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Bookbird

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Spirited Away and Alice in Wonderland

INTERNATIONAL BOARD ON BOOKS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

IBBY

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*I said it in Hebrew – I said it in Dutch –
I said it in German and Greek:
But I wholly forgot (and it vexes me much)
That English is what you speak!*

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The quoted stanza is from 'The Hunting of the Snark' by Lewis Carroll. The titles of the various *Bookbird* sections are taken from that same poem, from 'The Walrus and the Carpenter', also by Lewis Carroll, and from 'The Owl and the Pussycat' by Edward Lear.

Letters to the Editors

Dear Editors

I was surprised and dismayed to read Lydia Kokkola's condemnation of Anne Holm's award-winning novel, *I Am David*, in *Bookbird*, vol. 45, no. 4. She talks of its 'gross historical distortions' and its being at 'the extreme "untruthful" end of the spectrum' of Holocaust fiction, because 'although there are occasional mentions of *them* (Nazis), most of the novel is set in peacetime Europe where Italians are not allied to *them* and Americans can take vacations in their own cars' (p6). But surely this judgment depends on a misreading of the novel, first published in Denmark in 1963, when the Cold War was at its height?

Nowhere in *I Am David* are 'they' identified as Nazis, and unless Holm herself has written a statement about the novel of which I am unaware, I see no reason why the book should be classified as 'Holocaust fiction'. It has always seemed very clear to me that Holm's use of 'they', instead of directly naming those responsible for David's imprisonment, is a deliberately unspecific mode of referring to Stalinist communism and the methods of oppression adopted behind the 'Iron Curtain'. Concentration camps were not unique to the Nazi terror! David

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escapes to the Greek city of Salonica, which means that the camp is most probably located in Bulgaria. He travels by ship to postwar Italy, naturally a safe holiday destination for the Americans he meets. He proceeds over various frontiers towards his destination, Denmark. All too near to his direct route is the border into East Germany, over which at one point he accidentally strays.

There are indeed incidents in this novel whose probability could be questioned, notably the use of coincidence, but I don't think that makes it a fantasy. Still less should this important book be dismissed as a falsification of history!

Pat Pinsent

Senior Research Fellow, Roehampton University, November 2007

Pat Pinsent is absolutely right in her observation that Holm only refers to *them* and not specifically to Nazis in *I Am David* or *North to Freedom*. My decision to include this work in my article was based on the fact that it is often included in anthologies of Holocaust literature for children, such as Edward T Sullivan's (otherwise excellent) *The Holocaust in Literature for Youth* (Scarecrow Press). Holm's novel is also often listed on guides for teachers. Even very respectable sources, such as the League for Human Rights of B'nai Brith Canada's *Yom ha-Shoah Holocaust Memorial Day Teacher's Guide* (which draws on the Association of Jewish Libraries Annotated Bibliography of *Literature on the Holocaust for Juvenile and Young Adult Collections*), includes Holm's novel. I did not explain that this was the reason why I included the novel in my discussion, and I regret having failed to clarify this point. However, I stand behind my argument that, in this case, critics (ie those who would include this work on such listings) have failed to live up to their responsibilities to the truth. I am delighted that Pinsent is clearly a more ethically responsible critic.

Lydia Kokkola

Professor of English Literature, Turku University, November 2007



• German-language literature for children has bequeathed some classic characters to the world, including Heidi and Struwwelpeter. In recent years, with the awarding of the Hans Christian Andersen medal to German-speaking picturebook artists on four occasions and the success of Cornelia Funke's novels, German literature for children has enjoyed increasing international acclaim, argues Bettina Kümmerling-Meibauer in this comprehensive survey article

Children's literature reached a high point in Germany in the 1920s and 1930s with the novels of Erich Kästner and Lisa Tetzner, and again in the 1960s with the renewal of modern fantasy by Michael Ende, James Krüss and Otfried Preußler, and many of these authors have achieved international recognition (Wild 2002). Authors and illustrators from Austria and Switzerland have also been highly influential in the development of international children's literature, with the emergence of new illustrative styles in Swiss picturebooks by Alois Carigiet, Hans Fischer and Felix Hoffmann after World War II, and the popular children's books by the Austrian Christine Nöstlinger, the first winner of the Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award in 2003. International interest in German-language children's literature declined after 1970, even though very promising authors such as Peter Hacks, Peter Härtling,

Variety in Genres and Styles

Trends in Modern German-language Children's Literature

by BETTINA

KÜMMERLING-MEIBAUER



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Paul Maar, Gudrun Mebs and Benno Pludra, to name but a few, published prize-winning novels and stories for children.

However, international interest in children's literature from Austria, Germany and Switzerland has been increasing again since the beginning of the 1990s. The number of German-language children's books translated into other languages is increasing. International success has been achieved by the children's novels of Cornelia Funke, especially her self-illustrated fantasy stories, *Herr der Diebe* (*The Thief Lord*) (2000) and *Tintenherz* (*Inkheart*) (2004), with its sequels *Tintenblut* (*Inkspell*) (2005) and *Tintentod* (*Inkdeath*) (2007), which have had unexpectedly high print runs in England and the United States.

One important reason for this new international interest in German-language books has been the awarding of the renowned Hans Christian Andersen Medal to four German-speaking illustrators: the Austrian Lisbeth Zwerger was awarded the medal in 1990, the Swiss Jörg Müller was honoured in 1994, the German Klaus Ensikat received the medal in 1996, and the German Wolf Erlbruch was honoured in 2006. Their outstanding picturebooks are distinguished by a sensitive relationship between pictures and text. Of particular note are *Jules Ratte* [*Jule's rat*] (1981) illustrated by Klaus Ensikat with verse by Peter Hacks; Erlbruch's *Die Werkstatt der Schmetterlinge* (*The Butterfly Workshop*) (1994), with a text by Gioconda Belli; *Aufstand der Tiere oder die neuen Stadtmusikanten* (*The Animals' Rebellion*) (1989), illustrated by Jörg Müller with a story by Jörg Steiner; and Lisbeth Zwerger's captivating interpretations of texts written by Frank Baum, Lewis Carroll, ETA Hoffmann and Christian Morgenstern.

Perhaps more than any other genre, the picturebook has redrawn boundaries and expanded literary horizons in recent years. Contemporary illustrators are continually breaking new ground and challenging accepted forms and conventions. Innovative graphics and the creative, often complex dialogue between text and pictures provide multiple levels of meaning. Apart from the HCA medallists who have already been mentioned, illustrators like Jutta Bauer, Rotraut Susanne Berner, Quint Buchholz, Nikolaus Heidelbach and Binette Schroeder, to name but a few, have made a major contribution to the revival of modern

picturebook illustration. Good examples of the wide range of German picturebooks are the extraordinary works of Dieter Wiesmüller, such as *Komm mit, Moritz* (*Maury and the Night Pirates*) (1988) and *Pernix: Abenteuer eines kleinen Sauriers im Urzeitwald* (*Pernix: The Adventures of a Small Dinosaur*) (1992). The brilliant colouring and the plasticity of the landscape

Perhaps more than any other genre, the picturebook has redrawn boundaries and expanded literary horizons

evoke an atmosphere of magic realism, thus stimulating the child's imagination. Also impressive are the illustrations of Binette Schroeder, who received international acclaim for her first picturebook *Lupinchen* (*Flora's Magic House*) (1969). With *Der Froschkönig* (*The Frog Prince*) (1989), which many critics consider Schroeder's

Three trends in recent German children's literature: variety in genres and styles, crosswriting and literary works based on autobiographical memories

masterpiece, and *Laura* (1999), a tribute to Lewis Carroll's dreamlike world, Schroeder strongly influenced subsequent illustrators like Henriette Sauvant, who created astonishing pictures for the fairy tales *Allerleiirauh* [*All sorts*] (1997) and *Die sieben Raben* (*The Seven Ravens*) (1995). By contrast, the photo-realistic illustrations of Quint Buchholz, for example in *Die Sara, die zum Zirkus will* [*Sarah who wants to go to the circus*] (1990) or *Der Sammler der Augenblicke* (*The Collector of Moments*) (1997), build a charming contrast to the cartoon-like style of Jutta Bauer, Rotraut Susanne Berner and FK Waechter, all of them contributing to increasing public interest in modern picturebook art. One striking characteristic, besides the variety in thematic topics and artistic styles, is the tendency to use different materials and combine illustrative techniques in order to create something new. In summary, contemporary picturebooks have become a field of innovation and experimentation, challenging the conventions and norms that have traditionally governed the genre (Raecke 1999).

New developments are also obvious in the German children's novel. In my view, three trends can be discerned in recent German

children's literature: variety in genres and styles, crosswriting and literary works based on autobiographical memories. A glance at the books of Kirsten Boie, Jutta Richter, Burkhard Spinnen and Andreas Steinhöfel reveals the multifaceted nature of modern children's literature and the variety of ways in which writers attempt to appeal to their intended readership.

One of the most intriguing children's books of the 1990s is Kirsten Boie's *Ich ganz cool* [*Cool me*] (1992), runner-up for the Deutscher Jugendliteraturpreis (German youth literature prize). This first-person narrative deals with the everyday problems of a fatherless boy aged 13. In his quest for a friend who might share his interests, he spends the whole day watching TV and indulging in daydreams of an alternative and adventurous life. This novel is outstanding for its demanding style. In order to authentically reproduce the language of young people, Boie integrates slang, neologisms and the language of comics, thus producing a linguistically creative work that attempts to imitate the oral language of today's youth. *Ich ganz cool* challenges the reader by its ambiguity, the presentation of a childhood shaped by media like TV, video and the computer, the transition between daydream and matter-of-fact narration, and the open ending. For these reasons, *Ich ganz cool* might be regarded as an extraordinary example of the subgenre psychological children's novel.

Another important representative of this new direction within the realm of children's literature is Jutta Richter, whose novels, such as *Der Hund mit dem gelben Herzen* [*The dog with the yellow heart*] (1998), *Der Tag als ich lernte, die Spinnen zu zähmen* [*The day I learned to tame spiders*] (2000) and *Hechtsommer* (*The Summer of the Pike*) (2004), are characterised by a deep insight into child psychology. Although these small books seemingly tell a simple and



straightforward story, Richter succeeds in creating a poetic atmosphere that is reinforced by a lyrical style.

In contrast, Burkhard Spinnen's *Belgische Riesen* [Belgian giants] (2000) is a rather complex children's novel that is noteworthy. It tells the story of a new friendship between a shy boy, recently moved to a modern estate, and an imaginative girl, who is torn between worry about her depressive mother and hatred for her father who has left the family. The mysterious Belgian giants, which turn out to be a race of very big rabbits, gradually move to the centre of this eventful and surprising story.

Alternating between humorous and tragic scenes, these tragicomic novels are distinguished by a feeling that things exist in a precarious state of equilibrium. For this reason I characterise these works as 'broken idylls'. Whereas Richter's and Spinnen's works are aimed at children from 10 years upwards, Andreas Steinhöfel's award-winning adolescent novel *Die Mitte der Welt* (*The Center of the World*) (1998) is directed at young adults. By addressing taboo subjects and integrating complex narrative strategies – changing points of view, first-person narrative, intertextuality, irony, open ending – Steinhöfel adopts features that are typical of adult literature. Structured like a modern *Bildungsroman*, this novel focuses on the development of the male protagonist, an outsider who undergoes a difficult process of gaining self-knowledge. A symbol for his permanent quest is the big library in his home, called the middle of the world. Only in this room does he find allies in the books he so voraciously devours; outside the library, he is excluded by others of his age because of his homosexuality. This is an effective representation of a figure characterised by conflicting emotions and thoughts (Steinz and Weinmann 2002).

The development of the psychological children's novel goes hand in hand with a new perspective on childhood. Accordingly, more and more authors rely on their own childhood memories when writing children's novels (Ewers 1997). However, their works are not autobiographies in a traditional sense; most often these

Tragicomic novels are distinguished by a feeling that things exist in a precarious state of equilibrium. For this reason I characterise these works as 'broken idylls'

novels are autobiographies in disguise. Neither the book's title nor a preface explicitly points out that the work in question is based on the author's childhood memories. However, this knowledge can be gleaned from information on the book's origin and the author's biography. Kirsten Boie, Mirjam Pressler and Rafik Schami all integrate autobiographical references into their children's books. Examples are Kirsten Boie's *Mit Jakob wurde alles anders* [Everything

I suggest classifying these autobiographies in disguise as 'retrospective' children's novels

changed with Jakob] (1986) and *Monis Jahr* [Moni's year] (2003); Pressler's *Wenn das Glück kommt, muß man ihm einen Stuhl hinstellen* [When happiness comes, you should pull up a chair] (1994); Schami's *Eine Hand voller Sterne* [A handful of stars] (1987) and *Die Sehnsucht der Schwalbe* [The swallow's yearning] (2000). To distinguish these novels from autobiographies or autobiographical novels, I suggest classifying them as 'retrospective' children's novels (Kümmerling-Meibauer 2004). Boie, Pressler and Schami have integrated events and fragments from their own childhood in their fiction, but they arranged these materials in multiple ways by inserting fictitious plots, by constructing a third-person narrative and by changing the main characters' names. By means of these alienation effects, the novels reveal a complexity that arises from the confrontation of the child's spontaneous perspective by the adult narrator's reflecting perspective. With its focus on the representation of psychological processes, the concentration on the inner perspective of the characters, and the attempt to address taboo subjects, the psychological children's novel, and especially the retrospective novel, has paved the way for the growing interest of adult readers in contemporary children's literature (Ewers 2005).

If children's literature does succeed in briefly arousing the attention of scholars and critics of mainstream literature, this is largely due to well-known authors for adults who have crossed over into writing books for children, such as Irene Dische, Hans Magnus Enzensberger, Peter Härtling and Christoph Hein. These authors

not only manage to establish themselves in both adult literature and children's literature, but also succeed in winning wide acclaim in both. Enzensberger, for example, who is highly esteemed for his novels, essays and travelogues for adults, now and then turns towards a child audience. In the fantasy novel *Wo warst du, Robert?* (*Where Were You, Robert?*) (1998), the protagonist accidentally goes on a journey through time, being transported backwards into seven different periods of time, beginning with a short stay in Russia in 1956, and ending in the Thirty Years War in the 17th century. How Robert manages to escape these time shifts is told in a well-structured narrative full of suspense and philosophical insight.

Children's literature now reflects dominant trends in adult literature

Shifting boundaries between children's and adult literature constitute a significant trend in contemporary literature internationally. The term 'crosswriting' (or 'crossover writing') has been widely adopted in recent years to refer to the phenomenon of authors who write for both children and adults (separately) and also the phenomenon of children's books that are directed at an implied audience comprising both children and adults. Children's literature now reflects dominant trends in adult literature, and a wide range of previously taboo subjects and complex narrative strategies – including composite genres, deviations from chronological, linear order, fragmentation and gaps, absence of closure, irony, intertextuality – transgress the traditional demarcations separating children's from adult literature (Kümmerling-Meibauer 2003).

Peter Härtling alternately writes for children and adults. In 1999 he published an acclaimed

biography of the Romantic author ETA Hoffmann, and his next children's novel, *Reise gegen den Wind* [Journey against the wind] (2000), is strongly influenced by his preoccupation with Hoffmann. Regarded as an historical novel dealing with the end of World War II, *Reise gegen den Wind* is thematically determined by Romantic images, which is most obvious in the character of a mysterious elderly man who often intervenes in events.

Another aspect of contemporary German children's literature is the recalling of literary traditions

The largest group of crosswriters are those authors who address children and adults in separate works, and many of them continue to maintain a clear distinction between their two audiences. However, many authors now aspire to a form of crosswriting that consists of addressing the same texts to children and adults. In fact, new terms to describe the cross-audience phenomenon have been coined in some languages to refer to this literature for all ages, as for example the term *allålderslitteratur* (all age literature) in Swedish or *Literatur für Leser von 8 bis 80* (literature for readers aged 8 to 80) in German. Most of the children's books I have already mentioned appeal to children and adults alike.

