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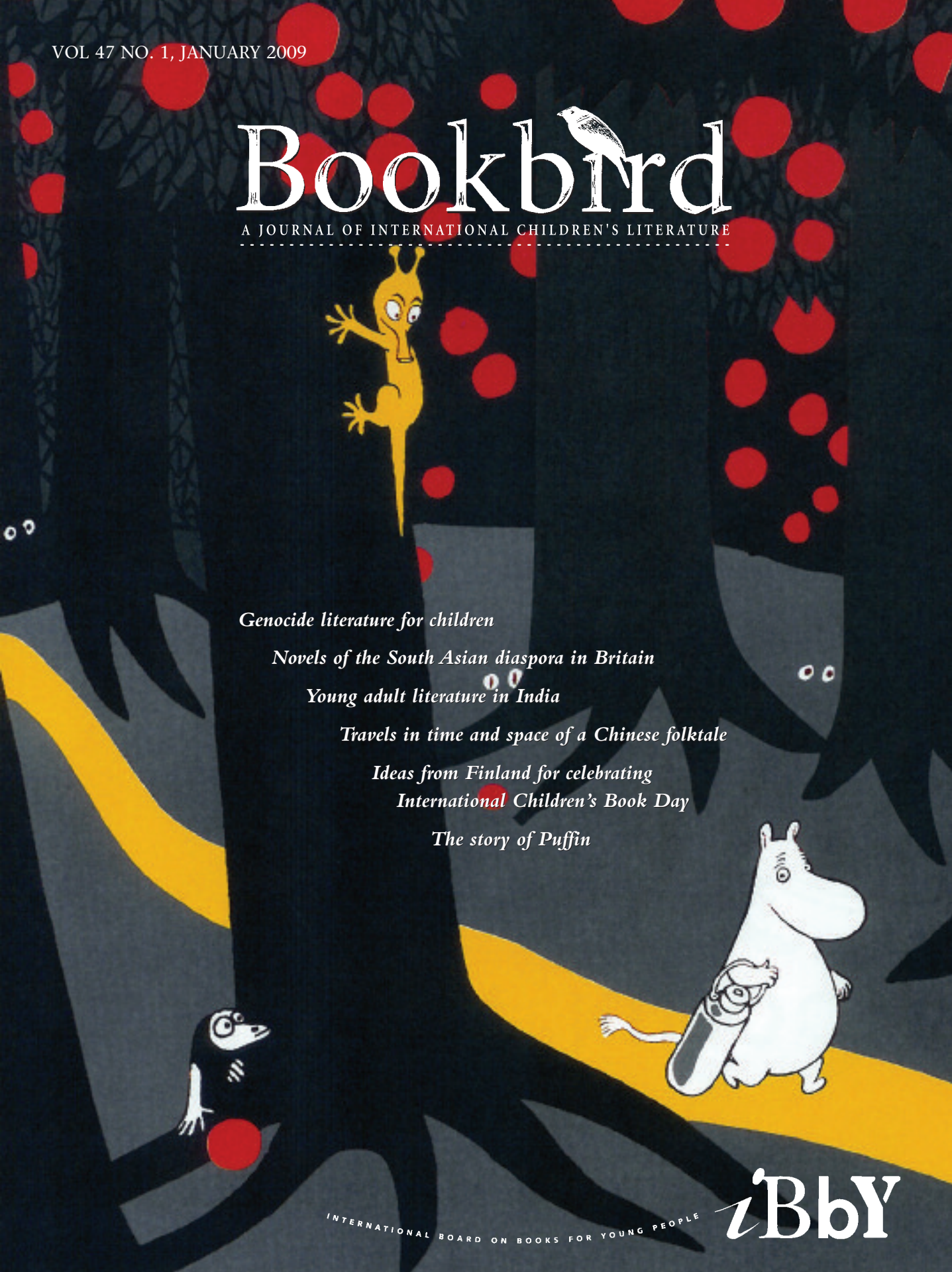
Bookbird

A JOURNAL OF INTERNATIONAL CHILDREN'S LITERATURE



Genocide literature for children

Novels of the South Asian diaspora in Britain

Young adult literature in India

Travels in time and space of a Chinese folktale

Ideas from Finland for celebrating International Children's Book Day

The story of Puffin

INTERNATIONAL BOARD ON BOOKS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

IBBY

Bookbird
A JOURNAL OF INTERNATIONAL CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

The Journal of IBBY, the International Board on Books for Young People

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Bookbird
A JOURNAL OF INTERNATIONAL CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

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!

FIT THE FIRST: JAM AND JUDICIOUS ADVICE

FIT THE SECOND: THOUGHTFUL AND GRAVE

FIT THE THIRD: SUCH QUANTITIES OF SAND

Children's Literature Projects around the World

FIT THE FOURTH: OF SHOES AND SHIPS AND SEALING WAX

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.

Editorial

IT's often said that time flies when you're having fun, and our four years (plus) as editors of *Bookbird* have certainly flown. As well as all that fun, we've also learned so much about children's literature from many parts of the world. During our time as editors we published articles from every continent (well, every inhabited continent anyway – we didn't get as far as Antarctica) and about literature written in many different languages. Literature is of course characterised by cultural and national identity, and we found it encouraging to see how particular identities are expressed in literature at a time when we hear so much about the homogenisation and globalisation of writing and publishing.

The fun part was mostly meeting and working with so many fine people through *Bookbird*. If ever evidence were needed of the outstanding calibre of those involved in the children's book world, then it is to be found in the many encouraging, supportive and friendly emails we have exchanged with people all over the world.

We'll never manage to thank everyone who deserves our thanks, but very special appreciation is due to those who served on the board of Bookbird Inc., during our term of office: Anne Pelowski, Ann Lazim, Elda Nogueira and Ira Saxena, and most of all the three officers, Joan Glazer, Alida Cutts and Ellis Vance, who gave us outstanding support and friendship. Liz Page, who was always cheerful, even when faced with tiresome queries, deserves our special thanks; it has been a great joy to work with you, Liz. Thanks also to Liz's colleague, Forest Zhang, who has been of invaluable assistance, and to those others who supported us from the IBBY office we can only say that life would have been much more difficult without you all.

All the IBBY EC members we met in various exotic locations at conferences and meetings have been unfailingly co-operative, on occasion stepping in as guest reviewers and sometimes even contributing articles to *Bookbird*. Together, the occasional and regular members of our editorial review board have ensured, through their perceptive comments and collectively wide knowledge of children's literature of the world, that standards of accuracy and sound scholarship were adhered to in *Bookbird*. Our regular contributors, Glenna Sloan, queen of the postcards, and Christiane Raabe and her predecessor Barbara Scharioth, together with the team at the Internationale Jugendbibliothek in Munich, especially Jochen Weber and Claudia Söffner, have contributed enormously to providing the variety of outlook, tone and content necessary in a journal such as *Bookbird*. We valued also the professional input of our designer, Kieran Nolan, whose vision transformed the look of the journal, and our proofreader, Antoinette Walker, whose expertise was invaluable and whose flexibility has been legendary. And of course, those who contributed articles during our four years as editors must be thanked too – without them there would be no *Bookbird*.

