience alienation from both the working class and the middle class. Their attempts to depict such realities and diversity of the working class were, however, less likely to be appreciated by Marxist critics, who were concerned with emphasising the political role of the different classes. In a similar way, although Alan Garner, as is shown, attempted to revive the residual culture in the rural working class through his writing, such attempts were rarely appreciated by left-wing critics, because classical Marxism had an urban bias and tended to dismiss nonrevolutionary rural working-class culture (see Williams, *Politics and Letters* 319).

The political bias towards Marxism or socialism in working-class literary studies has generally not benefitted most writers from the working class in mid-twentieth-century Britain, because the majority of working-class/scholarship boy writers (whether they wrote for adults or children) did not, in the period in question, identify with left-wing politics (Haywood 116; Laing 221–223). It is probably not a coincidence that the most frequently studied working-class novelist in the period, Alan Sillitoe, "is the only novelist [among John Braine, Stan Barstow, David Storey, Barry Hines and Sillitoe] who overtly expressed ideas of class struggle" (Salman 202). Even relatively "angry" working-class characters in the novels of the period, including Sillitoe's, rarely support socialism/Marxism in straightforward ways (Hitchcock, *Working-Class Fiction* 68; von Rosenberg 158–160). Peter Hitchcock (1989) notes that the majority of the protagonists in the working-class/scholarship boy novels of the period "have few natural predilections for the Right Wing—yet part of their dilemma is a distrust for a Left in Britain" (*Working-Class Fiction* 68). Some of the working-class characters depicted by scholarship boy writers are neither angry nor revolutionary, meaning they do not fit into Marxist models (see Rosenberg 16). Marxist/socialist critics were likely to disregard such works, and more often focus on "militant and proletarian" earlier working-class writers such as Robert Tressell (1870–1911) (see Lavelle 3–5).[13] For reasons of a similar tendency, in the field of children's literature, although Jan Needle, who "accepts… the great promises held out to the future by a certain local, low-key and militantly domestic British socialism" (Inglis, "Social Class and Educational Adventures" 89), is valued by the left-wing critic Fred Inglis, other scholarship boy writers who distance themselves to varying degrees from classical Marxism, including left-wing writers such as Robert Westall, have largely been neglected in terms of their depictions of class and politics.

Additional tensions with Marxism and for Marxist critics stem from the fact that their literary aims were also often difficult to appreciate in the frame of classical Marxism. Ingrid von Rosenberg (1982) summarises the characteristics of working-class novels for adults in the mid-twentieth century:

> The writers no longer show that grim pride in the separateness of their class, born from its very underprivileged and deprived position, which had dictated all that militant proletarian literature of the past. They show a pride that is fundamentally different, almost the opposite: it is pride in their integration, in having become a respected part *within* the existing society at last. (148)

Von Rosenberg, similar to most critics of working-class literature, makes no specific mention of writing for children by scholarship boys, but in this observation she is pointing to a characteristic shared by scholarship boy writers for both adults *and* children. As is shown in the following chapters, most scholarship boy writers for children willingly use middle-class literary traditions to write about working-class culture. Scholarship boy writers, who were caught between the working class and the middle class, tended to see antagonism between the classes and blind rejections of middle-class culture ultimately as damaging and pointless. In their stories, therefore, social and cultural integration is generally regarded as an ideal rather than a reluctant concession to the dominant culture and class. Scholarship boy writers often sought reconciliation between the working class and the middle class: for left-wing critics, this has undermined their status as writers from the working class. As a result, in the fields of both adult and children's literature, the impact of scholarship boy writers in mid-twentieth century Britain has largely been neglected.

Paradoxically, therefore, in the field of British children's literature it was the writers' determination to write about the working class that engendered not only criticism from conservative critics who disliked the inclusion of working-class culture but also critical neglect by left-wing critics (see Chaps. 8 and 9). Such Marxist scholars and critics have, however, overlooked the fact that another kind of class struggle was ongoing in the period: it was what Bourdieu theorises as struggle in the field of cultural production (or struggle to change the hegemony, in Williams' terms). As Haywood points out, "there has never been a time of such cultural pre-eminence in the history of the British working-class" to match the mid-twentieth century (Haywood 116). In other words, it was the time when struggles to challenge the bourgeois cultural domination in the field of English literature were most intense. As is shown, in mid-twentieth-century Britain, class was reproduced through cultural processes which often took place in educational institutions and in conjunction with children's books. Scholarship boy writers for children aimed to change this reproduction of class. They challenged the class system by integrating working-class culture into the dominant culture. This was not the kind of class struggle to achieve a social revolution expected in classical Marxism, but it was still a significant, and an enduring, struggle to change the class-divided society.

Because of the tendency to emphasize political ideology rather than cultural and psychological issues of class, working-class/scholarship boy

writers' backgrounds were also often toned down by socialist critics in the fields of both adult and children's literature. As Rosenberg states, "Among critics of working-class, especially socialist, literature it has become the habit to argue that the author's own background is of only negligible importance" (146). This book, however, shows that scholarship boy writers' backgrounds and real-life experiences were indispensable in any consideration of their works and activities. The consciousness of being from the working class, and their rich inherited working-class culture, had a key role in the development of the children's writers from the working class in the 1960s and the 1970s.

Outline

This book consists of three parts, each focussing on publishing, novels and criticism. By using not just published texts but also interview and archival materials, it highlights scholarship boy writers' own experiences and how these shaped their writing and activities in every sphere of the field. In particular, material from the Aidan Chambers Archive in Aberystwyth (now housed at Seven Stories in Newcastle-upon-Tyne), and several collections, including those of Robert Westall at Seven Stories in Newcastle-upon-Tyne, provide important insights into their experiences as scholarship boys. Part I considers issues around class and children's book publishing. Generally, published texts are selected and filtered by editors of publishing houses, in addition to writers' pre-selection in accordance with publishers' status, ethos and image. Until the 1960s, because of such filters, few children's books that depicted the working class from a working-class point of view were published. Chapter 2 investigates these conditions of British children's book publishing and the emergence of scholarship boy writers for children in the 1960s and 1970s. Two historically important attempts to increase the number of books for working-class children by Leila Berg and Aidan Chambers are then explored. Chapter 3 examines editorial disputes over and alterations to Westall's *The Machine Gunners* (1975). This chapter highlights how publishers' attitudes towards working-class culture affected the contents of published books by examining Westall's manuscript in his archive, the first hardback edition and the Puffin edition.

Scholarship boy novels for the young are often based on, or inspired by, the writers' personal experiences. Part II highlights characteristics of scholarship boy experiences by examining scholarship boy novels for children. Chapter 4, exploring Aidan Chambers' *Dance on My Grav*e (1982),