Another aspect of contemporary German children's literature is the recalling of literary traditions. In the first place, some authors refer in their recent works to the Romantic fairy tale tradition, as seen in Peter Härtling's *Reise gegen den Wind*. In his five-volume series about the fantastic character Sams (1973–2002), Paul Maar relates his main character to the motif of the strange child, introduced by ETA Hoffmann's fairy tale *Das fremde Kind* [The strange

child] (1816). This relationship is veiled in the first three volumes, but the fourth volume *Ein Sams für Martin Taschenbier* [A Sams for Martin Taschenbier] (1996) explicitly compares Sams to Hoffmann's strange child by stressing his peculiar outlook and his outstanding abilities. In addition, especially in this novel, Sams is often referred to as 'das fremde Kind' (the strange child), and other characters are called after the siblings Christlieb and Felix in Hoffmann's tale.

The Romantic motif of the strange child also occurs in Andreas Steinhöfel's *Der mechanische Prinz* [The mechanical prince] (2003). Both the figure of the mechanical prince and also the story's narrator are characterised by typical properties of the strange child. These properties include agelessness, immortality and magic abilities, among others. Because of these characteristic features, the characters that belong to this type are mainly distinguished by their loneliness, on the one hand, and by remaining in a state of eternal childhood on the other. These novels by Maar and Steinhöfel are just two examples of the obvious tendency to refer to national or international tradition in the realm of children's literature, a tendency that has not been thoroughly investigated so far, but which is a very promising subject for future children's literature research.

Secondly, the recalling of literary traditions is expressed in the endeavour to publish complete editions of the works of renowned German children's book authors, especially of children's classics (Kümmerling-Meibauer 1999). To commemorate Erich Kästner's centenary, a nine-volume edition was published in 1999, which includes both his works written for children and those for adults. In addition, this edition is a successful venture in satisfying not only the needs of an average readership by presenting a complete and readable edition, but also the

demands of scholars by including footnotes and critical remarks. In addition, the death of the prolific author James Krüss in 1997 prompted the publishing house Carlsen to start a complete edition of Krüss's extensive works for children, which were partially out of print. The volumes printed up to now arouse the readers' curiosity by introducing them to previously unpublished works like *Im Krug zum Grünen Walfisch* [In the tankard at the Green Whale] (1997) on the one hand, and calling their attention to very demanding works such as *Timm Thaler oder das verkaufte Lachen* [Timm Thaler or the sold laughter] (1962) or *Mein Urgroßvater und ich* [My great-grandfather and I] (1959) on the other.

Furthermore, many children's books from the former GDR (East Germany), which suddenly vanished from the backlist after 1990, have had a revival in the last few years. Books like *Tinko* (1954) by Erwin Strittmatter, *Insel der Schwäne* [Island of the swans] (1980) by Benno Pludra and the many picturebooks illustrated by Werner Klemke and Elisabeth Shaw, which are regarded as modern children's classics, are available again, thus acknowledging their relevant contribution to the history of German children's literature and their long-lasting appeal to the child audience.

An outstanding novel has recently been rediscovered. It is by the German-Jewish author Anna Maria Jokl who fled the Nazis in 1937, emigrating first to Prague and then to London. In 1937, Jokl wrote a school story with the title *Die Perlmutterfarbe* [The mother-of-pearl colour], first published in 1948 to immediate success. Nevertheless, this novel fell into oblivion for decades, until it was reissued in 1993. Jokl, a member of the so-called Kästner generation, created with *Die Perlmutterfarbe* a children's novel that is distinguished by its innovative literary qualities. The author reveals a clairvoyance concerning future developments in Nazi Germany that captivates contemporary readers as well. Since 1993, Jokl's novel has appeared in three different editions (two hardcover editions, one paperback) and has never been out of print. A film version is in preparation. The significance of *Die Perlmutterfarbe* was acknowledged by a committee that decided to include this novel, along with Erich Kästner's school novel *Das fliegende Klassenzimmer* (*The Flying Classroom*) (1933) into the list 'ZEIT-Schülerbibliothek' (ZEIT School Library), initiated by the renowned journal *Die Zeit*. One hundred books were selected for this list, aimed at students aged 10–18.

Jokl's novel reminds us of the considerable number of children's books written by German-Jewish authors before 1938, for example the



An outstanding novel has recently been rediscovered, Anna Maria Jokl's *Die Perlmutterfarbe* (1948), distinguished by its innovative literary qualities

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popular series about *Nesthäkchen* [Pet of the family] (1918ff) by Else Ury, killed by the Nazis in Auschwitz, and *Bambi* (1923) by Felix Salten, who emigrated to Switzerland just in time. Since 1938, just a few children's books have been published by Jewish authors in Germany.

The publication of *Prinz William, Maximilian Minsky und ich* (*Prince William, Maximilian Minsky and Me*) (2002) was a turning point. Written by Holly-Jane Rahlens, an American-Jewish author of German descent who lives in Berlin, this novel, which was awarded the Deutscher Jugendliteraturpreis in 2003, authentically describes the clash between two cultures and religions, namely the life of three generations of American Jews in contemporary Germany. The female protagonist, who falls in love with the British Prince William from a distance, gradually learns to give up her childish daydreams by turning her interest towards her

new friend, Maximilian Minsky. At the same time she begins to accept her Jewish roots, symbolically expressed by her serious preparation for bat mitzvah. These events are told in a lively, occasionally ironical tone by the protagonist, which has certainly contributed to the book's success.

The recent trends identified here – variety, crosswriting and 'retrospective' novels – cover all of contemporary children's literature, but the development of the modern picturebook and the emergence of the psychological children's novel are especially important. Both the 'broken idyll' and 'retrospective' literature are characterised by the focus on the representation of psychological processes, concentration on the characters' inner perspectives, and an attempt to address taboo topics, thus paving the way for the growing interest of adult readers in modern children's books.

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Fostering an Appreciation for all Kinds of Families

Picturebooks with Gay and Lesbian Themes



• In this article, Kay Chick discusses the benefits of gay-sensitive literature and the controversies and challenges associated with its use. She describes several examples of high-quality picturebooks with gay and lesbian characters, and points up gaps in existing literature selections

'Good-bye Antonio,' a sleepy voice calls out as Antonio leaves for school. It is Leslie, his mother's partner. She waves through the bedroom window, as she does every morning. Antonio runs up to the window and presses his hand against the glass, his small hand against her bigger hand.'

(from Antonio's Card, González 2005)

The issues, problems and biases experienced by non-traditional families are often complex and confusing, even for adults. Gay-sensitive picturebooks, however, such as the one quoted from here, can help young children to understand themselves and others while modelling for them what is important in homes, schools and society (Casement 2002). Picturebooks help to define the issues and translate them into experiences and language that young children can understand and identify with (Cooper 2000). Gay-themed literature also affords children of gay parents the opportunity to validate their experiences and see them-

by KAY CHICK



Kay Chick is associate professor of curriculum and instruction at Penn State Altoona, Pennsylvania, USA

Maillu tells a timely story of Termites and Safariants who used to be brothers and sisters, but now are at war because they look different. Termites were defeated and exiled, but they survived, established their own kingdom and prospered. Safariants then decided to colonise the Termites. When diplomacy failed a huge battle ensued and Termites were defeated and their kingdom occupied. Another disaster struck both Safariants and Termites when other people ploughed the land and built a school.

The reader witnesses a turn of events and is left wondering: who are the survivors? The author reveals that ten years after the school was struck by lightning and abandoned by frightened villagers, a Termite nest and anthill sprang up where the school building once stood.

This carefully crafted tale is a modern comment on people, their causes for strife and their struggles for survival.

Nyambura Mpesha



David G Maillu (illus Raphael Kimosop)

THE SURVIVORS

Nairobi, Kenya: Sasa Sema Publications 2003

72pp ISBN: 9966951091

(fiction, 8-12)

Young Jack expects to hear, this windy day, whether he has won the drawing contest he entered. Eagerly, he rushes to the mailbox, only to find it empty. Distraught, Jack fails to notice the postman who is frantically chasing an envelope the wind has carried away. So preoccupied is the disappointed boy that he doesn't realise, as he walks through the village, that he prevents a series of near disasters. With an unheeding hand, he stops a runaway baby carriage. A bird's egg falls from a tree into his open hand. He catches in his arms a small dog thrown out of his carrier when two bikes collide. Meanwhile, viewers watch as the dishevelled postman goes to extraordinary lengths to recover the letter and eventually place it in Jack's mailbox.

Decorated delightfully with bright, cartoon-style drawings of a huge supporting cast, including a flock of sympathetic sheep with expressive faces, Jack's story unfolds with humour and charm. Young readers/listeners will enjoy noting all that Jack misses as they follow him to a happy ending of his strange day.

Glenna Sloan



Iris van der Heide and Marijke ten Cate

RARE DAG/A STRANGE DAY

Rotterdam: Lemniscaat 2006

First US edition Honesdale, PA: Lemniscaat

(Boyd's Mills Press) 2007

32pp ISBN-10: 1932425942;

ISBN-13: 9781932425949

(picturebook, 4-8)

selves and their families in the books they read. Young children's understanding of family and their role in it is paramount to their sense of belonging. Stories shape, empower and validate children and their actions and experiences (Chapman 1999).

***Gay-sensitive picturebooks
can help young children
to understand
themselves and others***

Books with gay and lesbian characters are valuable resources for teachers and parents who may not feel comfortable broaching the topic of diverse families on their own. This literature also has important benefits for students. While adolescents who identify themselves as gay or lesbian have higher rates of suicidal thoughts, those rates declined in schools that included gay-themed literature in the curriculum (Sennett 2001). Jacqueline Woodson, author of *From the Notebooks of Melanin Sun*, writes, 'My goal is ... to show the one queer kid in class that he or she isn't all alone ...' (Garden 1994). While more research needs to be done in this area, it appears that children's literature with gay themes may help to meet the needs of acceptance, belonging and visibility in children who are experiencing the stresses of a homophobic society (Chapman 1999).

***Gay-themed literature
brings its share of
controversies and challenges***

However, gay-themed literature brings its share of controversies and challenges to families, schools, libraries, communities and children's authors. Although research suggests only positive outcomes from the inclusion of children's literature with gay and lesbian themes

in homes, schools and libraries (Chapman 1999; Cooper 2000; Garden 1994; Sennett 2001), we know that it is rarely present. Although the number of titles is increasing, there is still only a limited number of picturebooks with gay and lesbian themes available. Gay characters have been described as 'the most rare and controversial characters in children's literature (Casement 2002). The omission of such characters reflects the societal view that gay and lesbian parents and youth should, at best, be treated as if they are invisible (Henkin 1998).

The controversies surrounding children's literature with gay and lesbian characters extends to children's authors and publishers. Publishers, both large and small, are hesitant to print literature that is controversial and may not be widely purchased (Garden 2001). Because conservative groups voice strong opposition to gay-themed books, and parents, teachers and librarians tend towards self-censorship, publishers have little desire to print titles that cannot compete in a school and library sales-driven market (Garden 1997). In addition, all titles, including those that are considered high-quality literature, quickly go out of print (Casement 2002). For these same reasons, many authors are reluctant to write gay-themed books, which further limits the titles in print. Censorship and reluctant publishers, coupled with threats and lost movie contracts, have forced authors to face difficult decisions about their choice of characters and subject matter (Garden 1994). Self-censorship by authors has been described as 'one of the most dangerous by-products of attacks on books' (Garden 1994).

Although titles are limited, high-quality literature from several countries, including Australia, the Netherlands, Britain and the United States, is now available to readers. Two of the most widely recognised of these are *Daddy's Roommate* by Michael Willhoite and

***Recent additions to
gay-themed children's
literature incorporate
well-written stories***

Heather Has Two Mommies by Leslea Newman. According to Michael Willhoite, his book is designed to be 'a mirror in which children of gay parents can see themselves' (Afterword). It is the story of a little boy whose parents divorce. The father moves in with his roommate, Frank, and they enjoy working, shaving and sleeping together. The little boy enjoys visiting his dad and Frank, and his mother helps him to understand what 'gay' means. She explains that 'being gay is just one more kind of love'. *Heather Has Two Mommies* tells the story of Mama Jane and Mama Kate and their quest for a baby. They go to see a special doctor so that she can 'put some sperm into Jane's vagina' and that is how Heather is conceived. In the tenth-anniversary edition of the book, the author responded to criticisms from doctors, psychologists, parents and teachers. She shortened the text and deleted those sections of the story that dealt with Heather's conception and birth, in the hope that the book would reach a wider audience and be more acceptable for story time.

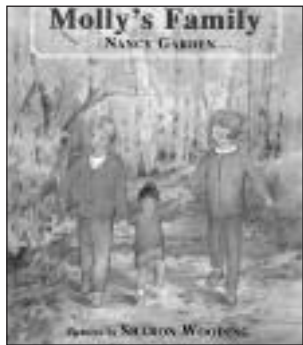
Both *Daddy's Roommate* and *Heather Has Two Mommies* represent pioneering efforts to expand the definition of 'family' in children's literature. However, as time has passed, educators have begun to question their literary quality. The illustrations in *Daddy's Roommate* represent stereotypes of gay men, rather than reality. The bias portrayed by the 'muscle-shirted' father and his roommate, as they put suntan lotion on each other, only reinforces the homophobic messages that are already present in our society. The lack of developmentally appropriate content and believable characters in *Heather*

Has Two Mommies makes it difficult for children to identify with the story's plot or protagonist. Young children are not developmentally ready to hear the specifics of Heather's conception and birth. In any case, the children of gay parents are more likely to have two parents who are now divorced, rather than to have started life through artificial insemination, as was Heather's experience. That content, coupled with a lack of fully developed characters, makes the book a poor choice for preschoolers and tedious for children in the elementary grades.

More recent additions to gay-themed children's literature incorporate well-written stories and the somewhat more subtle inclusion of gay characters. Multiple themes are represented, affording buyers and readers the opportunity to make selections based on the issues presented in each title.

***Differences are good and
there is no such thing as a
perfect or normal family***

Family diversity is a theme addressed in information books such as *The Family Book* by Todd Parr, which illustrates how families are alike and different. The simple text and colourful drawings are very inviting for preschool- and kindergarten-age children. Family differences such as size, colour and appearance are highlighted, and both animal and human families are introduced. When discussing types of families, the author mentions that 'Some families have two moms or two dads.' The strength of this book lies in the developmentally appropriate content and illustrations. Another information book, *All Families Are Different* (Sol Gordon) is most appropriate for children in grades one to three. In addition to descriptions of various kinds of families, this book discusses differences in race, religion, wealth and level of education.



Gordon also presents issues that affect families, such as divorce and illness, and emphasises the importance of showing kindness to family members. The most important message from this book is that differences are good and there is no such thing as a perfect or normal family.

Several picturebook selections help children approach the confusion and uncertainties experienced by those whose parents or relatives are gay or lesbian. These titles tell stories of children who experience a range of emotions and deal with both tension and hurt, yet come away with positive outcomes. *Antonio's Card (La Tarjeta de Antonio)*, by Rigoberto González, is the story of a young boy who lives with his mother and her partner, Leslie. Antonio is a sensitive, caring child who is unsure how to handle the teasing that occurs every time Leslie picks him up from school. He must deal with feelings of love, pride, hurt and confusion. Antonio's mother is very supportive and demonstrates great confidence in her son. The young boy expresses the love he feels for his mother and Leslie with a Mother's Day card that he displays at school. The acrylic paintings capture the story's message and the emotions of the characters. This book is written in both English and Spanish, making it an ideal selection for bilingual and Spanish-speaking families. The publisher's website has a teacher's guide for this text, which includes literacy activities, cross-curricular activities and additional resources and book titles (Children's Book Press 2006).