We thank you all most sincerely, and we hope to stay in touch with you, and with our readers, in other ways. We wish our successors, Cathy and Sylvia – whom you will meet in the next issue – well, and trust they will find *Bookbird* as enriching an experience as we did.

Sayonara, Au revoir, Namasté, Auf Wiedersehen, Zai Jian, Khoda hafaz, Arrivederci, Adjø, Khairete, Segobe, Do widzenia, Choum reap lia, Do svidanja, Slán agaibh.

Bookbird editors

***VALERIE COGHLAN** is the librarian at the Church of Ireland College of Education in Dublin, Ireland. She lectures on and writes about children's books and has a particular interest in picturebooks.*

***SIOBHÁN PARKINSON** is a writer of fiction for children and adults (young and otherwise) and a professional editor.*

A Tribute to Editors Extraordinaire

With this issue, Valerie Coghlan and Siobhán Parkinson complete their term as editors of *Bookbird*. We have been privileged to have had their extraordinary skill in all aspects of producing the journal for these last four years. We thank them and wish them well.

When Valerie and Siobhán applied for the position of editor of *Bookbird*, we read their credentials and thought that they couldn't possibly be as competent and creative as they appeared on paper. We were wrong. They are indeed that outstanding, as we discovered when we interviewed them, selected them and watched them bring their Irish magic to the journal.

Central to maintaining a high level of quality in an academic journal is the securing and selecting of articles, as well as careful editing. Siobhán and Valerie brought a commitment to having *Bookbird* depict children's and young adult literature of countries worldwide. Under their watch, every issue of *Bookbird* had articles representing countries on at least three different continents. They seemed particularly adept not just at giving an open call for papers but also at identifying potential authors at IBBY congresses and other international children's literature conferences, at the Bologna Children's Book Fair, and among their acquaintances in the field of international children's literature. It is quite possible that these editors share a middle name, and that name is 'Follow-up'. They talked with people, made plans and then made certain that the plans were implemented. When they began work on an issue on Chinese literature for children to complement the IBBY congress in Macau, they were concerned about having enough good articles. When they finished, they had acquired so many strong articles that we published a double issue.

The careful editing of *Bookbird* resulted in articles that were smooth and coherent, no matter how complex the content, and thus easily readable. Organisation was clear and vocabulary precise. Regular readers of the journal were especially appreciative of these qualities. Authors, too, found that a good editor made their writing even more effective.

We thank Valerie and Siobhan for their superb work as editors; for their selection and coordination with Kieran Nolan, the graphic designer who added pizzazz to the pages of *Bookbird*; for their many useful suggestions about helping the journal better reach its readers and achieve its purposes; and for their integrity in everything they undertook. We will miss them personally, with their sensitivity, their smiles and, of course, their wicked senses of humour. Thank you, Valerie and Siobhán – and keep in touch.

Joan Glazer
President, Bookbird, Inc.

'Never Again'

International Children's Genocide Literature

Genocides are an ever-present and troubling part of modern history, and in the last century, 'ethnic cleansing' has occurred throughout the world in countries like Turkey, Ukraine, China and Sudan. Even children's literature tackles the issue, and Leanna Fry here introduces a range of recent books on this painful topic for children and young adults

by LEANNA FRY

Leanna Fry is an English language fellow at Atatürk University in Erzurum, Turkey

According to Freeman and Lehman (2001), 'in recent years, there has been a proliferation of children's books about the Holocaust for children of all ages in a range of genres including picturebooks, memoirs, informational books, and historical novels'. This rise in children's books about the Jewish Holocaust is reflected in recent Mildred L Batchelder Award-winners (a US award for translated children's literature). Within the last decade, three books relating to the Holocaust have won this award: Shoshanna Rabinovits's *Thanks to My Mother* (1999), Uri Orlev's *Run, Boy, Run* (2004) and David Chotjewitz's *Daniel Half Human: And the Good Nazi* (2005 Honor). One reason for the prevalence of literature relating to the Holocaust, according to Freeman and Lehman, is because 'the lessons we have learned from the Holocaust resonate today as our world struggles with prejudice, discrimination, and racial cleansing'.

Despite the cries of 'Never again' from the international community following the Jewish Holocaust, acts of genocide have continued. Though international children's literature dealing with these contemporary genocides is still in its infancy, recent publications have attempted to address the conflicts in Cambodia, Bosnia and Rwanda. The children in these books are victims of the genocides, collateral damage in adult conflicts. Despite their youth and their ignorance of the political and ethnic forces driving these conflicts, all the children in these novels are survivors and have strength beyond their age.

Although the unifying theme of these books is genocide, the word – or even concept – is rarely used within the texts. The stories are told from the perspective of children who have little understanding that the conflicts they experience are based on ethnic tensions. Both Dara in Mingfong Ho's *The Clay Marble* and Vithy in Allan Baillie's *Little Brother* know the Khmer Rouge is responsible for the attacks on their villages, but neither has an

understanding of why. Instead, there is an overwhelming sense that the characters are simply victims, children caught in the middle of adult conflicts. Dara expresses this confusion, explaining, 'I [only] understand that war kills people who aren't even fighting it.'

In *Zlata's Diary*, Zlata Filipoviç has only a vague sense of the ethnic divisions in the former Yugoslavia. She writes:

> ***Now politics has started meddling around. It has put an 'S' on Serbs, an 'M' on Muslims and a 'C' on Croats, it wants to separate them. And to do so it has chosen the worst, blackest pencil of all – the pencil of war which spells only misery and death.***

She recognises the ethnic distinctions between people but never associates herself with any of the divisions; instead, she views herself as simply a girl.

There is an overwhelming sense that the characters are simply victims

The literature addressing the Rwandan genocide is an exception. The students in both Hanna Jansen's biographical novel *Over a Thousand Hills I Walk with You* and Jean-Philippe Stassen's graphic novel *Deogratias* must stand in class to identify themselves as either Hutus or Tutsis. They must carry identification cards, and the reality of two distinct tribes is constant. The children, though, have no understanding of the distinction. Jeanne, whose story Jansen recounts in *Over a Thousand Hills*, admits that 'she herself could not have even said what the differences were. Without lists, she would never have known who belonged to what tribe'. Yet, even an 8-year-old child like Jeanne understands she is in danger due to her Tutsi heritage, though she has little sense of why this is important to the Hutus. Her family 'were Tutsis. Jeanne knew now that all Tutsis were supposed to die. Without exception. But why?'.

