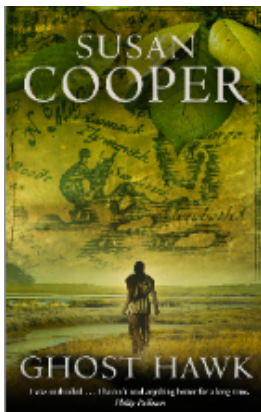


TALKING POINTS

CILIP Carnegie Medal Shortlist 2014



The CILIP Carnegie
& Kate Greenaway
Children's Book
Awards



GHOST HAWK by Susan Cooper

Before reading

What do the two epigraphs – three centuries apart – tell you about what you should expect from this book?

The setting

What clues does Susan Cooper include so that you know when and where the book is set?

Does anything about the way the author uses language give you clues as to the time period when the action is taking place?

The book is set in a world entirely different to that of its readers. What are the ways Little Hawk's world is different to yours? And how does the author make you feel you're actually there?

Little Hawk's relationship to the world around him (to the land, to trees, to animals) is so different from ours – can you think of some examples of this?

Do you think the author had to do much historical research before writing this book? What sort of things would she have needed to know to make it accurate?

The story

Versions of this story – the Europeans settling in America – have been told many times before. Why do you think writers keep coming back to it?

Did the shooting at the end of Part One come as a surprise?

Though their societies are quite different, both Little Hawk and John are symbolically sent away from their homes and families to grow up – Little Hawk to spend three months in the forest, John to be apprenticed to a cooper. Can you think of other similarities between their lives and their experiences?

Why is it significant that John learns to speak Little Hawk's language?



Is the ending hopeful?

In her Author's Note at the end of the book, Susan Cooper explains which parts are based on historical fact and which are completely made up. Does knowing this change how you think about the book?

The characters

All of the characters believe themselves to be right, and to act in ways that are moral. But are any of them *all* good or *all* bad?

What role in the story is played by

- Roger Williams?
- Yellow Feather?
- Daniel Smith?

Why did the author choose to include them?

How the story is told

We often divide books into reality and fantasy – which is this?

Why do you think the author chose to tell John's story from Little Hawk's point of view?

Ghost Hawk deals with conflicts between Native American tribes and the European settlers – do you feel the author wants you to support one particular side in these conflicts?

Some themes

What are the different expectations for boys and for girls in Little Hawk's society? And in John's?

Little Hawk's tomahawk appears throughout the book – from the very first pages to the very last. What is its significance?

Little Hawk and his people have strong beliefs about their place in the world; the English have the strength of their religion. From what you've read here, do you think tensions were inevitable, or could they have been avoided?

Ghost Hawk is set a world away from our own, and centuries back – but do you think the author is trying to say something about our world today?