A little girl's confusion about her two moms is explored in *Molly's Family*, by Nancy Garden. In preparation for kindergarten open house, Molly draws a picture of her family for the bulletin board. When the other children tell her that she can't have two mommies, Molly feels unsure and shares her confusion with Mommy, Mama Lu and her teacher. They all help her and the other children to understand there are many kinds of families in this kindergarten class. This picturebook is an excellent resource for teachers and parents to share with children who are feeling unsure about their family structure.

Children can begin to understand and discuss some of the difficulties gay families experience by reading *My Two Uncles* by Judith Vigna. It is the story of Elly and her two favourite uncles, Uncle Ned and his friend, Uncle Phil. During plans for her grandparents' golden wedding anniversary party, Elly discovered that Uncle Phil would not be attending the festivities. Grampy would not allow it. Judith

Children can begin to understand and discuss some of the difficulties gay families experience

Vigna does a commendable job of expressing Elly's confusion and hurt, through both text and illustrations. Because the story ends on a positive note, this book can give hope to those children who are experiencing the tensions of a homophobic society.

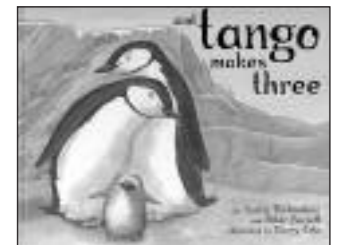
Adoption experiences in gay and lesbian families are a frequent theme in picturebooks. Fiction and non-fiction selections tell stories of children who were adopted by same-sex couples (or same-sex animal life!), with vivid descriptions of the emotions experienced by partners who yearned for a baby to complete their family. *King & King* and its companion book, *King & King & Family*, by Linda Haan and Stern Nijland, were first published in the Netherlands. They tell the story of a prince, whose mother, the queen, insisted that he get married. She brought in princess after princess, but the prince was just not interested. Finally, a princess arrived with her brother, and the two princes fell in love and married. In the sequel, the princes travel to a faraway jungle for their honeymoon. They notice all of the animals with their babies and begin to yearn for a child of their own. To their surprise, when they unpack after their trip, they find a little jungle girl hidden away. They quickly adopt her and there is a fabulous celebration. Children will love the very busy, brightly coloured illustrations in this fantasy-filled story.

While You Were Sleeping, by Stephanie Burks, is a very simple picturebook that is most appropriate for preschool children. Each page begins with the words, 'While you were sleeping,' and the story tells of the trip that two men make to the hospital to pick up their new baby. This book is an excellent way for families to initiate discussions of the birth experiences of their own children. A similar theme is evident in Andrew Aldrich's *How My Family Came to Be – Daddy, Papa, and Me*, written so the author's son would have an explanation of how their family evolved. The characters are Daddy, Papa and the baby they adopt, and the story is told from the child's point of view. The love these two Caucasian men feel for their African-American child is evident. They celebrate his adoption, read to him, care for him when he is teething and, above all, demonstrate their love and affection.

And Tango Makes Three by Justin Richardson and Peter Parnell is the true story of two male penguins, Roy and Silo, who 'fell in love' at the Central Park Zoo in New York City. They built a nest together, just like all the other penguin couples, but had no baby penguin to care for. Another penguin couple hatched two eggs, but could only care for one. A zookeeper put the extra egg in Roy and Silo's nest, and they became the proud parents of Tango. Roy, Silo and Tango continue to live as a family in the Central Park Zoo. This delightful story addresses the subject of same-sex couples and adoption in a 'kid-friendly' manner.

Several authors have embedded same-sex couples into stories in very subtle ways. These stories do not directly address the issue of gay and

She brought in princess after princess, but the prince was just not interested



lesbian families, but instead tell stories with characters who just happen to be of the same sex. Some selections include children as characters, while others, such as Ingrid Godon's *Hello, Sailor*, simply portray two same-sex friends who long to be together. *Hello, Sailor*, a picturebook published in both the Netherlands and Great Britain, tells the story of Matt, a lighthouse-keeper who spends his days watching the sea for his friend Sailor, so they can sail around the world together. Matt's friends try to convince him that Sailor has forgotten about him, but Matt has faith that his friend will return. Late on the night of Matt's birthday, Sailor arrives at the lighthouse. The two friends have a joyful celebration and depart for their trip around the world. While *Hello, Sailor* is a delightful story, parents, teachers and librarians should be cautioned that Matt and his friends enjoy a bottle of rum on two occasions.

He has trouble choosing his favourite colour, his best friend and his best mom. His mamas reassure him that he can have many favourites

Best Best Colors (Los Mejores Colores) by Eric Hoffman can help young children to learn their colours while hearing and seeing important messages about diversity. Nate is a little boy

with two 'mamas', one Caucasian and the other African-American. He lives 'in the moment', as many preschoolers do, and has trouble choosing his favourite colour, his best friend and his best mom. His mamas reassure him that he can have many favourites. The story is in both English and Spanish, making this book a significant contribution to a multicultural pre-school curriculum.

Going to Fair Day takes place in Sydney, Australia. Created for pre-school and primary-school children by Brenna and Vicki Harding, this book describes a little girl's day at the fair with her two 'mums'. They enjoy eating hot corn on a stick, playing in the jumping castle and watching a dog show. The thrill of the day comes when they get to take Jack, one of the trick dogs, home to become a part of their family.

Ultimately, most picturebook authors preserve a positive, upbeat tone in gay-themed stories for children. However, Kari Krakow diverges from the norm to tell a true story. *The Harvey Milk Story* is a biography of the life and death of the first openly gay elected city official in the United States. Harvey Milk was elected to San Francisco's Board of Supervisors in 1977. He worked to improve San Francisco's schools, parks and housing, and introduced a gay rights bill that would protect gay people from discrimination at work or when buying a

Best Best Colors

FAVOURITES GRAPH

After listening to the story, young children could begin to think about their 'favourites' by forming a human graph. Teachers or parents can place a piece of masking tape across the floor, from one side of the room to the other. Pictures, such as squares of different colours, animals, seasons of the year, etc., are placed along the tape at regular intervals. Children select their favourite by forming a straight line behind the picture of their choice. After the human graph is formed, children can discuss which colours, animals or seasons are the most popular, and why. The graph can be formed more than once, for children who might have more than one 'favourite'.

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home. In 1978 Harvey Milk and the mayor of San Francisco, George Moscone, were shot and killed by another member of the Board of Supervisors, who did not agree with the gay rights movement. This picturebook brings both hope and sadness to those who read it.

While the books discussed here are an accurate representation of the titles that are available, they are not a true representation of society. For example, many children with at least one gay parent come from homes where the parents are divorced. These children live with one parent, but have opportunities to visit or communicate with the other parent. While in *Antonio's Card* there is mention of a father, most gay-themed children's books do not address this type of family structure or the experiences of children within divorced families.

Picturebooks with gay and lesbian characters also tend towards families with only one child. In fact, there seem to be no titles available with multiple children. This gap in the existing literature leaves no opportunity to explore issues between siblings or differences in the ways that children in the same family manage problems and emotions. In an ideal text set of gay-themed literature, there would be multiple representations of all of the various family structures.

More important even than this, however, is the general lack of such

titles and the reluctance of authors and publishers to produce books of this type, which are so sorely needed to help to counteract the marginalisation of gay- and lesbian-led families.

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Acclaimed author Paul Fleischman continues to demonstrate his versatility as he cleverly weaves various versions of the Cinderella story into a singular, satisfying, globe-spanning retelling. A world map on the endpapers in rich gold and blue marks the seventeen cultures represented in this inspired creation. When the girl has nothing to wear to the ball, a crocodile swims up with a sarong of gold in its mouth (Indonesia). A cloak sewn of kingfisher feathers appears (China) and a kimono as red as sunset (Japan). During the crucial test, a rooster warns that the 'beauty is hid below' (Iraq). The straw sandal (Korea) fits and the wedding feast follows: mangoes and melons (Zimbabwe), rice seasoned with almonds (India), beef stew and lamb stew (Ireland).

Using Winsor and Newton gouaches, the artist draws, to brilliant effect, on each country's folk art and textile patterns to create a varied yet unified work of extraordinary beauty. Words and pictures perfectly blend in this remarkable example of creativity and inventiveness.

Glenna Sloan



Paul Fleischman and Julie Paschkis
GLASS SLIPPER, GOLD SANDAL:
A WORLDWIDE CINDERELLA

New York: Henry Holt 2007

32pp ISBN-13: 9780805079531

ISBN-10: 080507953X

(picturebook, 5-9)



What can a classic of Victorian children's literature have in common with a recent Japanese film? ANDO Satoshi argues that they represent, respectively, the crisis of Victorian England and that of contemporary Japan, through their heroines' identity crises as they pass from childhood into adolescence

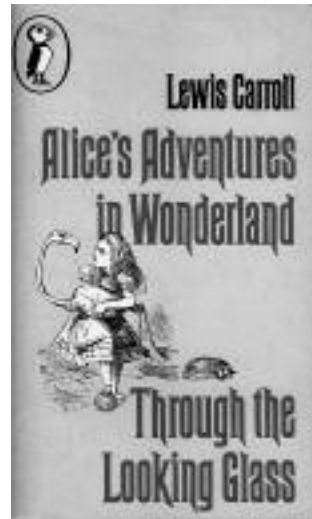
Hayao Miyazaki's animation film *Spirited Away* (first released in Japan in 2001), although written in a very different social context, has much in common with Lewis Carroll's classic children's book, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865). Both works are products of transitional periods: when *Alice* was written Britain was in the midst of a great turbulence, brought about by industrialisation, urbanisation and Darwinism, while *Spirited Away* is set in a precarious period for Japan's economy just after the 'bubble boom' of the early 1990s. In such times of crisis, anxiety and pessimism prevail and people look not to the future but to the past, feeling the need for escapism. These are the conditions in which great fantasy is created (see Ando 2003 for a discussion of *Alice* and other British children's classics as products of the Darwin disturbance or the decline of the British Empire). Humphrey Carpenter (1985) points out that 'optimistic societies do not, apparently,

Regaining Continuity
 With the Past
Spirited Away and Alice's Adventures in Wonderland

by ANDO SATOSHI



ANDO Satoshi is professor of English at Aichi University, Japan



produce great fantasies'. Most fantasy novels (and films) seek the past in some way, which is a reflection of the time's anxiety and pessimism.

In both stories, a pre-pubertal girl happens to stray into a perplexing 'other world' and experiences an identity crisis there. The two girls are soon going to go through puberty – Chihiro is said to be 10 years old; Alice's age is not given in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, and though she is suggested to be seven and a half in the sequel, *Through the Looking Glass*, she seems to be about the same age as Chihiro, considering her linguistic ability and logical way of thinking – and they will encounter various rites of passage as they pass from infant to adolescent.

Girls are likely to experience at least some level of identity crisis when they go through puberty, for it is one of the biggest discontinuous changes of their lives. The two stories seem to express the protagonists' bewilderment at the change which they are soon to confront. The characters feel disconnected from the past by discontinuous change and thus lose their sense of identity and of the future. The sense of being connected with the past gives one comfort and confidence, and one's identity is, of course, the very accumulation of one's past experiences and the memories of them.

The book 'without pictures or conversation' that Alice's older sister is reading when *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* opens suggests the boredom and dullness of the adult world for Alice. As she has an elder sister, she must have seen an example of a girl's physical change during puberty. The wonder she feels when she peeps into the book her sister is reading shows that she is beginning to perceive the sense of incongruity caused by acknowledging that she is approaching the boring world represented by the book.

Spotting a flustered rabbit with a watch – which, like the crocodile in *Peter Pan*, can be construed as a metaphor for those who are always chased by time – Alice runs after him and finds herself falling down a dark hole. In the underground world, Alice is constantly frustrated in her efforts to get into 'the loveliest garden'. On a table she finds the golden key to the small door into the garden, but as she is too big to get through the door, she drinks some medicine that she finds, until she gets small enough – only to find that now she is too small to reach up onto the table to get the key. No matter how many times she repeats magnification and reduction

Most fantasy novels (and films) seek the past in some way, which is a reflection of the time's anxiety and pessimism

by eating magic cakes and mushrooms, Alice cannot make it to the garden, which we can read as symbolising both childhood and adulthood: she is too big to go into the garden of childhood, and at the same time she is too small to enter the garden of adulthood. She is frustrated by not being able to get into the garden and is perplexed with the repeated metamorphosis of her

body: she has lost her place between childhood and adulthood.

Alice is too big to go into the garden of childhood, and at the same time she is too small to enter the garden of adulthood

Walt Disney's animation film *Alice in Wonderland* (1951) must not be admitted as the filmisation of Carroll's work, for it visualises only superficial elements such as the amazement of the adventure or the queerness of the characters, who are all too amiable. The film fails to show Alice's bewilderment, whereas in the book, Alice almost always seems to be crying, angry or perplexed. She feels not only bewildered, but deprived of her identity in this 'Wonderland', where she has no friend or acquaintance, and where she repeats the physical magnification and reduction too many times. Her identity crisis is aggravated when the rabbit calls her 'Mary Ann' and the Pigeon refers to her as 'Serpent'.

William Empson (1935) points out that death is 'never far out of sight' in the two books featuring Alice. Alice feels the fear of extinction when she physically reduces and she is afraid of being drowned in her own tears when she becomes small. Alice is encountering the discontinuous change of puberty, which is in effect the death of Alice as a little girl and her birth as a young woman.

Alice is disappointed when she finally arrives in the garden because it is a very strange place, where the playing cards are painting the white roses red so as not to exasperate the Queen who loves red roses and hates white ones. It is obvious that both the worlds of adulthood and childhood, which the garden simultaneously represents, are worlds ruled by the obsession with death. Infant Alice is doomed to die within a few

years and the grown-up Alice constantly and steadily approaches death in the domain of time.

The awkwardness Alice experiences in Wonderland, and that she expresses by crying, getting irate or being bewildered, is a metaphor of her awkward situation where she is going to be forced to face a discontinuous change. The awkwardness she has in Wonderland is a reflection of the incongruity and bewilderment which lurks deep within her. Alice is at a loss and her identity sways as the great change approaches. Alice famously asks the Caterpillar 'when you have to turn into a chrysalis – you will some day, you know – and then after that into a butterfly, I should think you'll feel it a little queer, won't you?' Referring to this, she also says, 'it would feel very queer to me'. She seems here to be commenting on her experience of magnification and reduction, but she is also manifesting bewilderment at the physical changes she is to undergo in the near future.

Spirited Away also features a heroine who is going through an identity crisis in a kind of other world shortly before confronting her puberty. Girls' transitional periods is a recurring theme in the films of Hayao Miyazaki, but this is the film of his that most specifically deals with a protagonist's transitional period and death as a rite of passage.

At the beginning of the film Chihiro is moving to a new house. She is sad and sullen because she has had to part with her friends and does not think she can get used to the new environment. Like Alice, she is in a precarious situation before the onset of puberty and is feeling awkward and perplexed. The removal signifies her transitional situation and losing her own place. Her being displeased shows that she rejects the change of her environment, her physical and mental situation, and that she wants to remain in her old familiar place. The bunch of withering flowers she is holding obviously symbolises her feelings of

depression.

Then off the road she and her parents happen to come across a peculiar tunnel and go through it to a place like a ruined theme park. Tempted by a delicious smell, her parents begin to devour the food they find on the stools and, while Chihiro hesitates and walks round, they turn into enormous pigs. To help them out she is forced to work in an old bath-house, where various kinds of gods ('eight million gods' in the verbatim translation) come to relax and cleanse themselves, and she also has to discover the way to dissolve spells. A mysterious boy called Haku tells her how to get a job there and, after many twists and turns, she succeeds in getting employment.