The children feel abandoned by both the world and God

'Why' is a question that runs throughout the literature. The children feel abandoned by both the world and God. Both have allowed these atrocities to happen, and the children have the impression that no one cares about them. In *Deogratias,* Tutsis watch 'the evacuation of Europeans' from Rwanda. The Europeans save their own and leave the Tutsis to be slaughtered. Jansen expresses her outrage to Jeanne. She writes: 'Almost a million dead in only a hundred days. Murdered. Not killed in war. And the world looked on. Or looked away.' By way of reply, Jeanne says: 'Who was interested? What's Rwanda, after all? A little speck in Africa that nobody knows about. A nothing.' Elsewhere, Jeanne feels that '[n]ow God has abandoned us too' just like Zlata (in *Zlata's Diary*), who asks, 'God, is anyone thinking of us here in Sarajevo?' The children see little hope of help from either God or the international community.

Death is an unrelenting factor in these children's lives

Death is an unrelenting factor in these children's lives. Nina, trapped in the Bosnian conflict in Gaye Hicyilmaz's *Smiling for Strangers*, explains that 'death terrified and excited everyone at the same time'. The refugees of the Cambodian conflict fall into a pattern of introductions. Dara (in *The Clay Marble*) explains that 'first there were the greetings, then the terse tally of the dead, then the pause. Only after that, it seemed, could there be talk of other things.' Jeanne (*Over a Thousand Hills*) felt

that 'death was on the road with [the refugees]. It was their constant companion. It had nothing to do with a war, just with naked hatred, which had suddenly burst out, and shows itself to them undisguised.' Despite their youth, these children must deal constantly with the effects of death.

Children's literature on genocide overwhelmingly emphasises survival

The most graphic accounts of the conflicts occur in the literature addressing the Rwandan genocide. Perhaps this is because the violence was so obviously present. Unlike Bosnia, where people were killed by shelling and unknown snipers, those killed in Rwanda were attacked face-to-face by neighbours and friends wielding machetes and other farming tools. In *Over a Thousand Hills*, Jeanne witnesses the murders of both her mother and older brother. A farmer approaches her brother, Jando, and 'he quickly lifted his long-handled field hoe and drove its point into the back of Jando's head. Jando collapsed. He lay and moved no more. But still the blows rained down on him.' Stassen's description in *Deogratias* of the violence is equally as candid and brutal. *Deogratias* contains graphic accounts of both rape and murder. The violence during this genocide was so visible that it could not be ignored, even in juvenile literature.

Yet, rather than dwell on the death and destruction inherent in genocide, children's literature on the topic overwhelmingly emphasises survival. As such, the focus of many of these books is not the conflict itself but escape, as many characters seek sanctuary as refugees. Dara (*The Clay Marble*) and Vithy (*Little Brother*) both journey to the refugee camps on the Cambodian–Thai border. For them, the border represents safety and security. In *Over a Thousand Hills* Jeanne takes refuge with Hanna Jansen in Germany. Nina (*Smiling for Strangers*) flees from Bosnia into Italy and then Great Britain, and even Zlata eventually moves to France. In this way, genocide literature often overlaps with survivor literature.

Although all the main characters in these books survive the genocides, they must deal with survivor's guilt. In *Smiling for Strangers* Nina escapes to England and lives with a family friend, Paul Fellows. Despite Paul's willingness to shelter Nina, she has difficulty interacting with and relating to other people: 'She felt herself to have been set apart, because she had survived.' Zlata (*Zlata's Diary)* experiences bouts of despair and even contemplates suicide. She writes: 'I really don't know whether to go on living and suffering, to go on hoping, or to take a rope and just … be done with it.' Jeanne (*Over a Thousand Hills*), the sole survivor in her family, has the most difficult time dealing with her guilt. Jansen describes a conversation with Jeanne:

> ***In the silence you now put the question that has haunted you for so long. Why weren't you killed too? You feel guilty. Just because you survived. Just because that's how you see it. A little bitter, as it sounds to me. The others were worth more, you probably mean to say by that.***

Jeanne cannot imagine the possibility of moving on from the genocide. 'There is no future … How can there be a future when, in one day, everything can suddenly be completely gone. Gone forever.' For these children, being survivors is often more difficult than facing the actual conflicts.

Deogratias is an interesting addition to this literature because the character is Hutu. Although he is one of the attackers, he must also cope with survivor's guilt. Deogratias loses his mind – he literally believes he is 'only a dog' – because of the atrocities he both sees and commits.

Children's books discussed

Baillie, Allan (1992) *Little Brother* New York: Viking
Chotjewitz, David (2004) *Daniel Half Human: And the Good Nazi* (trans Doris Orgel) New York: Simon & Schuster
Filipoviç, Zlata (1994) *Zlata's Diary* (trans Christina Pribichevich-Zoriç) London: Penguin Books
Frank, Anne (1997) *Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl* (trans Susan Massotty) New York: Bantam
Hicyilmaz, Gaye (2000) *Smiling for Strangers* New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux
Ho, Minfong (1991) *The Clay Marble* New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux
Jansen, Hanna (2006) *Over a Thousand Hills I Walk with You* (trans Elizabeth D Crawford) Minneapolis: Carolrhoda Books
Orlev, Uri (2003) *Run, Boy, Run* (trans Hillel Halkin) Boston: Houghton Mifflin
Rabinovits, Shoshanah (1998) *Thanks to My Mother* (trans James Skofield) New York: Dial Books
Stassen, Jean-Philippe (2006) *Deogratias: A Tale of Rwanda* (trans Alexis Siegel) New York: First Second
UNICEF (1994) *I Dream of Peace: Images of War by Children of Former Yugoslavia* New York: HarperCollins

Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl is the seminal example of Holocaust – and genocide – literature. It 'continues to be of high interest to children' (Freeman and Lehman 2001), and even those children affected by later genocides are familiar with her story. A fifth-grade class living through the conflict in Bosnia released this statement in UNICEF's *I Dream of Peace: Images of War by Children of Former Yugoslavia*:

For these children, being survivors is often more difficult than facing the actual conflicts

> ***Our teacher has told us about Anne Frank, and we have read her diary. After fifty years, history is repeating itself right here with this war, with the hate and the killing, and with having to hide to save your life. We are only twelve years old. We can't influence politics and the war, but we want to live! And we want to stop this madness. Like Anne Frank fifty years ago, we wait for peace. She didn't live to see it. Will we?***

Children are the most innocent and helpless victims of genocide. *The Clay Marble* asks the resonant question: 'Why must the children suffer, when it's the men who are fighting?' Yet despite their suffering, the children in genocide literature are survivors. They have the ability to continue on in spite of the death that surrounds them and their own unwarranted guilt over surviving. This literature, although depicting the darkest side of humanity, is vital for young readers. The books not only teach readers the historical significance of events that may seem to have occurred long ago and far away but also help ingrain and reinforce the plea for 'Never again'.