Masashi Shimizu (2001) points out that this is a process of Chihiro's death and rebirth, and that Yubaba, an avaricious witch and manager of the bath-house, fills the role of her mother for her rebirth. Here the spoiled child Chihiro dies and is led to be reborn as a devoted and loving adolescent through performing her duties.

When she starts work, Chihiro is deprived of her name 'Chihiro' and renamed 'Sen' by Yubaba. 'Sen' is the other pronunciation of the Chinese character 'chi' which forms the first syllable of her real name,

Yubaba controls the employees by taking their names away :

'Chihiro', and it means 'a thousand' or 'a great number'. As Haku explains, Yubaba controls the employees by taking their names away. Being called Sen signifies her lost, or dispossessed, identity; and she almost forgets her own name when she is talking to

Haku early one morning in the flower garden and when she yells 'I'm Sen' to her parents in the pigsty.

It is obvious that Alice's Wonderland and Sen's bath-house, or the theme park world as a whole, have the same meaning: a symbol of the pre-pubertal girl's awkwardness and sense of incongruity, and a place of symbolic death and rebirth. Chihiro is upset during the transition period for two reasons: she has just left the place she is familiar with and has moved to a new one where she does not feel at home, and she is beginning to migrate from childhood to adolescence. Her parents' being pigs signifies the fact that she has lost one of the most important sources of her identity and the means to maintain continuity with the past.

Sen's mission here can be summed up as 'to regain the past'. Since Haku has also been bewitched by Yubaba and deprived not only of his real name but also of his past, she must help him to get back his memory to find the way to save her parents. Yet, Haku, whose real name is Nigihayami Kohakunushi and who is in fact the spirit of the River Kohaku [Amber], recognises Chihiro when he first meets her in front of the bath-house. Once, when she was very young, she almost drowned in

the Kohaku, which has now been reclaimed to build blocks of flats; and it is not until she regains the memory of the river that Haku is freed from the spell and takes back his real name. He has lost not merely his past but his own place because the Kohaku does not exist any more, but when she recovers her memory of the river he can have a place in it.

Past and place are two most important bases of identity, for past experience and its memory forms one's identity, and one needs a place where one can be 'at home' to maintain it. Chihiro's identity is in crisis when she loses her place in

Past experience and its memory forms one's identity :

two ways: being forced to leave her town and the house she is used to, and being chased by time, to leave childhood and enter adolescence. Like Alice, Chihiro is in an unstable condition before her approaching sexual maturity and the physical and mental transformation it brings about, and thus she has a sense of incongruity. Her transformation means her death as an infant and her birth as an adolescent. Her experiences at the bath-house, such as helping the River God to wash off the mud, the encounter with No-Face, who represents those who have lost their identity, and consoling him or her for his or her sadness and going to see Zeniba, the twin sister of Yubaba, to rescue Haku, are all important lessons for her to recover her past, her place and her identity.

Many other works of Miyazaki feature girls in their teens and facing transition and rebirth. *My Neighbour Totoro* (first released in 1988, and apparently set in the early 1950s, when Japan was in the midst of an abrupt change after World War II) begins with a scene of the protagonists' removal, where a 10-year-old girl, Satsuki (rightly named after the Japanese word for the fifth month of the year, May), and her little sister Mei (pronounced

just the same as 'May') are removed from somewhere in town to an old country cottage with their father, while their mother is in hospital because of some tuberculosis-like illness. In their new surroundings the two girls experience the rural and traditional way of life for the first time.

As their names signify, Satsuki and Mei are identical and imply two aspects of a girl who is approaching her transitional period: the former is she who is turning into adolescent and the latter she who still remains infant. Shimizu indicates that Satsuki's symbolic death and rebirth are intimated in the scene where she does headstands and forward rolls in the field in front of the cottage on arriving there, and that Mei imitates the same process by doing the same action as her elder sister. It must be pointed out that these processes are executed in their mother's absence and in an unaccustomed environment for them; that is to say, when they are separated from their own past.

In *Kiki's Delivery Service* (1989), as well as in *Majo no takkyuu-bin* [The witch's delivery service] (1985), a novel by Eiko Kadono on which the film is based, the heroine, Kiki, according to an old custom, begins her training to be a witch at the age of 13. Unlike Chihiro, Satsuki and Alice, she has already plunged into puberty and been conscious that she is now forced to disconnect herself from both her home and her past to change and grow up. In the earlier part of the film there is also a scene of removal, in which Kiki flies on a broomstick with her cat Jiji. While her mother complains that Kiki does not learn traditional witchery such as prescribing witches' medicine, an elderly lady called Dora, one of her customers, tells her that everything is changing with time, which implies that this story is also set in a transitional period in the witches' world. Kiki faces lots of trials and crises in the process of her training, but all through the narrative her independence and unyielding forward-lookingness are acclaimed. It is interesting that Kiki

regains her lost confidence when she is absorbed in helping others (in this case especially a boy called Tombo) and surrendering herself, just as Chihiro retrieves her continuity in the course of devoting herself to saving Haku and her parents.

Nausicaä, the heroine of *Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind* (1984), is 14 years old; Sophie in *Howl's Moving Castle* (2004), based on Diana Wynne Jones's novel with the same title, is 18 – although for most of the story she

**These works are
almost always set in
historical crises**

has been turned into an old woman of 90; and though their ages are not revealed, Princess Mononoke and Sheeta (in *Laputa: The Flying Island*) also appear to be in their teens. Shizuku, the 14-year-old protagonist of *Whisper of the Heart*, which is directed not by Miyazaki but by the late Yoshifumi Kondo, one of Miyazaki's fellow artists and directors at Studio Ghibli, and produced by Miyazaki, goes through some rites of passage such as first love, first farewell or deciding her way of life. These works are almost always set in historical crises: Nausicaä lives in the time after the last world war and the disintegration of human civilisation, whilst *Princess Mononoke* is set in the mid-16th century when nature and human technology began to come into conflict in rural Japan. Miyazaki's *Howl's Moving Castle*, unlike the original novel, has a war as its background, and *Whisper of the Heart* is located in a western suburb of Tokyo, where the landscape is always changing rapidly and thus is one of those places which have lost their continuity with the past.

In both *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and *Spirited Away* deaths and rebirths as rites of passage in girls' growth is one of the central motifs. The Victorians had sentimental views about girlishness and chastity and tried to make childhood and girlhood as long as possible. Nowadays, a much more positive view is taken of girls' growth. However, no matter how drastically the historical and social contexts of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and *Spirited Away* differ, they have an important issue in common: that is, that a girl's puberty is a great discontinuity which can be considered as a kind of death, and that the only way to be reborn from it is to get back continuity with the past to retain her identity.

There is disagreement among critics about whether Alice grows up at all in the Alice books (see Empson 1935, Batchelor 1990, Hyland 1994, Gordon 1987), but it appears to be true that she recovers continuity with

**A girl's puberty is a great
discontinuity which
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kind of death**

her past by waking up from her dream. She at least understands the pain and jeopardy of losing her identity by being detached from her own past, and it is apparent that the infant Alice and the grown-up Alice are sure to have some continuity.

Chihiro also regains her continuity not just with the

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past but with the future too by experiencing death and rebirth throughout her adventures, and therefore at the end of the film she is able to come to grips with her new life. She has overcome instability and awkwardness and is ready to accept the two forthcoming changes: the environmental change and the physical one. The moment she discovers her parents amongst the pigs indicates her regaining of continuity with her past. The last scene in which, seen off by Haku, she crosses the river that divides the two worlds of death and life, and walks through the tunnel – possibly a metaphor of female genitalia – represents her rebirth.

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• A country finding its feet after decades of strife and war, Cambodia has a fragile but growing publishing industry. Children's publishing is in its infancy and heavily influenced by moral and educational considerations. Susanna Coghlan brings us a fascinating account of a country in the early stages of developing a children's literature

Print publishing is a relatively recent phenomenon in Cambodia, though the country has a long literary history (see panel). It was not until the mid-19th century that Cambodian literature based on the contemporary world – though influenced by classical themes – began to appear (Jarvis and Arfanis 2002). These books were written in French, the primary language of instruction in Khmer schools at the time. Mass production of Khmer texts had been slowed by opposition from monks who viewed it as a desecration of the written word, and it was not until 1908 that the Khmer script first appeared in print with the publication of *Pantan Ta Mas* [The recommendations of Grandfather Mas]. The 1930s and 1940s brought the publication of a wealth of short stories, plays and novels, and literature began to be considered an art form. Due to the high cost of publishing books, most of these works were first published in newspapers and magazines (Cultural Profiles 2005).

Demand for printed literature grew, and between 1938 and 1972 over a thousand novels were printed, ranging from adventure tales to mysteries, historical novels and love stories (Jarvis and Arfanis 2002). In 1954, independence from France was formally declared, and Cambodian literature was added to the national curriculum. The Khmer Writers' Association was established in 1956.

In 1974, when the Khmer Rouge seized power with the aim of transforming Cambodia into a peasant-dominated agrarian collective, virtually all print publication ceased, and artistic activities were violently repressed – with the exception of the writing and singing of Khmer Rouge songs. During this time, towns were emptied and everyone was forced to relocate to the countryside to work in the fields. The national library became a storage facility and the grounds were used for raising pigs. The library at the Buddhist Institute was destroyed (though many publications from their presses have survived). Most of the educated class were branded parasites and

by SUSANNA COGLAN



Susanna Coghlan is a director of a private training company in Phnom Penh, Cambodia

Joy Cowley, author of international renown, blends the worlds of modern-day New Zealand society with themes from ancient Maori history to create a new classic in this New Zealand Post Book of the Year 2006.

Jordan and her brothers are flying home for Christmas when their small plane crashes in remote bush country, killing the pilot and injuring one of the boys. Two hundred years before, a slave leads a group of Maori warriors on a hunting expedition to kill the giant moa he sees in his dreams. Through mystical means he now sees the shiny white bird crashed on the beach and the stranded children. He communicates his knowledge to Jordan, and with her we learn ancient skills: how to make a fishing line, kill a fish and cure with natural remedies. The story moves skilfully between two realms, drawing you into the landscape and flashing back and forth across the years in such a way that you live the drama of the struggle for survival. Language is so vivid you can almost smell the bush.

Crissi Blair



JOY COWLEY

HUNTER

Auckland, New Zealand: Puffin 2005

148pp ISBN: 0143318292

(fiction, 10+)

Reviewers describe these seven short stories of young love, first kisses and secret dreams as 'fascinating', 'written in delicate and moving language', 'a very enjoyable read ... that inspires a big smile'. Two of the stories are summarised below.

A British paratrooper lands in the middle of a small Jewish settlement in the 1930s and is injured. Tamara rescues and looks after him. It is the time of the British Mandate and the paratrooper is considered an enemy, but Tamara falls in love with him against all odds.

'What wouldn't we do to kiss the most beautiful girl in the class?' wonders a boy in drama class. He is eager to play the ass in Shakespeare's *A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM* to get that kiss.

Although the stories take place at different times in different places, young love is the constant throughout.

Ofra Gellbart-Avni



Nava Samel

Beginners' Love

Tel Aviv, Israel: Yedioth Achronot

Publishing 2006

97pp ISBN: 9655119408

(fiction, 12+)

Early history of Khmer literature

Narratives in Khmer, the national language of Cambodia, have their roots in the oral traditions of tribes and villages. The earliest written works are the Sanskrit verses of the Angkorian era (9th to 13th centuries), inscribed on palm leaf manuscripts.

By the 11th century, Buddhist treatises and *jataka* (various tales about Buddha's former lives) were being produced on a regular basis. The oldest work written in Khmer is the *Reamker*, the Cambodian version of the ancient Ramayana epic. The earliest existing versions of the *Reamker* date from the 16th to 18th centuries, although these are believed to originate from manuscripts from the Angkorian era.

In the 19th century Buddhist monks began to produce *chbap* ('codes of conduct') texts, written in the precise meter of Khmer poetry, to teach novices about morality. This period also saw the introduction of *satra lbaeng* ('works for pleasure'), lengthy verse-novels which recounted the *jataka* stories.

(Cultural Profiles 2005; Jarvis and Arfanis 2002)

It was not until 1908 that the Khmer script first appeared in print

executed, and many others died from mistreatment, malnutrition and disease.

At the end of 1978, Vietnam invaded and, in January 1979, captured Phnom Penh and installed a state called the People's Republic of Kampuchea. The Khmer Rouge leaders were formally deposed, although they retained power in many of the more remote provinces for up to two decades.

During the 1980s, the government placed a high value on literature as a means to 'liberate' the illiterate masses. Literature was specifically used for state propaganda, and stories often related the heroic acts of soldiers serving the revolution. Prizes were offered for novels, poems, songs and drama on officially approved themes of war and socialist reconstruction (Cultural Profiles 2005).

After the UN-sponsored elections in 1993, classic stories, folktales, novels and other pre-revolutionary literature began to appear in re-printings. The Khmer Writers' Association was re-formed in 1993 by two of its former members, and established as a non-governmental organisation (NGO). Although censorship had relaxed, the publication of new works was hindered in the 1990s by a lack of funding, and authors generally had to provide the money to pay for printing.

The national library became a storage facility and the grounds were used for raising pigs

The last decade has seen a sharp increase in the number of organisations in Cambodia which are publishing books in Khmer, French or English. There is, however, as yet, little professional support for creative writers in Cambodia nor literary reviews to publicise and promote the works of Cambodian authors.

The last decade has seen a sharp increase in the number of organisations in Cambodia which are publishing books

Even more recent than publishing in general is the advent of literature aimed at a child audience. Books of this kind are largely a result of a few NGOs striving to produce quality children's books in Khmer and other languages. While many NGOs operating in Cambodia are working to improve access to formal and non-formal education systems, there are few which deal directly in the promotion of publishing for children and access to literature.

The children's publishing sector is still a long way from being able to maintain its existence through sales. As well as selling books through retail outlets, most of the NGOs supporting the publication of children's books distribute some of their publications free to public schools.

Probably the most prolific of all the publishers is Room to Read Cambodia, who have published a large number of attractive, illustrated storybooks focusing on particular concepts such as education, health and personal development. Save Cambodia's Wildlife publishes a number of titles looking at wildlife and environmental issues, combining narrative texts with richly detailed illustrations and factual information.

Most of the books currently being published by NGOs for young readers in Cambodia have a moral or educational content. Publishers can submit their books to the Ministry of Youth, Education and Sport (MoYES) in order to receive government approval of the content. The ministry will evaluate the text and illustrations in the book to identify whether they are consistent with Khmer culture and values. If the

text is to be published in Khmer and another language, they will also examine the fidelity of the translation. It is not compulsory for publishers to submit their books to the ministry in advance of publication, but many do follow this procedure, since books not approved by the ministry could be withdrawn from schools or public institutions if the ministry objects to the content.

Literacy levels are still relatively low and for many children from low-income families, work, inside and outside the home, takes priority over schooling. This is the topic addressed in *Yeung Dow Sala/Let's Go to School* by Ke Bararoth and Lang Bunlim (2006). Cheng and Sokha and their five children are subsistence farmers in a remote rural village in a Cambodian province. Neither they nor their five children have ever attended school, nor can they read or write. When the father falls ill, the family runs into difficulty: they can read neither the direction signs to the hospital nor the instructions for the medicines they eventually receive. During a home visit, the doctor enlightens Cheng and Sokha on the value of an education and they finally agree to send the children to school.

The children's publishing sector is still a long way from being able to maintain its existence through sales

Themes of tolerance, working together, conflict resolution and reconciliation are also common, in an effort to combat the hugely destructive forces of civil war and decades of fighting that have characterised recent Cambodian history. Vann Nath's and James Walter's *Jayk Neung Joch/Jayk & Joch* (2005), and their tale of the most delicious mango that ever there was, is



centred on the theme of conflict resolution. Two monkeys, one black, one white, but both of the same species, simultaneously discover what could ‘possibly be the most delicious mango that there ever was’ growing on a small solitary tree in a dusty field. Both monkeys want the mango for themselves and fight viciously over it, breaking the little mango tree in the process, and eventually ruining the mango itself. After seeking the counsel of the wise old master called the Aisay on the mountain top, the monkeys plant the seed of the ruined mango and devotedly care for the tree that grows from it, sharing the work equally between them. The wide, leafy tree becomes home to the families of both the black and white monkeys and provides shade and shelter for the other creatures of the forest. This book will surely become a classic of Cambodian children’s literature. Vann Nath’s striking and symbolic images, imbued with the warm hues of the Cambodian countryside, fill the pages and perfectly complement the subtle humour of Walter’s delightfully direct text. Vann Nath’s own story as a survivor of the notorious Khmer Rouge prison Toul Sleng adds further weight to the significance of the tale, which skilfully avoids didacticism or an overbearing moral message.

Themes of tolerance, working together, conflict resolution and reconciliation are common

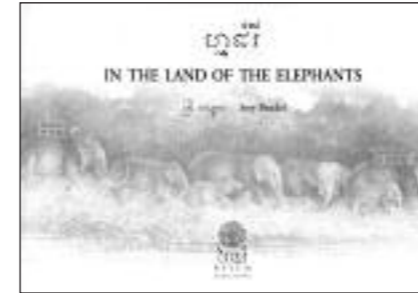
Illustrated books are by far the most common format for publications for children, a trend perhaps influenced by the time when stories were recorded not with written words but through ornate temple carvings and frescoes. They are generally reflective of the day-to-day lives and concerns of Khmers living

in small communities, although stories featuring animals who work together to collectively tackle problems are also common. Magical spirits and religious figures often help guide the wrongdoer toward amending his or her ways.

Popular folktales, including morality stories, animal tales and traditional riddles and sayings, were frequently retold throughout previous generations of Khmer culture but rarely recorded. From the 1950s to the 1970s some of these were collected and published by the Buddhist Institute, and more recently some NGOs and publishing companies have also produced illustrated versions of these stories for children.

The publishing house Domrei Sor’s collection of traditional tales for children are published in Khmer, English and French. As with the folktales and legends of Africa, these tales usually feature animals and show how cunning and ingenuity can win over strength and power. The character of Judge Hare is commonly used, a creature whose small stature belies his wisdom and intelligence.

Reyum Publishing has published a number of attractively illustrated short reproductions of well-known legends and folktales. Srey Bandol’s



Hawmo Domrei/In the Land of the Elephants (2005) is by far the crowning glory of their list. Beginning in a time now passed, this is the story of a young boy who ventures into the forest with his tribe one day only to become separated from the group. After surviving various challenging situations in the forest, boy and elephant finally emerge only to find themselves in a modern Cambodian village:

several generations have passed while they were wandering in the forest. Srey Bandol’s delicate pencil illustrations create the densely foliated forest of interlocking tree trunks and twisting vines, evoking the confusion felt by the boy and his beast as they wander alone and unsure of themselves. As heavy deforestation continues in the northeastern region of Cambodia where the story is set, this beautiful and evocative book depicts scenes increasingly in danger of disappearing for ever.

Srey Bandol is also a founder of an artists’ collective, Phare Ponleau Selpak, which offers training and support to young artists. Established in the mid-1980s in a Thai refugee camp, Phare now provides basic education as well as instruction in the arts to more than a thousand students, of which around 150 are studying drawing and comic books. In 2006 Phare produced a short comic book in Khmer and French titled *Reung Bpaylyoop Joom Kmoij/Histoires de fantômes qu’on rencontre la nuit* [Stories of ghosts you meet in the night].

Comic books were hugely popular in Cambodia before the rise of the Khmer Rouge. Inspired by the French *bande dessinée*, Khmer artists such as Uth Roeun embraced this form and used it to portray scenes from Cambodian life, although romance was by far the most popular theme. Roeun’s adaptations of the classical tales of Tum Teav and Thmenh Chey, which, dressed as romances, tell the struggle of the poor against tyranny of the powerful are still being reprinted 30 years later. The Khmer Rouge years brought an abrupt halt to the work of Uth Roeun and other comic-book artists. In the 1980s, however, new artists began to publish their work and Cambodia saw a resurgence of interest in this art form. As well as providing a diversion for people caught up in the

Businesses and NGOs began to recognise the influence of the comic book and commissioned artists to produce works on various social and political themes





vicious civil war, businesses and NGOs began to recognise the influence of the comic book and commissioned artists to produce works on various social and political themes. The Cambodian NGO Heritage Watch chose this as the format in which to publish *Monhgoss Neung Pnu Boreun / The Wrath of the Phantom Army*, a short story promoting heritage protection. Innovatively combining painted illustrations with photographs of ancient temples, this short graphic novel is designed to help educate people about the need for heritage preservation. There are also a number of commercial publishing companies such as Tam Tam who regularly produce comics for young readers. Topics range from strong moral messages regarding appropriate behaviour for young Cambodian men and women to fantastical tales of ghosts and ghouls and other magical creatures. These publications are widely distributed through newspaper stands and booksellers in major towns.

There remains a serious dearth of material for readers looking for more challenging texts on topics which relate the everyday lives of modern Cambodian children. The selection of Khmer-language novels for more advanced readers predominantly comprises ghost stories and romances published by commercial publishing companies. Éditions SIPAR have published some novels: Jud Kai's *Kmayng Wadht Samoy Baharang* [The two boys who lived in the pagoda during the French regime] (2005) and two translations, of Collodi's *Pinocchio* and Antoine de St Exupéry's *The Little Prince*. As today's younger readers grow into their teens hopefully the range of books for this age group will grow with them.

Information books are increasing in numbers and range of information. Health education is a popular topic with a number of NGOs producing books on health subjects ranging from basic daily hygiene to HIV prevention. SIPAR has produced the largest collection of information books through their excellent series. The high production standards of these colourful books, combining photographic or artistic illustrations with small chunks of text, makes them instantly attractive to young readers. The use of photostories is particularly

There remains a serious dearth of material for readers looking for more challenging texts

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Ke, Bararoth and Lang Bunlim (2006) <i>Yeung Dow Sala/ Let's Go to School</i> Phnom Penh: Room to Read	Vann, Nath and James Walter (2005) <i>Jayk Neung Joch/Jayk & Joch</i> Phnom Penh: Save Cambodia's Wildlife
Phare Ponleau Selpak (2006) <i>Reung Bpaylyoop Joom Kmoij/Histoires de fantômes qu'on rencontre la nuit</i> Phnom Penh: Tam Tam	Ven, Son and Khun Sovannarith (2006) <i>Gomnaap Okhbagahn Dontreik Khmai / A Poem About Khmer Musical Instruments</i> Phnom Penh: Room to Read
Seoung, Makara, Pich Proeung, Elénore Richardson and Kimberly Cousins (2002) <i>The Hare and the Trappers</i> Phnom Penh: Domrei Sor	Y, Lida and Heritage Watch <i>Monhgoss Neung Pnu Boreun/The Wrath of the Phantom Army</i> (2006) Phnom Penh: Heritage Watch
Srey, Bandol (2005) <i>Hawmo Domrei/In the Land of the Elephants</i> Phnom Penh: Reyum	

effective at showing the messages the books contain in practice in familiar contexts. Room to Read have also recently published two books written by Mr Ven Son, a renowned poet and an active promoter of Cambodian children's literature, about Khmer instruments and dances using the conventional metre and rhyming patterns of Khmer traditional songs.

Cambodian publishers face problems of piracy and distribution. Although Cambodia is a member of the World Trade Organisation and its intellectual property laws and regulations are now in compliance with its WTO commitments, enforcement of copyright regulations remains a problem. Markets, streetside stalls and bookstores still sell large numbers of pirated books. In fact, there are few bookshops in Cambodia selling original copies of children's books published outside of the country. Often copies are of high quality making it difficult to distinguish them from the original publications: others may be simply bound photocopies.

• Cambodian publishers face problems of piracy and distribution

In recent years, many improvements have been made in the roads network in Cambodia, and now most major towns and provincial capitals are serviced by a sealed road. Large areas of the countryside, however, remain accessible only by dirt road, sometimes little more than an ox-cart track. During the monsoon season, many of these areas become inaccessible for long periods of time. There remain many smaller towns and communities around the country that receive little printed material of any description.

In spite of these difficulties, children's publishing in Cambodia is continuing to grow. The Ministry of Youth, Education and Sport is currently working towards the improvement of literacy levels through

the installation of libraries in rural schools and several NGOs run library projects to increase access to books across the country.

The Khmer Writers' Association now has more than 200 members and provides training workshops to writers and poets. In 2004, the Federation for the Development of the Book Sector in Cambodia was established. It brings together representatives from governmental organisations, NGOs, associations and businesses, as well as individuals concerned with the development of books and reading in Cambodia.

Increased literacy levels will hopefully increase the demand for books and will encourage publishers to continue with providing inspiration and enjoyment to Cambodian children. Cambodian children's publishing has taken its first steps and with continued support from governmental, NGO and private sources it will surely grow and flourish, striding forward to take its place in the Cambodian literary tradition.

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Banco del Libro, Venezuela

In a true pioneering spirit, with ingenuity and a sheer determination, the Banco del Libro has constantly sought new ways of disseminating books and promoting reading among children in Venezuela. Enthusiasm, professionalism, closeness to the children and a refreshing lack of bureaucracy are the hallmarks of the Banco del Libro's work, whether in shanty towns, mountain villages, universities or out in cyberspace

from the website of the Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award

A powerful image of the work of Banco del Libro is that of a 'bilbiomule' with a saddlebag full of books labouring up a twisty mountain path to the most isolated villages in the Andes. The idea of book boats chugging up the Orinoco river on a similar mission to other isolated communities is equally appealing. But Banco del Libro, the extraordinary organisation behind these images, is not about being colourful. It is about a belief in the significance of books and the central role of reading in the emotional, intellectual and social development of children and young people. That's why it goes to such lengths to work out, in association with its partner organisations, the best means of transport for getting

Sebastian Junger, author of *THE PERFECT STORM*, writes on the book's jacket: 'A LONG WAY GONE is one of the most important war stories of our generation Ishmael Beah ... has become one of its most eloquent chroniclers.' The war Beah describes takes place in Sierra Leone in the 1990s. His entire family murdered by rebels, Beah, 12, wanders from village to village with other orphaned boys. Soldiers fighting the rebels recruit the children and, with the help of narcotics, train them to be killers. Beah tells his riveting story graphically, sparing the reader nothing of his nightmare life as a soldier. Without the knowledge that against all odds Beah survived to be rehabilitated, readers might not have the fortitude to face the brutal honesty of this account. At 15, a drug addict, he was discharged from the army to a UNICEF camp. For a time he thought he would never again live normally. Helped by a caring nurse and a loving uncle he didn't know existed, Ishmael lives to tell his harrowing tale. He moved to the United States, completed high school at the UN's International School and graduated from Oberlin College in 2004.

Glenna Sloan



ISHMAEL BEAH

A LONG WAY GONE

New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux 2007

240pp ISBN-13: 9780374105235;

ISBN-10: 0374105235

(memoir, 12+)

by CARMEN DIANA DEARDEN



Carmen Diana Dearden is president of the Banco del Libro and of Ediciones Ekaré and a past president of IBBY

Milestones in the history of Banco del Libro

- 1960: Banco del Libro was founded. Its primary function at that time was as a textbook exchange programme. This programme still operates, though the focus of the organisation is no longer primarily on schoolbooks.
- 1965-1972: Guayana school library network developed: every ordinary school in the city got a school library.
- 1965: Caracas model public library network began, which consisted of a central library, branch libraries, bookmobiles and travelling boxes.
- 1968: A library bus service was started to low-income areas such as the huge shanty towns around Caracas. This continues to be a central Banco activity.
- 1974: Banco del Libro's documentation centre and library was established. It now has over 20,000 children's books and is a hub for the dissemination of children's books across the whole continent and an important centre for research.
- 1976: The first specialised children's bookstore in Venezuela was opened by Banco del Libro at its headquarters. It is still operating.
- 1978: Banco del Libro created the first children's book publishing house in the country, Ediciones Ekaré, which now operates as an independent publisher.
- 1980: Banco del Libro instituted the *Los mejores libros para niños* (Best Books for Children) award.
- 1988: The organisation's innovative headquarters building was completed.
- 1988: Banco del Libro won the IBBY-Asahi Reading Promotion Award.
- 1999: Banco del Libro launched *Leer para vivir*, or *Read to Live*, an enormously successful bibliotherapy programme.
- 2003: The *Leer para vivir* project won IFLA's Cuust van Wesemael Literacy Award.
- 2004: Online master's course in children's literature was begun with the Autonomous University in Barcelona.
- 2007: Banco del Libro won the Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award.

books to children, no matter how remote their community. And that is why *bancolibreros* rove the country setting up school libraries.

It is that passion in action that has made Banco del Libro such a successful organisation and a model for reading projects around the world. And it is that passion in action, along with Banco del Libro's extraordinary record of imaginative service, ready adaptability and practical development that has won the organisation international

recognition and in particular the 2007 Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award.

In 1969, fresh from England, with two young children, I went to visit my friend Virginia Betancourt, a leading founder member of Banco del Libro, and first director of the organisation. At that time, the offices were scattered in several leftover barracks, with narrow and winding alleyways between, and the roofs leaked. But it was a place full of vitality, originality

Banco del Libro is about a belief in the significance of books and the central role of reading in the emotional, intellectual and social development of children

and enthusiasm, and it was an exhilarating time: anything was possible. Virginia eventually moved on, but I had been bitten by the Banco bug, and I stayed.

The organisation had been set up, after the collapse in 1958 of the Venezuelan dictatorship, by a group of women who believed that the way to democracy was through education and that books and reading were vital tools. All volunteers, they imagined different ways of disseminating books and of creating consciousness in the political sphere about the importance of reading. We knew books and reading were not neutral pretty toys. We wanted to change public education in the country; we wanted all those people who had never had books before to change through contact with books – become informed citizens, make decisions, have a say. We wanted school and public libraries to have well-trained librarians and high-quality collections. And those ideas are still at the core of what Banco del Libro does today. There is now a professional staff, but the vital spirit that animated those pioneering volunteers still prevails.

It has been a rare and exquisite privilege to be part of a movement that has accomplished so much and innovated so much. For example, we developed the first public library network in the country, in Caracas. We built the first school library network in Ciudad Guayana, the industrial zone to the south. We were the first to try out a bookmobile service, which regularly visited popular barrios. When we first started the bookmobile service to the barrios in the evenings, even the board of directors had misgivings. They thought people were too busy trying to survive to be interested in books. But it turned out to be just the opposite: on bookmobile visiting days kids would stand watch on the hillsides and we could hear them shouting, 'Here comes the bibliobus! Here comes the bibliobus!' This was a far cry from the attitude of the teacher who, in my early days with the organisation, proudly showed me what excellent condition the books in his school were in, explaining, 'That's because I don't allow the students to touch them.'

Our bookmobile service also visited training centres, schools and jails. A very satisfying and amusing moment was when we were accused by an irate prison guard of having helped some prisoners to escape. The reason we were under suspicion was that the escaping prisoners had



Campaign for collecting books

The organisation had been set up by a group of women who believed that the way to democracy was through education



The bibliobús (bookmobile) visits a low-income neighbourhood in Caracas

taken nothing with them as they tunneled out of jail – except some books they had borrowed from us!

We were the first to open a children's bookstore, the first to set up a children's publishing house, the first to establish an award for children's literature. Our book evaluation committee still selects and recommends the best books in Spanish every year and holds the Best Books of the Year exhibition every April, which has become an important point of reference for publishers, authors, illustrators and the general public.