Reference

Freeman, Evelyn B, and Barbara A Lehman (2001) *Global Perspectives in Children's Literature* Boston: Allyn and Bacon

It is difficult to find in Africa, especially in the Republic of Benin, a publication whose object is laughter. Michel G Aïsse, called Mickey, caricaturist since 1997, works to make readers of a daily Benin newspaper happy with his drawn jokes. Here he offers a compilation of 92 of them. THE FUNNY ONES OF MICKEY isn't a children's book exclusively. Some of the drawings can be decoded by young people while others may be understood only by adults. That is why the author thinks the target audience for this book is from 7 to 107 years. He defies anyone to read the work from beginning to end without ever wanting to laugh. The text and illustrations of his work guarantee for the reader the good mood essential to well-being.

Georges Bada

Michel G Aïsse

LES RIGOLOS DE MICKEY

[THE FUNNY ONES OF MICKEY: 92 DRAWN JOKES]

Benin: published by the author 2008
48pp ISBN: 9789991968261
(drawn jokes, all ages)

In a handsome volume with plenty of visual appeal, the reader finds fifteen small, witty, often humorous tales featuring Snake and Lizard, two very different creatures who become firm friends. Joy Cowley, author of more than 600 titles for all ages, demonstrates the sure way with words that has earned her numerous awards both at home in New Zealand and internationally. Gavin Bishop's drawings and Cowley's text work together to create a perfect example of complementarity in an illustrated work. Each tale, from the first in which the friends meet for the first time, is set in the desert. Illustrations in watercolour executed in rich desert hues of sunshine yellow, sandy browns, rich red and soft umber enrich and embellish each tale and extend to the endpapers where creatures playing supporting roles in the stories are featured. Perfect bedtime read-alouds, the brief good-humoured stories, enlivened by conversation, are also simple enough for early assisted reading aloud.

Glenna Sloan

Joy Cowley and Gavin Bishop (illus)

SNAKE AND LIZARD

First published in New Zealand by Gecko Press
First US edition La Jolla, CA: Kane/Miller 2008
85 pp ISBN: 9781933605838
(short stories, 5–10)

Dissolving Cultural Boundaries

Two Novels by Bali Rai and Narinder Dhami

by SHEHRAZADE EMMAMBOKUS

Migration and diaspora, cultural identity, hybridity and belonging are explored in novels by many British Asian writers. In this analysis of two novels for young people by Bali Rai and Narinder Dhami, Shehrazade Emmambokus considers how these novelists of the South Asian diaspora in Britain negotiate hybrid cultural identities and offer their readers a kind of bibliotherapy in the process

Authors for adults like Salman Rushdie, Hanif Kureishi, Zadie Smith and Meera Sya explore South Asian diasporic experiences in Britain, and in recent years there has also been an increase in the publication in Britain of South Asian diasporic children's literature that explores adolescent experiences. Like their adult counterparts, these novels examine the negotiation of hybrid cultural identities by looking at the cultural boundaries that exist between the protagonists and their 'home' and 'homeland' cultures. (The word 'home' here refers to an individual's country of actual residence (see Mannur 1999); and their 'homeland' – a term famously used by Rushdie (1991) in *Imaginary Homelands* – means a migrant's country of origin or that of their ancestors. I prefer these terms to 'host' and 'home', since that pairing of words implies that the migrant is just visiting and will eventually return 'home', whereas 'not all diasporas sustain an ideology of "return"' (Brah 1996).) These novels explore the alienating effects of confronting these boundaries and illustrate that the process of negotiation can be problematic, because young people must negotiate between and over the cultural barriers that exist between themselves and their two cultures.

Although books for adults and children may explore similar themes, adult books that look at divided selves differ from similar books for children, as they do not explicitly resolve the conflicts associated with cultural identity negotiation. Instead, they end quite ambivalently and often the reader is expected to make their own conclusions. For example, at the end of Kureishi's *The Black Album* (1995), it is unclear whether the protagonist, Shahid, has chosen to assimilate into the dominant white culture or to embrace hybridity. Children's books, however, usually try to resolve some, if not most, of the anxieties presented in the text, and they illustrate that the process of cultural identity negotiation is ultimately achievable. In this way, these novels not only entertain, but can offer their readers a service:

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readers who empathise with the situations and conflicts they present are offered a form of bibliotherapy, since readers may find the stories and their resolutions comforting and reassuring.

The cultural barriers erected between the protagonists and their 'homeland' cultures are usually self-imposed

Bali Rai's *(Un)arranged Marriage* and Narinder Dhami's *Bindi Babes* engage with the identity conflicts of growing up in a bi-cultural environment and can offer their readers a form of bibliotherapy through the resolution of these internal conflicts. Both these novels, written in the first person, depict the experiences of growing up in the UK. Dhami's protagonist, Amber, narrates how she and her sisters, Jazz and Geena – known as the 'Bindi Babes' – endeavour to evict their aunt, Auntie, who has recently moved in with them from India following the death of their mother. Although the girls embrace parts of their Indian heritage, they resist Auntie partly because they do not want her to replace their mother or take over their domestic space, but also, as Dhami insinuates, because they seem to associate her with traditional Indian culture. Rai's novel, on the other hand, centres on the male protagonist, Manny, and his attempt to 'unarrange' his arranged marriage. Although some of the conflicts between the protagonists and their elders can be associated with adolescence and teen rebellion, because the nemeses in both stories are associated with traditional Indian cultures and customs, in order to engage with the adolescent diasporic experience, both novels suggest that the behaviour of the protagonists is in reaction to these customs. These novels illustrate that for individuals to be content with their ethnic identities, they should dissolve or try to go around some of the cultural barriers that are in place in order to choose and negotiate their cultural identities.

Rai's and Dhami's books demonstrate that the cultural barriers erected between the protagonists and their 'homeland' cultures are usually self-imposed and often as a reaction to external influences. Rai's protagonist, Manny, rejects several of the customs and traditions that he associates with his Punjabi culture – for example, as the title of the book suggests, arranged marriages (which are of course a feature of many cultures, not just Punjabi culture). Manny asserts that, 'It was all too weird for me, something I couldn't understand. How could anyone marry a person they'd never met' (*sic*). Even though Manny grew up in a household where arranged marriages are considered normal – all his siblings have had or are having an arranged marriage – but it is clear that Manny finds the concept very alien and he fully rejects this tradition when his father informs him that he is to marry the daughter of one of his friends:

> ***I had all these things that I was going to do. I was going to be a top striker for Liverpool … the first Asian pop star and write a best seller, go out with supermodels and win an Oscar and stuff. Loads of stuff.*** **Loads.** ***None of which included getting married at seventeen to some girl who I didn't know. … No way!***

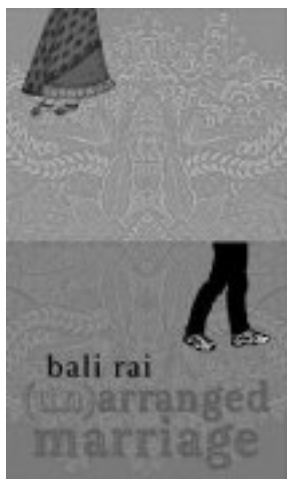
Through this consecutive list, Rai depicts Manny's sense of panic and anxiety. This list also itemises Manny's dreams. For Manny, the prospect of 'getting married at seventeen', means that he will forgo the chance of fulfilling his (perhaps unattainable) dreams, and the opportunity of becoming the person that he wishes to become. The statement 'No way!' demonstrates Manny's forceful decision to rebel

against his family and what he sees as 'their' customs in order to regain control over his life. Through his resistance and rebellion, Manny erects a barrier between himself and his 'homeland' culture, which problematises the process of negotiating an internally hybrid cultural identity.