In the 1990s we developed Venezuela's first (and so far only) reading promotion campaign through mass media: *Leer es un Placer* or *Reading Is a Pleasure*. In 1999, in response to a flooding disaster, we launched our book therapy programme *Leer para vivir*, or *Read to Live*, inspired by Joseph Gold's book *Read for Your Life*. USBBY, through Katherine Paterson, provided the seed money that allowed us to start it, and it was a runaway success. Almost five hundred parents, community leaders and neighbours and 2300 teachers were trained in 62 schools, and fourteen reading clubs were created by the

communities themselves. Eight years later, the project continues, in the hands of the communities. Some of the mothers who came to the first school to hear us read stories are now librarians and reading promoters themselves and lead their own book clubs.

Banco del Libro has now committed itself to research and education

Now that the national public library system has integrated many of Banco del Libro's pioneering projects into its own operations and the school library networks have been taken over by the Ministry of Education, Banco del Libro has committed itself to research and education. It documents its practical experience of running projects and publishes material on children's and young people's literature and other media – recommendations, reader's guides, reports on new research and so forth.

Banco del Libro arranges exhibitions and seminars, both national and international, and organises workshops and courses. The 150-hour course for reading promoters created by the Banco del Libro is held both at the institution itself and as an online course. Together with the Universidad Autonoma de Barcelona and the Sanchez Ruiperez Foundation in Spain, the Banco del Libro now also offers an online master's degree in children's literature.

Experiments with new methods, the construction of models and the dissemination of skills and expertise are at the core and are the strength of Banco del Libro's concept. The institution's impact on the entire field of children's literature in Venezuela and its significance for the development and spread of methods of stimulating reading in Latin America spring from the diversity of our activities and our innovative approach. But one of our most important qualities is enthusiasm, and the ability to arouse enthusiasm in the people we work with.

One of the things that has helped Banco del Libro to survive for almost five decades has been its own innovative spirit. There has always been freedom to invent and try out new ideas; interdisciplinary teamwork; forward vision and good timing; ingenuity and creativity to face the constant lack of sufficient funds; alliances with public and private institutions; many friends who believed in us; a refreshing lack of bureaucracy, as cited by the Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award jury; and, always, good humour – and a touch of magic.

This article is partly based on an article that appeared recently in The Horn Book Magazine.

Website (in Spanish):

<http://www.bancodellibro.org.ve>

There has always been freedom to invent and try out new ideas

Experiments with new methods, the construction of models and the dissemination of skills and expertise are at the core

One remarkable fact about this book is that Tamworth resident Annaliese Porter, a descendant of the Gamilaraay people of Australia, wrote the ballad that forms its text when she was 11 years old. Together with Bancroft's vivid traditional art, her words provide the reader with a virtual tour of the Outback. 'A desert interior-/harsh, sandy, miles of dunes,/the scurrying of animals/are the only tunes.'

The book is a celebration of the native people and their land: 'For thousands of years Aboriginal people/have trodden on this dusty sand-/caring for mother nature/and their sacred land./They have felt the softness of country/and seen the crystal sky-/they have tasted the searing desert wind/and heard the eagle's cry.'

Rock paintings in rich colours, a stylised rendering of the fabled rock formation, Uluru, and a sense through the art of the vastness of this land are other noteworthy aspects of THE OUTBACK.

Glenna Sloan



Annaliese Porter and Bronwyn Bancroft

THE OUTBACK

Broome, Australia: Magabala Books Aboriginal Corp. 2005

22pp ISBN: 1875641866

(picturebook, 4-8)

One of the world's leading children's book illustrators, Can Göknel, writer and illustrator of more than 30 stories for pre-school children, is recipient of many international awards. Her works for children and adults are exhibited widely in museums, including London's Victoria & Albert.

THE SEA TALE tells the story of sea turtles which lay their eggs on sandy beaches. In existence for millions of years, these creatures have become endangered by human activities. Sea turtles hatch out at night but because of artificial lighting cannot easily reach the sea. The moon, the sea and the fish help the anxious mother sea turtle guide her babies away from the lighted camping area around the beach. Polluted water and nature's own chain affect the turtles' future. They are the natural prey of many creatures such as crabs and birds whose survival depends upon eating turtle eggs and hatchlings.

Full-page illustrations in warm colours will have special appeal for children as the content steers them to start thinking and working toward conservation of this and other endangered species.

Nilay Yilmaz



Can Göknel

DENİZ MASALI [The sea tale]

Istanbul: Can Çocuk Press 2006

25pp ISBN: 9750706714

(picturebook, 4-8)

The University of Minnesota in Minneapolis holds several collections related to children's and young adult literature, among them the well-known Kerlan Collection. These world-class collections, known as the Children's [and Young Adult] Literature Research Collections (CLRC), have emerged as one of the premier programmes in this field in the USA.

Dr Nelson Hoyle provides an overview of the collections and their treasures, together with information about library activities

The University of Minnesota's CLRC acquires materials, encourages research, and supports exhibits and conferences for professional outreach. Housed previously in Walter Library, CLRC moved to the new Andersen Library in the spring of 2001. One of eleven collections of rare and unique research materials, the CLRC suite in the Elmer L Andersen Library contains a reading room, processing space and offices. Adjacent are classrooms and gallery, while storage space is below in state-of-the-art temperature and humidity controlled areas.

Private collectors founded the CLRC, enhanced since by additional private gifts and library staff. Flagship collections are the Kerlan and Hess, and other significant acquisitions followed. Acquired annually are touchstone books in the history of children's literature, books nominated for the Hans Christian Andersen, Mildred L Batchelder, Caldecott and Newbery awards, and representative titles from Australia, Denmark, Germany, Great Britain, Japan and the Netherlands.

Founded in 1949 by Irvin Kerlan, MD, the Kerlan Collection holds first-edition titles (one-fifth inscribed), together with related material, that have made a significant impact on the field of children's and young adult/adolescent literature. Young adult books and manuscripts increase as the field expands. Documenting the creative process, these working materials may include manuscript drafts, illustrator studies, dummies, editorial correspondence, marked galleys and selected fan mail from children. There are currently 110,000 books and original materials for 18,000 titles.

The Hess Collection numbered 60,000 dime novels, pulps, story papers and girls', boys' and family series books when bequeathed

by KAREN NELSON HOYLE



Karen Nelson Hoyle is professor and curator at the University of Minnesota Libraries



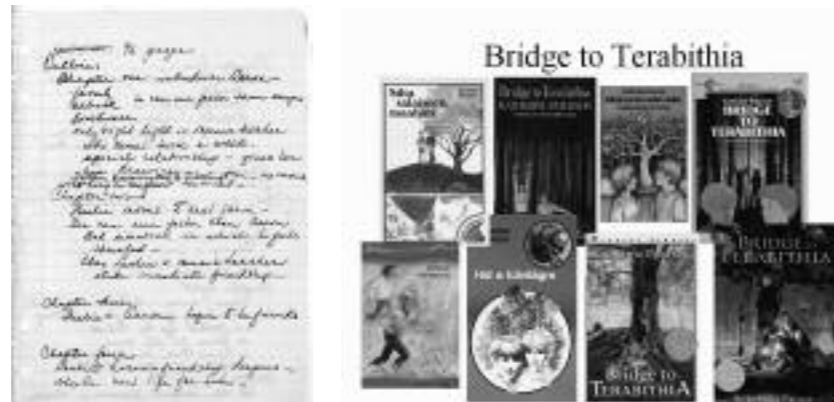
by George Hess Jr in 1954. Some popular items include Beadle's Dime Novels, *The Boys of New York*, *Jesse James Stories* and Alger series books. A bibliography entitled *Girls' Series Books, A Checklist of Titles Published 1840–1991* is now on the CLRC website, with asterisks indicating holdings.

Other important collections include the illustrated *Treasure Island*, pirate and *Alice in Wonderland* books given by Lionel Johnson, Little Red Riding Hood and folklore editions from Jack Zipes and Latin American titles from Mauricio Eduardo Charpenel. Denis R Rogers donated both series books and dime novels to the Edward S Ellis Collection. J Randolph Cox donated 19th-century works such as *The Seaside Library*, early 20th-century books and current fanzines. Laura Jane Musser expanded the L Frank Baum Oz-related holdings with titles written under pseudonyms, chinaware and photographs. Comic books arrived from several sources.

A university librarian, Edward B Stanford, brought together several private enterprises for the Paul Bunyan Collection. ACE paperbacks by authors such as Poul Andersen, Gordon Dickson and Isaac Asimov came from Donald and Mary Lea Osier. Beulah Rudolph purchased book character figurines, such as the Royal Doulton Potteries Wee Willie Winkie and the Danish Ole Luk-Oie, while travelling internationally and bequeathed them all.

Magazines for children such as *Robert Merry's Museum*, *St Nicholas*, *Youth's Companion* and *Cricket*, along with scholarly journals such as *Book-bird*, *Children's Literature Quarterly* and *The Lion and the Unicorn*, arrive as subscriptions or gifts. Secondary literature and ephemera gathered in a reference section and vertical files respectively complete the basic core.

Newbery and Caldecott Awards for distinguished writing and illustrating of children's books are represented by inscribed first-printing trade editions, manuscript drafts for 22 titles and more than a thousand illustration studies. Honour books and translations have expanded the



collection's scope. For example, manuscript drafts and more than a dozen translated editions each for Katherine Paterson's award-winning books such as *Bridge to Terabithia* are available.

The renowned English illustrator, Edward Ardizzone, gave an ink and pencil dummy with handwritten text for *Johnny the Clockmaker* and Rosemary Sutcliff contributed a 145-page handwritten draft and autographed copy of *Knight's Fee*. The Swedish-born Gustaf Tenggren created illustrations for *The Poky Little Puppy*, a 'Little Golden Book' mass-market success, and 50 other titles held in the collection. The Danish American artist NM Bodecker's art, including 39 ink drawings for his *Hurry, Hurry Mary Dear!*, and Edward Eager's *Half Magic*, arrived in 1991.

A collection of the Mildred L Batchelder awardees contains pairs of books – the original language edition and the translated American version – since 1968. Astrid Lindgren's *Rönja rövardotter*, for example, became *Ronja, the Robber's Daughter* in the American edition. Fifteen translator manuscripts enhance these holdings. An example is Robin Longshaw's work for Pilar Molina Llorente's *The Apprenticeship*.

Esther Shepherd's *Paul Bunyan* and James Stevens's book with the same title, published a year later in 1925, differ in information about the legendary hero. Manuscripts, art and correspondence provide fodder for more investigation.

The Bohemian American and Minnesotan Wanda Gág, whose *Millions of Cats* (1928) proved innovative in the concept of illustrating the double-page spread, is represented by studies and manuscripts for eight books.

CLRC holds young adult manuscripts by Francesca Lia Block, Nancy Garden, Robert Lipsyte and Jacqueline Woodson and up to a hundred other authors in this newer, growing genre. John Donovan may be the first to include a gay episode in his *I'll Get There. It Better Be Worth the Trip*. Among the author's notes, research materials, correspondence,



Wanda Gág's Millions of Cats (1928)

reviews and book catalogues he donated for six titles is the 206-page corrected typescript for this groundbreaking title.

Individuals using the collections discover information they may keep private or publish. Permission to quote is protected by copyright when in effect. Professor Fred Erisman wrote several articles based on his studies of boys' and girls' series books and then a book, *Boys' Books, Boys' Dreams, and the Mystique of Flight*. Keiko Hori found that a popular 19th-century Japanese author may have plagiarised from Bertha Clay. I myself learned that Wanda Gág used India ink, not woodcuts as her contemporary reviewers claimed. Anita Silvey perused the Jean Craighead George manuscripts and discovered that the author wrote three complete drafts and changed the title six times, concluding with *Julie of the Wolves*. She notes this in her 2004 publication *100 Best Books for Children*. A graduate student found imbedded in Kate di Camillo's computer printouts for *Because of Winn Dixie* evidence that the author chided herself.

Class visits by appointment offer higher education students in the Twin Cities (Minneapolis and St Paul) area an opportunity to peruse course-related books, manuscripts and art. Faculty in University of Minnesota departments such as Creative Writing,

Curriculum and Instruction, Design, and English schedule classes each semester to peruse primary sources, enhancing teaching and research. A College of Visual Art class in history of illustration looked at examples of colour separations by Jean Charlot, Janina Domanska and Roger Duvoisin. A Minneapolis College of Art group studied prints and etchings by Arthur Geisert.

In 1995, Professor Shigeo Watanabe, then recently retired from Keio University in Tokyo, brought nineteen students to participate in the Japan and American Children's Literature Symposium. They also examined picturebook art, especially by Virginia Lee Burton and Marie Hall Ets. Twelve staff members from Japan's Kijo Picture Book Village visited in the summer of 1999 to select works for a future Wanda Gág art exhibit and travelled to the artist's childhood home in New Ulm to understand German and Bohemian influences in her work.

Exhibitions vary from temporary displays in the home Andersen Library Gallery to international travelling exhibitions. In 1985, for example, 'An American Sampler: Children's Books from the CLRC', with guest curator Dr Moira Harris, opened at the Bologna Children's Book Fair. 'From Swedish Fairy Tales to American Fantasy: Gustaf Tenggren's Illustrations 1920–1970' was mounted by the University of Minnesota's art museum with a guest curator, the art historian Dr Mary Swanson. It travelled to venues in the USA for two years and then to the National Museum in Stockholm and five other sites in Sweden for an entire year.

CLRC hosted the IBBY exhibition 'Children's Magazines' in 1992, assembled by Marianne Carus; 'Roots in Denmark' in 1992, assembled by the Danish section of IBBY and the Danish Writers' Union; and 'Trolls, Mrs Pepperpot and Beyond: Celebrating Norwegian

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Children's Books' planned by the Children's Museum in Washington DC in 2000.

Conferences, symposia and lectures open to the public occur occasionally. In 1979 the Minnesota Humanities Commission grant provided a series of lectures about Hans Christian Andersen that included the Danish author and Andersen translator now living in Ireland, Erik Haugaard, and artist Nancy Ekholm Burkert, who had illustrated American editions of two titles. The Embassy of Finland lent the exhibit 'Tove Jansson's Moomintroll Family' in late spring of 1993.

An international conference in 1995, 'Der Struwwelpeter Reconsidered', attracted Walter Sauer, Astrid Surmatz and Gerhard Weiss, among

Contact details

For books, view <http://www.lib.umn.edu/>
or enquire at clrc@umn.edu for books published pre-1993 in the card catalogue.

For manuscript and illustration holdings, view
<http://special.lib.umn.edu/clrc/kerlan/auweblinks.php>

Contact details: clrc@umn.edu; telephone +1 612-624-4576
<http://special.lib.umn.edu/clrc>

Children's Literature Research Collections (CLRC), including the Kerlan and Hess
113 Andersen Library, 222 21st Avenue South, Minneapolis, MN 55455, USA
FAX +1 612-626-0377

others, as speakers. Two Swedish experts, Ulla Lundkvist and Ulf Boëthius are among nine who will participate in 'A Woman for All Seasons: Astrid Lindgren at 100' celebration at Andersen Library in November 2007.

The annual Ezra Jack Keats/Kerlan Collection Fellowship was established in 1984 to enable an emerging author or artist to travel and study for a week in the Andersen Library. The Marilyn Hollinshead Endowment for a research fellow began in 2004 and provides travel and per diem funds for a similar stay.

The Kerlan Friends, a membership organisation, sponsors an award, supports a conservation programme and publishes a quarterly newsletter. The Kerlan Award is given annually by the Kerlan Friends 'in recognition of singular attainments in the creation of children's literature and in appreciation for generous donation of unique resources to the Kerlan Collection for the study of children's literature'. Past recipients include Don Freeman, Madeleine L'Engle and Jane Yolen. Ruth Berman edited *The Kerlan Awards in Children's Literature 1975-2001* honouring those selected. Conservation arrangements are made by contract. The newsletter is available in both paper and electronic form, the latter on the CLRC website.

To raise funds, the Kerlan Friends received permission to reprint images by Ashley Bryan, Chinese American Cheng-Khee Chee, Hungarian-born Paul Galdone, James Marshall, Lois Lenski and to sell greeting cards and calendars. Facsimile images of manuscripts and art, for example by Karen Hess, Walter Dean Myers and Phyllis Reynolds Naylor, are lent out for two weeks in portfolios.

The Andersen Library reading room is open to the public Monday through Friday from 8:30 to 4:30 and by appointment. While visitors are always welcome, better service is provided by appointment with materials retrieved in advance.

Submission Guidelines for *Bookbird*

Bookbird: A Journal of International Children's Literature is the refereed journal of the International Board on Books for Young People (IBBY).

Papers on any topic related to children's literature and of interest to an international audience will be considered for publication. Contributions are invited not only from scholars and critics but also from editors, translators, publishers, librarians, classroom educators and children's book authors and illustrators or anyone working in the field of children's literature. Please try to supply illustrations for your article. (Book covers are sufficient, but other illustrations are also welcome.)

Length: Up to 3000 words

Language: Articles are published in English, but where authors have no translation facilities, we can accept

contributions in most major European languages. Please contact us first if you have a translation problem.

Format: Word for Windows (Mac users please save your document in rich text format – RTF) as an email attachment; send illustrations as JPG attachments.

Style and layout: The author's name and details should appear in the email only, not in the paper itself. A stylesheet is available with more detailed guidelines.

Deadline: *Bookbird* is published every quarter, in January, April, July, October. Papers may be submitted at any time, but it is unlikely that your paper, if accepted for publication, would be published for at least six to nine months from the date of submission, to allow time for refereeing and the production process.

Contact details: Please send two copies: one to bookbirdsp@oldtown.ie AND one to bookbirdvc@oldtown.ie

NB: Please put **Bookbird submission** followed by your initials in the subject line.

Please remember to include your full name and contact details (including postal address), together with your professional affiliation and/or a few lines describing your area of work in the body of your email.

Send us a book postcard from your part of the world!

Notices on international children's books, distributed throughout Bookbird, are compiled from sources around the world by Glenna Sloan, who teaches children's literature at Queens College, City University of New York.



Have you got a favourite recently published children's book – a picturebook, story collection, novel or information book – that you think should be known outside its own country? If you know of a book from your own or another country that you feel should be introduced to the IBBY community, please send a short account of it to us at *Bookbird*, and we may publish it.

Send copy (about 150 words), together with full publication details (use 'postcard' reviews in this issue of *Bookbird* as a model) and a scan of the cover image (in JPG format), to Professor Glenna Sloan (glennasloan@hotmail.com).

We are very happy to receive reviews from non-English-speaking countries – but remember to include an English translation of the title as well as the original title (in transliterated form, where applicable).



• *Books on francophone Belgian, Colombian and Korean illustration; a book on children's literature from the (former) German Democratic Republic; a collection of essays on Irish children's writers and illustrators, and one from Italy on modern British children's literature; and a groundbreaking study of radical children's literature by Kim Reynolds*

edited and compiled by

CHRISTIANE RAABE

(translations by Nikola von Merveldt)



Christiane Raabe is director of the Internationale Jugendbibliothek (International Youth Library) in Munich

BELGIUM

PHILIPPE SUINEN (ET AL) (EDS)

Parade autour des fêtes carnavalesques. 15 illustrateurs de Wallonie et de Bruxelles

[Carnival parades. 15 illustrators from Wallonia and Brussels]

Brussels: CGRI 2007 36pp ISBN 9782930308098

PHILIPPE SUINEN (ET AL) (EDS)

Panorama. 40 illustrateurs de Wallonie et de Bruxelles

[Panorama. 40 illustrators from Wallonia and Brussels]

Brussels: CGRI 2007 173pp ISBN 9782930308104

Compared to the comic-authors Hergé, Peyo and Morris, with their iconic heroes Tintin and Snowy, the Smurfs and Lucky Luke, the national tradition of children's book art from Wallonia-Brussels is but little known. To remedy this, the Administration of the French Community of Belgium prepared two exhibitions featuring children's book illustrations that were first shown at the 44th Bologna Children's Book Fair in 2007. Each exhibition is accompanied by a fine catalogue.

For the first one, fifteen renowned artists, some of whom are still fairly young, were invited to submit illustrations on the topic of carnival festivities that are so popular in the French-speaking community of Belgium. These parades have acquired a worldwide reputation and have been registered by UNESCO in the list of Masterpieces of Oral and Intangible



Heritage of Humanity.

Depending on their artistic approach and personal interpretation, the artists created parade pictures showing abstract masks, grotesque anthropomorphised animals, or whimsical scenes on the margins of the parades.

The second catalogue, *Panorama*, gives a survey of Franco-Belgian children's literature between 1950 and 2007. Forty artists ranging from Elisabeth Ivanovsky and Gabrielle Vincent to Marie Wabbes and the impetuous newcomers Anne Herbauts and Kitty Crowther testify to the enormous vitality and diversity of the art of illustration in francophone Belgium.

Both catalogues are complemented by quotes and bio-bibliographical presentations of the artists in French, English and Italian.

Elena Kilian

IYL Scholarship Programme

For many years, the International Youth Library (IYL) has been offering a successful programme of scholarships. Thanks to the financial support of the Foreign Ministry of the Federal Republic of Germany, each year the IYL invites several specialists in the field of children's and young adult literature from around the world for a research stay. During their visit, the scholarship holders have access to the works of primary and secondary literature from the world's largest special collection of international children's literature. Applications for 2009 are welcome. For further information, please contact Petra Wörsching (email: direktion@ijb.de) or visit our website at www.ijb.de.

COLOMBIA

FANUEL HANÁN DÍAZ

Leer y mirar el libro álbum: ¿un género en construcción?

[Reading and looking at picturebooks: a genre under construction?] (Series: Catalejo)

Bogotá [et al]: Ediciones Norma 2007 240pp ISBN

9789580496382 US \$20



Thanks to a growing number of licensed editions and original creations, the picture-book is gaining in importance in Latin America. The present volume testifies to the growing interest that publishers, specialists in

children's literature and educators manifest for this genre. It brings together a number of revised articles and papers by Fanuel Hanán Díaz, a Venezuelan specialist in children's books, who has been studying the developments in Latin American picturebook illustration for years.

The first of four chapters looks at milestones of the genre to trace its historical development all the way from the European roots to the present day. In the second chapter, Díaz focuses on the characteristics of the genre, namely the interactions between text, image and overall graphic design. Questions of pictorial composition, visual effects and artistic techniques are addressed in chapter 3, including reflections on the relationship with fine arts and film. The last chapter looks at the reception of picturebooks and analyses different ways of 'reading' them.

The chapters are only loosely related but well structured; many examples illustrate Díaz's argument, creating a highly readable text. The

joy of reading and looking at the volume is somewhat tempered by the inferior quality of the reproductions, particularly regrettable in a book about the importance of images. It nevertheless remains a recommendable volume, especially useful as a concise introduction for anyone interested in working with picture-books, be it in theory or practice.

Jochen Weber

GERMANY

RÜDIGER STEINLEIN, HEIDI STROBEL,
AND THOMAS KRAMER (EDS)***SBZ/DDR. Von 1945 bis 1990***

[Soviet occupation zone/German Democratic Republic. 1945 to 1990]

(Series: Handbuch zur Kinder- und Jugendliteratur; 5)

Stuttgart: Metzler 2006 xxxiv+1515pp

ISBN 9783476021779 €299.95



With this volume on the history of children's literature in the GDR from 1945 to 1990 ('Soviet occupation zone' 1945–9), this *Handbuch zur Kinder- und Jugendliteratur* [Handbook of children's and youth literature] takes its

historical survey of German children's literature up to the present. Four previously published volumes cover the period from 1461 to 1850; further volumes are in preparation.

Due to postwar politics, East German children's literature evolved in a context that deserves to be considered as a distinct historical period. Accordingly, the editors aim to offer a comprehensive survey of GDR literature, its thematic, aesthetic

and ideological spectrum, and to illuminate its function and political significance within the socialist regime. An extensive introduction is followed by fourteen chapters, which present areas such as realistic short stories and novels, literature for girls, poetry for children, historical narratives, anti-fascist literature, adventure and crime novels, fairy tales and others. This is the first volume of the *Handbuch* series to devote a

detailed section to the art of illustration in picturebooks and illustrated children's books. The final section offers bibliographical information, including secondary literature, and an index searchable by name, book title and year of publication. Detailed annotations to 798 titles broaden the scope presented in the main section of this standard work of reference.

Andreas Bode

IRELAND

VALERIE COGHLAN AND SIOBHÁN PARKINSON (EDS)

Irish Children's Writers and Illustrators 1986–2006. A Selection of Essays

Dublin: CBI and CICE Publications 2007 168pp ISBN 9780950928951 €15

As joint editors of the quarterly Irish children's literature magazine, *Inis*, Valerie Coghlan and Siobhán Parkinson commissioned a number of essays between 2001 and 2004 about some of the most successful Irish children's book authors and illustrators. For the present publication, these thirteen articles, written by renowned children's literature experts, editors and fellow authors and illustrators, have now been updated. They introduce and discuss the works of ten popular Irish authors, including Eoin Colfer, Matthew Sweeney and Gerard Whelan, and the three Irish illustrators Marie-Louise Fitzpatrick, Niamh Sharkey, and PJ Lynch. In his article on young artist Niamh Sharkey, for example, John Short traces the development of her style with many full-colour pictures showing examples of her stunning artwork; Celia Keenan reflects on the importance of place in Maeve Friel's novels and on her 'complex and ambiguous' attitude to the past. Even though the articles focus primarily on children's literature published in English (and often outside of Ireland), as the editors concede in the introduction to the book, this collection of essays still offers a broad critical overview of the contemporary Irish children's literature scene at the turn of the 21st century. Thus it constitutes a unique resource for both scholars of children's literature and the general reading public.

Claudia Söffner



ITALY

FRANCESCA ORESTANO (ED)

Tempi moderni nella children's literature.**Storie, personaggi, strumenti critici**

[Modern times in 'children's literature'. Stories, characters, literary-critical tools]

(Series: LIMC 5)

Milan: CUEM 2007 225pp ISBN 9788860011206 €14



A continuation of *Le guide del mattino. Alle origini della 'children's literature'* [The morning guides. On the origins of 'children's literature'], this volume of collected essays is devoted to the study of modern British children's literature.

The editor, professor of English at Milan State University and since 2007 host of an English-language website on the study of children's books in Italy (<http://users.unimi.it/chilidit/>), brings together eight contributions by Italian Anglicists. The period of the Enlightenment is represented by the essay 'Puer oeconomicus', which looks at work, wealth, and social rise in 18th-century narrative children's literature, and by Giulia Margon's article on Sarah Fielding's *The Governess, or The Little Female Academy* (1749), the first British novel to be published specifically for girls. Matteo Crivelli's contribution on scientific phenomena and issues in Lewis Carroll's Alice novels is followed by four essays on famous protagonists of children's books from the Victorian era to the present: Winnie-the-Pooh, Mary Poppins, Harry Potter and, in Orestano's essay, child protagonists in 19th-century urban novels. An annotated bibliography of British children's literature from the beginnings to the postmodern present completes the volume, which, thanks to its

broad thematic and historic scope, succeeds in uncovering the intellectual and cultural roots of British children's literature.

Elena Kilian

JAPAN

OKIKO MIYAKE (ED)

Picture Books in Korea. A Collection of Essays / Symposium 'Picture Books in Korea and Japan'

Suita: International Institute for Children's Literature, Osaka 2006 321pp no ISBN ¥2000 Multilingual edition: Japanese, Korean, English



The present trilingual edited volume offers an excellent overview of Korean picturebook art, which has been attracting growing international interest. In the first section, Korean and Japanese specialists present the history of Korean illustration from the beginnings to the present day. Okiko Miyake's opening essay sketches the historical background: Japanese colonisation, following the demise of the Joseon Dynasty (1392–1910), the Korean War and the following military dictatorship, which lasted until 1996, all suppressed traditional Korean culture. Only within the context of democratisation and economic recovery did South Korea slowly recover its cultural identity. Today, young artists, trained in Western art, struggle to get back in touch with their cultural heritage. This desire is manifest in many recent picturebooks and lends them a unique charm. In his essay, Osamu Nakamura analyses Japanese translations of Korean originals focusing on differences in quality between

the original and the translated text, the difficult translation of idioms and phrases particular to the Korean language, and the problem of the lack of knowledge of the cultural background.

The second section features renowned picturebook artists such as Seung-gak Chung (South Korea) and Seizy Tashima (Japan) who look back on their artistic development,

comment on their styles and techniques, and share their views of art and social commitment.

The volume comprises illuminating contributions on the characteristics of Korean picturebook art and its producers that are bound to inspire further explorations of this burgeoning art form.

Fumiko Ganzenmüller

UNITED KINGDOM

KIMBERLEY REYNOLDS

Radical Children's Literature. Future Visions and Aesthetic Transformations in Juvenile Fiction

Basingstoke [et al]: Palgrave Macmillan 2007 xi+215pp ISBN 9781403985613 £45

In this groundbreaking study, the British professor of children's literature Kimberley Reynolds sets out to contradict the opinion voiced by some earlier critics that writing for children is a conservative form of literature that defies any kind of modernist influence. In the first chapter, the author prepares the ground for her argument by discussing some of the points laid down in two influential critical works published in the 1980s, Jacqueline Rose's *The Case of Peter Pan or The Impossibility of Children's Fiction* (1984) and Juliet Dusinberre's *Alice to the Lighthouse. Children's Books and Radical Experiments in Art* (1987).

In contrast, Reynolds concludes that, quite frequently, 'textual experiments are given their first expression in writing for children'. Focusing mainly on contemporary English-language children's books from different countries, Reynolds then analyses a variety of themes (such as fear, sexuality and trauma), and genres (eg nonsense literature, picturebooks and problem novels) to demonstrate that children's literature, in its traditional form as well as in modern media, 'is both a breeding ground and an incubator for innovation'. The wide range of texts discussed and the new insights offered into the interplay of children's literature with childhood and youth culture will make this book an indispensable study for children's literature scholars.

Claudia Söffner

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 • Submissions of recent books and book announcements for inclusion in this section are welcome. Please cite titles in the original language as well as in English, and give ISBN, price and other ordering information if available. Brief annotations may also be sent, but please no extensive reviews.
 • Send submissions to Christiane Raabe, Internationale Jugendbibliothek, Schloss Blutenburg, D-81247 München, Germany.





- *The International Children's Book Day message and poster for 2008 from Thailand;*
- *a new fund for Children in Crisis; more about Books for Africa Books from Africa;*
- *the 31st IBBY congress in Copenhagen in September; mobile libraries in Mongolia;*
- *and an obituary to the last living founder of IBBY, Richard Bamberger*

International Children's Book Day 2008

The 2008 poster and message are sponsored by IBBY Thailand, with support from the Siam Cement Foundation. This year's motto is 'Books Enlighten; Knowledge Delights', written and illustrated by Chakrabhand Posayakrit, who, in 2000 was named National Artist in Visual Arts, by the Thai office of the National Cultural Commission. In 2005 the Thai Cabinet endorsed a proposal by the Ministry of

Education to honour Her Royal Highness Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn on the occasion of her 50th birthday, by naming 2 April as the Thailand Children's Book Day to be celebrated annually. The princess was honoured by the Government of Thailand in respect of her active engagement in the promotion of reading and her own writing talent that has been admired by all. This recognition shows the reflection of the willingness of the government to cultivate a reading habit among Thai children. Internationally, the princess was a member of the Hans Christian Andersen Award Jury in 1988.