In order to maintain some control of her life, Amber goes deliberately against her family's expectations

Like Manny, Dhami's Amber does not want to conform to the expectations that her family have about marriage and, as a result, she too enforces a barrier between herself and their cultural expectations. For example, Amber has the following conversation with Auntie, Auntie Ria and Biji (an elderly female relative):

> ***'How will you find a good husband if you don't get yourself a decent education?' [snapped Biji].***
> ***'I don't want to get married,' I said.***
> ***You'd have thought I'd said I'd murdered someone.***
> ***Auntie Ria gasped and nearly dropped the teapot. Biji goggled at me from behind her five-centimetre-thick glasses. Even Auntie looked shocked. I went for the killer touch.***
> ***'I want to be a pop star,' I added.***
> ***Biji almost fell off the sofa. 'A* pop *star?' she screeched. 'What kind of job is* that *for a respectable Indian girl?'***



By using the term 'a good husband', Dhami implies that the family will decide if the prospective husband is 'good' enough, which suggests that Amber will either have to concede to an arranged marriage or, if she were to have a 'love marriage' (whereby someone marries a person they have met independently of their family), the family would have to deem the potential husband suitable. Like Manny, Amber revolts against the marriage expectations of her family; as Auntie Ria, Biji and Auntie react to her news as though she had 'murdered someone', their reactions demonstrate that Amber's decision not to marry is deemed improper. Therefore, when Amber jokingly informs her family that she wants to be a pop star, Dhami asserts through everyone's reactions that, again, Amber's decisions are highly inappropriate. As a result, Amber, like Manny, in order to maintain some control of her life, goes deliberately against her family's expectations. Amber also seems to construct a barrier between her and her 'homeland' culture, thus negating the options she has for synthesising a hybrid cultural identity.

Manny and Amber further reject their 'homeland' cultures by choosing to embrace ideologies or characteristics which they associate with British culture. Rai's novel celebrates the positive elements of

multiculturalism, which Manny associates with Britain. For example, Manny speaks quite highly of his hometown Leicester and approves of the fact that 'everyone kind of melted into the city centre so that it was all multicultural'. Rai reasserts Manny's celebration of multiculturalism as his best friend, Adrian, is black and his girlfriend, Lisa, is white. However, Manny's family express racist sentiments and are hostile towards Adrian; Manny despises this attitude, and when Manny and his brother, Harry, have a fight over Harry's racism, Manny's older brother, Ranjit, intervenes and tells Manny: 'We are brothers, us three. Punjabis, innit. We ain't supposed to fight each other.' To which Manny responds: 'If he's what being Punjabi is all about – man, I don't want it.' Here, Manny asserts that he does not want to be a Punjabi because he associates this culture with racism. Although racist ideologies may have nothing to do with Punjabi culture, Manny is taught to associate this ideology with his 'homeland' culture *because* of his family and he erects another barrier between himself and this culture.

Amber and her sisters similarly reject their 'homeland' culture by embracing parts of their 'home' culture. As stated earlier, the girls associate Auntie with traditional Indian culture. They repeatedly associate Auntie with the word 'interfere', which indicates that they see her as the stereotypical 'nosy auntie' figure who promotes traditional Indian values and disapproves of the 'westernisation' of Indian youth. Subsequently, in order to '*really* freak her out' and urge Auntie to move out, Amber and her sisters dress up in short skirts and tiny T-shirts. They clearly choose to wear their 'western' clothes to shock their aunt, and they achieve the desired effect. As Auntie represents and is a symbol of traditional Indian culture, when Amber and her sisters reject her, they *symbolically* reject parts of their 'homeland' culture too, which inadvertently erects a barrier between themselves and this culture.

Dhami's novel directly addresses racism

The barriers raised by Manny and by Amber and her sisters separate the protagonists from the elements that they associate with their 'homeland' cultures. However, experiences of racism divide them from their 'home' culture too. Although Manny celebrates Leicester's multiculturalism, he also asserts that 'some areas were nearly all white, some black and some Asian'. Although this extract, when placed within the context of the paragraph, is used to demonstrate Leicester's positive assertion of multiculturalism, it nonetheless illustrates that a sense of racial segregation exists. Manny also acknowledges that Highfields, which neighbours Leicester, has been given a bad reputation by racists because it was populated with black and Asian people. Manny does not openly state that he has experienced racism; however, this reference to Highfields indirectly suggests that perhaps he has. Manny, throughout the novel, seems quite disillusioned by his 'homeland' culture; and since he chooses *not* to address any racist experiences, his motive is perhaps *because* he rejects his 'homeland' culture so extensively. Manny does not feel like a Punjabi nor does he feel like he belongs to his family, so in order to try and create a feeling of attachment, Manny may have chosen to disregard any of his racist experiences to assert a sense of belonging within his 'home' society. Consequently, when retelling his story, by ignoring any issues that he may have had with racism whilst living in Leicester, Manny shelters himself from feeling like an outsider in the UK. As a result, Rai implicitly suggests that racism

forces individuals to feel like outsiders in their countries of residence; this then inhibits their ability to find a comfortable space in which to exist, which can problematise the negotiation of a hybrid cultural identity.

Dhami's novel, unlike Rai's, directly addresses racism and the main racist antagonist is the next door neighbour, Mrs Macey. Although the girls choose to ignore Mrs Macey and her implicit racist comments, she clearly bothers them. For example, when Auntie invites Mrs Macey to their home for tea, the girls are horrified: 'Jazz made a kind of shocked gurgling noise. Geena and I stared. … How dare she invite Mrs Macey into *our* house?' As indicated earlier, the girls feel threatened by the arrival of Auntie, as they feel that she wants to take over their household, and this extract illustrates that Auntie has entirely commandeered their domestic space. Here, the word 'our' seems to refer exclusively to the girls and does not include Auntie. The emphasis on this word asserts that they feel that Auntie has allowed Mrs Macey to invade their territory and they clearly feel displaced by her presence. Though Auntie's intentions for inviting Mrs Macey for tea are meant to dissolve any racial tensions between the neighbours, the girls feel that instead, Mrs Macey will only tolerate them whilst still harbouring prejudiced feelings: 'Mrs Macey will just turn into one of those people who says, *Well, I don't like Pakis, but you're all right because I know you*.' This act, on Auntie's behalf, realigns her as the antagonist who must be resisted and coupled with the presence of a racist symbol in their home, the girls are made to feel entirely displaced in their own space. What this extract ultimately illustrates is that racism hinders the process of finding a comfortable hybrid cultural space to exist in, between 'home' and 'homeland' cultures, thus problematising identity negotiations.

Although these novels demonstrate that their protagonists face boundaries with their 'home' and 'homeland' cultures, both Rai and Dhami illustrate that their characters, in order to negotiate their hybrid cultural identities, have to overcome the barriers that are in place. Manny erodes the racism barrier by promoting multiculturalism, whereas the girls successfully confront it directly. As well as confronting the racism barrier, the characters begin to lower some of their self-erected barriers when they allow themselves to affiliate more with their 'homeland' cultures.

Through Manny's newfound interest in Sikhism, Rai implies that he has found a new interest in his 'homeland' culture

Manny, when declaring his independence at the end of the book, states that, 'whatever it is, I'm doing it because I choose to do it'. Here Rai foregrounds the importance of allowing oneself to choose and negotiate one's own identity. Manny confesses that he, 'confuse[d] being a Jat Punjabi in the way that my old man saw it, with being a Sikh, which is something totally different', and he has since learned that Sikhism 'preaches tolerance and equality towards everyone'. Through Manny's newfound interest in Sikhism, Rai implies that he has found a new interest in his 'homeland' culture. Through this, coupled with Manny's affection towards his 'home' culture, Rai suggests that Manny has, at the end of the book, begun to negotiate an internally hybrid cultural identity: Manny allows himself to choose which 'home' and 'homeland' cultural elements he wishes to incorporate as part of his ethnic identity and he seems a bit more confident about *who* he is.

Amber and her sisters open up and renegotiate their hybrid cultural identities when they choose to embrace and accept parts of their 'homeland' culture

Amber and her sisters also open up and renegotiate their hybrid cultural identities when they choose to embrace and accept parts of their 'homeland' culture by finally accepting Auntie. Dhami implies that Amber and her sisters performed and perfected their roles as the Bindi Babes to cope with the death of their mother. She also indicates that part of the Bindi Babe persona is to play the role of 'the good academic Asian kid': 'The teachers like us because we work hard, and we're clever, polite and helpful.' The girls, it seems, did what they thought they were expected to do in order to create the illusion that everything is fine. However, the plan to get rid of Auntie disrupted this persona. When the girls stop role-playing, Dhami asserts that they learn that they are 'fed up with trying to be perfect all the time', and that they just want to be themselves. Consequently, by trying to get rid of Auntie, they were forced to suspend their performances which made them realise that they were not being true to themselves. Through Auntie, by the end of the book the girls learn to reassert who they want to be and not conform to the 'Bindi Babes' stereotype:

> ***'Hey, lady,' He [the taxi driver] called … 'Do you want this cab or don't you?'***
> ***Auntie regarded us thoughtfully. 'Well? Do I want it or not?'***
> ***'No, you don't,' said Geena. 'I think you should come back and we should start over again.' …***
> ***'I have to tell you … that I do find it hard not to interfere. So I can't promise anything for the future.'***
> ***'That's all right,' I replied. 'We're not promising to be perfect either.'***
> ***'Oh no,' said Geena, sounding horrified.***
> ***'Definitely not,' Jazz agreed. 'We've had enough of that.'***

As the book closes after this excerpt, this ending confirms that with their aunt present, the girls no longer need to be the perfect 'Bindi Babes'. Consequently, as Auntie represents traditional Indian culture, by symbolically welcoming her into their lives, Dhami asserts that they have genuinely embraced their 'homeland' culture and in doing so they hybridise different parts of their 'home' and 'homeland' cultures, which allows them to be true to themselves.

The process of negotiating a hybrid cultural identity can be quite complicated and challenging

These books assert that the actual process of negotiating a hybrid cultural identity can be quite complicated and challenging for the individual but that this process is nonetheless achievable. They illustrate that it is not uncommon or abnormal for diasporic individuals to create self-imposed barriers towards their 'homeland' cultures and that people are (sadly) not alone if/when they feel excluded from their 'home' cultures because of prejudice and racism. These books, therefore, are able to offer their diasporic readers a form of bibliotherapy, as they not only provide information and insight into the complications of living the diaspora, they offer their readers solutions and answers to how to deal with these problems. Also, both Dhami and Rai illustrate that when Manny, Amber, Jazz and Geena begin to dissolve the cultural boundaries

that are between them and their 'home' and 'homeland' cultures, these characters seem happier and more fulfilled with their identities. These novels therefore foreground the importance of choosing and being open to the cultural characteristics that are available to diasporic individuals in order to forge cultural identities. Ultimately, the two novels illustrate that one need not deny one's cultural heritage and one should attempt to dissolve certain personal cultural barriers, as it is OK to embrace and lay claim to both 'home' and 'homeland' cultures without compromising one's identity.

Books for young people

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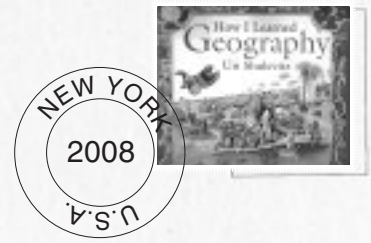
Rushdie, Salman (1991) *Imaginary Homelands: Essays and Criticism 1981–1991* London: Granta Books

Distinguished creator of critically acclaimed picturebooks since 1963, Uri Shulevitz is recipient of the American Library Association's Caldecott Medal and two Caldecott Honor citations. This poignant account tells how a young boy and his family survive after fleeing their wartorn homeland to live in poverty in a strange country. The boy has no toys, no books and little to eat. When his father brings home a large wall map instead of food, the boy at first is angry. But the map intrigues him; without leaving the room he is transported to faraway places.

In this story, based on his childhood memories of World War II, Shulevitz shows how a map and his imagination helped him to bear hunger and misery. Provocative watercolour and ink illustrations, at first monochromatic depictions of life in exile, later burst into the glorious colours of the map and the exotic destinations the boy visits in his imagination. The text, simple enough to be understood by preschool listeners, tells a story to inspire all ages.

Glenna Sloan



Uri Shulevitz

HOW I LEARNED GEOGRAPHY

New York: Farrar Straus and Giroux 2008
32pp ISBN-13: 9780374334994;
ISBN-10: 0374334994
(picturebook memoir, all ages)

Substance or Illusion?