Books enlighten; knowledge delights

The quest for knowledge through reading needs to be given a high priority and nurtured from childhood.

In my view, Thai children have long been inculcated with a desire for knowledge through reading, based on a sublime culture and tradition. Parents see their first teachers and the clergy are their principle mentors in guiding and educating young people intellectually and mentally, in both worldly and spiritual matters.

I found inspiration for this painting from Thailand's long recorded traditions, through the telling of stories to children to their learning by reading inscriptions on palm leaves placed on small folding tables exclusively designed for the purpose of reading.

Stories written on palm leaves usually come from Buddhism. They tell of Buddha's life and recount tales from the *jataka* with the noble intention of cultivating young minds and instilling in them faith, imagination and morality.

*Chakrabhand Posayakrit
December 14, 2006*



IBBY Fund for Children in Crisis

Following on the success of IBBY's Tsunami Appeal and the IBBY-Yamada Fund that supports our current project programme, the IBBY Executive Committee decided to create a new programme of projects for children in the most difficult of circumstances.

The purpose of this new fund is to provide support for children whose lives have been disrupted through war, civil disorder or natural disaster. The two main activities that will be supported by the fund are the therapeutic use of books and storytelling in the form of bibliotherapy, and the creation or replacement of collections of selected books that are appropriate to the situation. We hope the programme

will not only provide immediate support and help but that it will also make a long-term impact in the communities, thus supporting IBBY's goal of giving every child the **Right to Become a Reader**.

Based on predetermined criteria, IBBY will select the communities where the projects will be funded. The basic criteria will include:

- the existence of a short- or long-term situation of crisis in the lives of the children of the community
- the availability of a strong, capable IBBY section either in the affected or a neighbouring country and/or the presence of a capable IBBY partner

compiled and edited by
ELIZABETH PAGE



Elizabeth Page is IBBY's member services, communications and new projects director

- the strength of the project and its possible short- and long-term impact in fulfilling IBBY's goals
- the availability of money

Two projects were set up in 2007 under the auspices of the IBBY Children in Crisis programme:

Conflict management for war-traumatised children (Lebanon)

The programme is organised by IBBY Lebanon and is currently running in schools in Southern Lebanon using puppetry, theatre, storytelling and books to explore issues of anger, alternative methods of conflict resolution, etc. This project is fully funded by the residual of the IBBY Tsunami Appeal. Workbooks for teachers and a corresponding one for children have been written, published and distributed to the schools involved in the project.

Gaza project 2007–2008 (Palestine)

This project, operated by the Tamer Institute for Community Education based in Ramallah – IBBY National Section of Palestine – will create libraries in two community centres in Gaza, Palestine. In addition, bibliotherapy training will be given to the people working in the centres who, in turn, will train other bibliotherapists working throughout Gaza. The project will be fully funded by the Paterson Family Private Foundation, through the IBBY Children in Crisis Fund.

Reading clubs for child victims of armed conflict (Colombia)

A third project will begin shortly and will take place in Colombia over the next two years. This project comprises reading clubs for children and young people who are victims of armed conflict in Colombia. Operated by the Banco del Libro (IBBY Venezuela) and Asolectura, the project will involve a thousand street children, who have been

displaced by the ongoing civil conflict, in reading clubs. Selected books will be available through a system of mobile libraries. An important component of this project will be a phase of rigorous assessment at the end of the period, aimed at refining IBBY's work in bibliotherapy, IBBY Colombia and the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) will be instrumental in this important aspect of the project.

IBBY can accept donations in Swiss francs, euros and US dollars. A new page on the IBBY website has been established giving details about how to make donations. We are very grateful to Piet Grobler for his splendid illustrations for the webpage, which he made especially for IBBY.

Go to www.ibby.org to find out more about the IBBY Children in Crisis Fund.

Books for Africa Books from Africa



This virtual exhibition is now an established feature on the IBBY website. Thanks to the support of the Project for the Study of Alternative Education in South Africa – PRAESA – in Cape Town, their Early Literacy Unit, under the leadership of Carole Bloch, will take over the administration of the project. With the help of the IBBY secretariat in Basel the books will be selected and reviewed in Africa. Carole will be looking for books of high quality that are authentic and respectful and which are produced in Africa, reflecting the cultures and heritage of African children.

Visit www.ibby.org/africa/exhibition

Stories in History – History in Stories

The 31st IBBY congress will take place in Copenhagen, Denmark, 7–10 September 2008. The chosen venue is the Radisson SAS Scandinavia Hotel in the heart of the city. The congress will open with a festive evening at the concert hall of the famous Tivoli Gardens, the highlight of the evening being the presentation of the diplomas and medals to the winners of the 2008 Hans Christian Andersen Awards.

How has children's literature reflected the actual history of a country or people – and how has consciousness of the past influenced stories for children?

This is the overall theme of the congress with many general topics related to the past and present in literature for children, as well as specific periods and events in history, various geographical areas, and cultures.

- How cultural and ethnic heritage is described in children's books
- Living – and reading – in a time of hardship: during war, suppression, deprivation, exile, etc.
- Integration and socio-cultural conflicts
- Society and culture(s) of a country, and its contemporary stories and myths
- Freedom of speech in children's books
- Religion and morality in children's books
- The relevance of myths and legends in contemporary society, eg the great Indian and other epics
- Slavery; colonialism; holocaust; segregation; apartheid
- Children's reading in times of crisis
- Personal stories and biographies for children

A comprehensive programme of keynote and seminar speakers will talk on these themes. Spanish author and philosopher Fernando Savater will introduce the main theme on day one, followed by keynote speakers including Grete Haagenrud (Norway), Sharif Kanaana (Palestine), Rukhsana Khan (Canada), Klaus Kordon (Germany), Ana



María Machado (Brazil), Ondjaki (Angola), Josefine Ottesen (Denmark), Michèle Petit (France), Peter Sís (USA/Czech Republic), Ngarmpun Vejajiva (Jane) (Thailand), Mats Wahl (Sweden) and Torben Weinreich (Denmark).

The presentation of the IBBY-Asahi Reading Promotion Awards 2008 will be another highlight to watch out for. The Lord Mayor of Copenhagen has invited IBBY to hold the award ceremony at the Town Hall. The IBBY activities such as the general assembly, honour list presentation, open forum, Executive Committee meetings and the traditional storytelling sessions will be accommodated during the congress. A whole range of social activities is also planned, as well as a selection of post-congress tours.

A special workshop is planned for Sunday, 7 September. This will be for members only and covers topics such as reading promotion, the use of bibliotherapy, fundraising and networking. The aim of this extra workshop is to strengthen the national sections in their work and organisation. It is hoped that at least one person from every section will be able to attend.

Visit the IBBY website or the congress website for full information. Early Bird registration is open until 1 April 2008: www.ibby.org or www.ibby2008.dk

With the Mobile Library through the Seasons

It was boiling hot even though it was a day in September. It was like a summer day when the mobile library embarked on a new trip. I can't remember how many trips I have made – I have lost count. There are few places that I have not yet visited in Mongolia: an area of 1,500,000 square kilometres! We even started taking off our warm travelling clothes. As we were driving along the earth road, we saw two white *gers* (round felt tents used as dwelling by the Mongols) among the green hillocks. We left the road and drove through the yellow flowers until children on horseback came to meet us. Now, they know us very well – it wasn't like that sixteen years ago! At that time rural children did not have much interest in reading books and I used candies to attract them to the mobile library. They began to like books more and more. I wrote a poem, called 'Delicious Books' and set it to music. The children and I still sing the song to this day:

*Candy will melt in your mouth,
But books will stay forever in your mind.*

Further along our way we stopped at local schools, where the children gathered to read the books we were carrying. At last we reached a large river in the Khangai Mountains. The river had already begun to ice over and as we drove through the deep water the wheels of the van

disappeared. A cold wind began to blow and it seemed that fall was coming. Once over the river we left the main steppes and approached the mountain region.

As we travelled further, two children, who were riding pillion on a yak, approached us. When we asked why they were not in school, they said that they didn't go to school, and we soon discovered that they couldn't read. When we read one of Andersen's tales to them they were very interested. So we gave them some nice books, saying that they should learn to read. The children were really happy and promised: 'We will surely learn to read!'

The stiff clouds that appeared on the horizon told us that the weather was about to worsen; maybe even snow. The next day it snowed heavily as predicted and the engine of the van was difficult to start the next morning. As we were driving along the van suddenly stopped: the summer fuel had frozen! Snow was everywhere! There was nothing we could do but wait. Just then a wild snowstorm reached us and we couldn't see anything. It is like being in an airplane that was flying in the clouds. What should we do so that we didn't freeze to death?

My son was the driver, my wife the librarian, and I was the boss, so it was up to me to make the right decision. But, there were more than just the three



of us travelling in this mobile library: the characters from our books travelled with us. I began to think of a brave man (a character of one of Jack London's stories) who managed to overcome obstacles by fighting hard and the old fisherman in Ernest Hemingway's story. 'Let's go on,' I told them. 'But where to?' 'Let us find a *ger*.'

I had seen some horses running away from the storm, which meant that there could be a *ger* nearby. We drove on against the storm. As all of us were in our thin fall clothes, it felt as if a storm devil was biting us with its frozen teeth. I wished that I could ask *Little Mook* for his pair of magic slippers or *Karlsson* on the roof for his propeller from his back. We were very happy when we heard a dog barking. We had found the *ger*. But as we approached the dog snarled at us and barred us from going into the *ger*. I found a large wooden stick under snow and when I brandished it at the dog, it ran away yelping.

We went into the *ger* and found a little girl inside. She told us that her parents had gone to round up the animals that had run away during the storm. When we asked her how old she was, she stuck up five fingers. It was very warm inside

the *ger* as she was continually burning the droppings they use for fuel. She offered us cups of hot tea and a plate of dried curds and clotted cream. She was busy cleaning the *ger* and brought some more droppings in to stoke up the fire. It is normal for children in the countryside to be hardworking from their early childhood. We complimented her on her hard work and told her the story of *Little Red Riding Hood*. She liked the story so much that she ran and took out her own red hat from a trunk. Meanwhile her parents returned, having found their livestock.

When I went outside the *ger* later the dog bit me in the thigh! Why did that dog bite only me – we were all strangers! Then I remembered that I had threatened the dog with a large stick when we first arrived and now the dog bore a grudge. The next morning the storm was over and as we left I gave a slice of meat to the dog to apologise according to Mongolian customs. The dog saw me off with a gentle look as if it was also saying sorry for having bit me. The snowstorm had blown over, and all around it was quiet as if nothing had happened. It was still cold and we had to burn droppings under the van in order to start it,



but eventually we were able to continue our trip.

We noticed tracks of many different animals in the fresh snow. It was like reading a book as we tried to discover which animals had passed by. We found dog-like tracks, but much larger than usual. We followed the tracks until we saw a wolf. It was really a wolf! It was the first time that we had seen the king of the steppe. The Mongols say that if someone sees a wolf, he or she will easily achieve their goal. The wolf stood for a while on the mountain ridge, staring down at us, and then slowly began to move away without showing any fear. We drove on through the snow-covered valleys, warming the hearts of so many children with the stories and books we were carrying. Eventually it was time to go home.

On our return journey, the snow began to melt and the ground began to show through the snow cover, as if spring was coming. It also got warmer and the families were leaving winter camps and moving to their fall camps. Yes, it was still September, it was as if our trip to share the books with the children in the countryside had passed through all four seasons: but it had only taken two weeks and 2,800 km!

Dashdondog Jamba

Mongolian children's writer

Winner of the 2006 IBBY-Asahi Reading Promotion Award

*Translated from Mongolian by the OCHKO Translation Center,
Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia*

Richard Bamberger 1911–2007

Richard Bamberger died on Sunday, 11 November 2007 at his home in Vienna. He was 96. With him IBBY has lost not only its last living founder, but also a friend, a visionary, a giver of ideas and a great stimulator of talent.

During an interview in 1993, in which Richard and I discussed the 40th anniversary of IBBY, he recalled that in 1951 the idea of increased international collaboration in the field of children's literature was first broached while sitting in the Munich *Brauhauskeller* with Jella Lepman, Erich Kästner and himself after a passionate discussion on the possible effect of the joint guilt of fairy tales on National Socialism. What drew Richard Bamberger, Jella Lepman and Erich Kästner together from the beginning was their common attitude to activities for peace. In 1947 Richard gave up a promising political career in the Social Democratic Party because of his resistance to the re-creation of the Austrian army.

Because of his strong commitment, Richard Bamberger was a natural member of IBBY's founding group and stayed closely connected to IBBY for over 50 years. He was elected IBBY President in 1962 and served until 1966. While he was president, IBBY expanded, mainly in Eastern Europe and Latin America, and many permanent links to international organisations, including UNESCO, were established during this time. Also during his presidency, he co-founded IBBY's journal *Bookbird* with Jella Lepman in 1963, and served as editor until 1982.

Not only was he very active in IBBY, he was also busy in the promotion of children's literature in Austria, having founded the Austrian Children's Book Club in 1949, and later went on to establish the International Institute for Children's Literature and Reading Research in Vienna in 1965, where he remained director until 1980. His intention was to give IBBY International a home, an idea that was realised by Leena Maissen in Zurich and subsequently, Basel. The Institute in Vienna became the home of the Austrian Section of IBBY.

During the 1978 IBBY Congress in Würzburg, Germany, Richard Bamberger was awarded honorary membership of IBBY and thirteen years later received one of the first Jella Lepman medals.

He was a visionary in children's literature, his book *Jugendlektüre* became a standard work in the German-speaking region and was also widely translated. With the founding of the Austrian Branch of the International Reading Association (IRA), he helped forge the special relationship enjoyed between the IRA and IBBY. Even after his so-called retirement at the age of 70, he founded the Institute for Educational Media Research in Vienna. In 1996 the International Reading Association honoured him by presenting him with the prestigious Citation of Merit. One of the last



Richard Bamberger 1911–2007

honours he received was an honorary doctorate from the University of Dortmund, Germany in 2003 for his services to reading promotion.

When I was a young teacher, Richard Bamberger was a shining example of how to teach reading successfully; he showed me priorities and principles not only for my personal development, but also in my work for and within IBBY. Let me finish with a citation of Richard Bamberger from his speech at the opening ceremony of the International Institute for Children's Literature in Vienna in 1965: 'In our times mankind is striving to vanquish the borders between peoples and find one world. But children have long known that in the kingdom of their imagination there are no border posts. In their favourite books they inhabit all the lands of the earth.'

Peter Schneck

Correction

The caption on page 60 of the last issue of *Bookbird* that refers to a Catholic school should in fact refer to a mosque.

'My idea,' says Gusti, author and illustrator, 'is to show children that creativity helps us to live a better life.' His unique and witty book teaches this lesson by example. One night, the world splits in two and an elephant, himself depicted here as a creature of bits and pieces of wood with a paintbrush for a tail and a long spring for a trunk, loses his back half. He begins a journey to find the missing part, discovering, as he searches, the pros and cons of being without his other half and learning that there are many different ways of rebuilding and reinventing oneself.

Gusti, an award-winning illustrator from Buenos Aires, Argentina, cleverly uses digital images of discarded objects such as washers, screws, bits of wood, nuts and bolts 'to show children that art can be created from objects that usually end up in the garbage can'. Young listeners or readers will delight in this imaginative book, poring over pages packed with visual surprises and pondering messages communicated conversationally in its economical text.

Glenna Sloan



GUSTI

HALF OF AN ELEPHANT

Mexico City: Ediciones Serres City 2004
 First US edition La Jolla, CA: Kane/Miller 2006
 32pp ISBN-10: 193360509X;
 ISBN-13: 9781933605098
 (picturebook, 4-8)

Bookbird

A JOURNAL OF INTERNATIONAL CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

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