Young Adult Literature in India

by DEVIKA RANGACHARI

Devika Rangachari is an award-winning writer of children's books and is currently doing postdoctoral research in Indian history

The applicability in the Indian context of the term 'young adult literature' – if by this we mean literature that is largely concerned with family and adolescent issues – is debatable, argues Devika Rangachari. She explains traditional and cultural constraints that have made the development of a modern young adult literature difficult in India, and surveys some books in English that are making a cautious but determined effort to bridge this gap

India is the third largest publisher of English books in the world, ranking after the US and the UK. The recognition that India has great potential in the book trade has manifested itself in various ways. Thus, for instance, Delhi was declared the World Book

There is a school of opinion that believes Indian children should not read JK Rowling

Capital for 2003/04, the third place to have received this honour from UNESCO after Alexandria and Madrid. India was also conferred with guest-of-honour status at the Frankfurt Book Fair in 2006 – the second time that this status was bestowed on her. The country also boasts the oldest collection of 'children's literature' in the world, the Panchatantra, although these tales of political wisdom and sagacity essentially target adults.

One might presume, as a logical consequence, that children's writing is a thriving industry in India. However, children's literature in India suffers from three handicaps. The first is related to what is loosely termed 'Indian culture', for want of a better phrase. Until very recently, children's books were expected to adhere to certain tacit and invisible guidelines in the delineation of their themes. Strong overtones of didacticism and moralising were welcomed as a means to keep the young reader rooted in 'Indian' traditions. Broken families, divorce, child abuse, friendship with the opposite sex and similar issues were proscribed themes for children's books – a position held by writers and, more emphatically, by publishers. One could, perhaps, provide some faint indications of dysfunctional relationships but would have to gingerly skirt the issue and focus, instead, on how the various strands of the story could be pulled together to culminate in a triumphant attestation of the strength of the Indian family, traditions and morals.

Lack of experimentation was just one of the offshoots of this attitude. Another was a tenacious pride in the ancient Indian literary tradition that precluded an appreciation of other literatures. There is, even now, a school of opinion that believes Indian children should not read JK Rowling's works because the gamut of fantasy issues has already been covered by epics like the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. Harry Potter is perceived as a threat and not as a welcome spur to children's reading. By extension, most issues covered in western books are still seen as irrelevant to Indian children, reality notwithstanding. Thankfully, this insular mentality towards books is a minority one.

Children are asked to bury their natural reading tastes and opt for books that have some 'value'

The second handicap relates to the overweening importance accorded to the educational curriculum. Books other than the prescribed texts are welcome only in so far as they provide additional information to enhance the child's knowledge. Activity, quiz and general knowledge books are usually lapped up by parents to hone their children's competitive edge. Consequently, books that can be read for sheer entertainment or that deal with issues that do not strictly pertain to studies are usually given the cold shoulder. At book fairs and sales, children are often asked by accompanying adults to bury their natural reading tastes and opt, instead, for books that have some 'value'. The roaring sales at stalls that stock 'educational aids' bear testimony to this attitude.

The third obstacle pertains to the lack of institutional, organisational and financial support to authors of children's books in India. The government does launch schemes to further the cause of reading, but these are undertaken in a distinctly sporadic and apathetic fashion, with no concrete follow-up measures. Moreover, there is hardly any financial support for children's authors by way of sponsorship or

other monetary assistance. Book fairs are regularly held but these are usually clubbed with stationery fairs or other events, with the result that the audience is effectively halved. It is clear that children's writing has no place on the government's priority list, notwithstanding pious declarations to the contrary.

Publishers are rousing themselves from decades of lethargy

Additionally, book talks and reading tours, ubiquitous in the US and UK, for instance, are more or less non-existent in India and, if they occur at all, are the initiative of individual authors or schools and not the publisher. This results in a yawning gap between themes attractive to children and what is being regularly churned out as 'safe' options. Authors, therefore, have been targeting a disenchanted audience, writing in a vacuum of sorts with hardly any means of knowing what their books lack because there is little dialogue between them and their readers. Prizes for children's writing, of the prestige and stature of the Newbery or the Carnegie Medal, are conspicuously lacking on the Indian scene. By extension, apart from, say, the Children's Book Trust writing competitions, there is virtually no arena where children's authors can pit their skills against each other such that the best is identified and lauded, and the incentive to write and publish is strong. Efforts made by private organisations such as, for instance, the Association of Writers and Illustrators for Children, are largely unsung and routinely ignored by the media, for whom children's literature is not an attractive topic for coverage.

As a result of these crippling pressures, children's literature in India was, until very recently, conservative and limited – a pale shadow of its adult counterpart, the popular 'Indian writing in English' that has netted two Booker prizes for the country and is therefore much more attractive as a commercial proposition. However, certain recent and positive changes have rescued the situation from a morass of bleakness and given it some hope and direction for the future. A significant development is the entry of several new publishers into the children's book scene, some riding on the Harry Potter bandwagon and others simply curious to explore the huge, untapped Indian market and develop its potential. Tulika, Young Zubaan and Pratham are some notable new names in this regard. Besides these, Indian branches of international warhorses like Puffin, Scholastic and HarperCollins, among others, are showing serious signs of investing effort in developing good books for children in the country. Publishers are rousing themselves from decades of lethargy and are not only identifying talent, but are also becoming aware of the profits that can be made through marketing and popularising good products. Children's book authors are, consequently, stepping out of the shadows and slowly coming into their own.

In Indian young adult literature the themes seem rather tame

Changes, however, are percolating rather slowly and cautiously into the content of Indian children's literature, particularly in the genre that this article is concerned with – which is to say, books for young people that foreground the family or issues that impinge on the lives of adolescents. Issues such as single-parent families, relationships with the opposite sex, teenage pregnancy and mental fears or complexes seem to be the preferred themes of young adult (YA)

fiction in the US and UK (for example, in the books of Judy Blume and Jacqueline Wilson) and issues of race, oppression and injustice and the problems faced by teenagers in migrant communities are also tackled with sensitivity (by writers such as Beverley Naidoo and Bali Rai). No issues are really taboo, and such books are very popular, even in the Indian market.

In Indian young adult literature, by contrast, the themes seem rather tame. This can be partly attributed to the conservative and conformist cultural ethos we have already noted, an ethos that writers and publishers alike have been distinctly reluctant to challenge. The shackles, however, are slowly being cast aside.

The school story is pervasive in India. Swapna Dutta's *Juneli at St Avila's*, for instance, was initially serialised in the monthly *Children's World* magazine (published by the Children's Book Trust) and was instantly popular as an Indian offshoot of the popular boarding school genre of the West. Juneli learns to adjust in unfamiliar environs, make new friends, challenge random bullies, and eventually grow to view her school as a home away from home. Although this series had stock characters and was imitative and derivative, its lucid, accessible style endeared it to many an adolescent reader.

Bubla Basu's trilogy dealing with the travails of six teenagers is diametrically opposite in its treatment. It pitchforks the reader into a world of contemporary adolescent issues, ranging from drinking and smoking to squabbling parents. *It Happened that Year*, the first of the trilogy, delineates friendships between the sexes with great sensitivity and is one of the very few books that dare to venture into this hitherto taboo domain. Unfortunately, the work is weighed down by a heavy didacticism in that the dilemmas faced by the six protagonists are always resolved by an adult figure, Auntie Bulan, with a fair amount of lecturing and moralising in the process. Although it is a commendable effort to explore the complex world of adolescents, Basu's work is largely repetitive and predictable.

A very promising offering by a 14-year-old writer engagingly straddles the worlds of Indian and American schoolgirls

Wrong Side of the Bed by Poojitha Prasad also uses the school as a backdrop. A very promising offering by a 14-year-old writer, it engagingly straddles the worlds of Indian and American schoolgirls, whereby the identity of Anita Nair, the protagonist, is exchanged with that of an American girl in a magical swap. Although fantasy and the supernatural are the core elements of the book, it nevertheless offers a brief glimpse into the concerns of Indian and American teenagers. This work is reminiscent of Maya Chandrashekharan's series of school stories that pits an American girl, Priscilla (in *Priscilla Rebels*, for example), against an Indian frame and explores the conflicts thereby produced.

The world of the family is explored in the works of Devika Rangachari who uses school as a backdrop while exploring the conflicts and challenges of growing up in an adolescent world. *Growing Up* deals with a crisis in values and principles faced by the middle-class Dipa, whereby she is forced to reassess her priorities in life and her friendships. *When Amma Went Away* explores the relationship between Nalini and her grandmother, while simultaneously dealing with a juxtaposition of north and south Indian cultures. The contradictory feelings of alienation and belonging experienced by the Tamilian Nalini in the cosmopolitan city of Delhi in the north are highlighted.

A very recent addition to the young adult genre in India is Subhadra Sen Gupta's *Double Click!*, the first title in a mystery series. This book has a determinedly contemporary feel and is Sen Gupta's successful attempt to veer away from her usual output of historical fiction. *Double Click!* introduces the irrepressibly curious Foxy 4 quartet, teenagers in a boarding school in Delhi, who battle authority figures and ugly situations with cheerful insouciance. Sen scores on almost every count – the language is short and snappy, the main characters are engaging, and the suspense unfolds at a riveting pace. Additionally, there are absorbing descriptions of Delhi, its environs and of food. Humour drives the narrative here, although the plot itself embraces serious issues like drugs, problem boyfriends and the outcome of fashion obsessions.

Another fairly recent and delightful contribution to this genre that explores the juxtaposition of cultures is Anjali Banerjee's *Maya Running*. Maya, the only brown-skinned teenager in her school in Canada, has to confront issues of her Indian birth and heritage when her cousin, Pinky, arrives from India. Banerjee skilfully delineates the turmoil of an Indian adolescent in a foreign culture and her attempts to reconcile these conflicting worlds. This is, incidentally, another welcome entry into the forbidden world of boy–girl relationships. Maya's attempts to save her boyfriend from her cousin's clutches verge on the hilarious. *Maya Running* is one of the few books in this genre that uses humour to explore the world of the adolescent.

A mélange of young adult concerns can be seen in Deeptha Khanna's *The Year I Turned 16*. Written in a diary format, it attempts to tackle the issue of boyfriends, gender roles, teenage ambitions, friendships, child abuse, community traits and parental fears and aspirations in a heady if somewhat convoluted brew. The effort is quite commendable and, indeed, pioneering in many ways. However, while the light, informal style is reminiscent of Meg Cabot, it does not really replicate the delightful sensitivity and irreverent humour of her Princess Diaries series. Nevertheless, it is a step in the right direction and the concerns of the protagonist, Vinita, will touch many an adolescent heart.

One of the most significant books in the young adult genre in India is Paro Anand's exposition on terrorism in Kashmir, illuminatingly entitled *No Guns at My Son's Funeral*. Young Aftab is drawn into the clutches of the terrorist, Akram, and exchanges his childhood innocence for blood and tragedy. The book explores the mindset of a terrorist and the circumstances that lure adolescents into the culture of violence. This is also the boldest intrusion, by far, into the world of love and relationships in its delineation

In* No Guns at My Son's Funeral*, young Aftab exchanges his childhood innocence for blood and tragedy

of the affair between Aftab's teenage sister and Akram that culminates in a child born out of wedlock. And it is the unwed mother who vows to eschew violence for the sake of her child, thereby infusing a strong note of hope into an otherwise bleak scenario. Anand also sensitively examines the turmoil in adolescent minds on being forced to adopt religion and politics rather than love and friendship as their guiding factors.

Chip of the Old Blockhead *is light and frothy, yet a poignant depiction of the young adult world*

Equally noteworthy is Ranjit Lal's *The Battle for No 19*, a searing portrayal of the anti-Sikh riots in Delhi that followed the assassination of the Indian prime minister, Indira Gandhi, in 1984. A group of schoolgirls, pitchforked into mindless communal violence, seeks refuge in an abandoned house and fights to keep savage human marauders at bay. This gender-sensitive book maps the emotional journey of the girls, who must draw on unknown reserves of courage and ingenuity to survive, and of Puja, their leader, in particular. Puja, already deeply troubled by her uneasy relationship with her father, must battle fear, self-doubt and overwhelming odds in a personal odyssey. Lal's treatment of violence is simultaneously matter-of-fact and thought-provoking, and effectively delineates its devastating impact.

Kavita Daswani's *A Girl Named Indie* examines the world of fashion in Los Angeles and also subtly probes issues of racial antagonism and identity through 15-year-old Indie's relationship with celebrity fashion editor (and her idol) Aaralyn Taylor. Daswani injects a contemporary note into her work by talking of celebrity weddings, fashion coups and disasters and, more pragmatically, childrearing concerns. The focus on fashion is a trifle overwhelming but the realistic depiction of the adolescent Indie's world more than makes up for this.

Rupa Gulab's *Chip of the Old Blockhead*, where the adolescent Priya confronts radical changes in her life, is an engrossing read. Priya confronts a bittersweet truth: that her father, once presumed dead, is actually alive and wants to be a part of her life. The book, infused with liberal doses of humour, examines Priya's forays into an adult world of double standards, marital estrangement and divorce, while simultaneously delineating the protagonist's attempts to build a relationship with her father. Gulab's treatment is light and frothy; yet the book is a poignant depiction of the young adult world and the numerous fears and traumas that go with the territory.

Summer Job, by Maya Chandrasekharan, is based in the office of a magazine. It deals with the experiences of a handful of teenagers during their summer stint there, this being their first experience of an adult world. The easy camaraderie that exists between the adolescent trainees is a marked feature of this book and although the plot diverges into

Young adult fiction discussed

Deepa Agarwal (2003) *Not Just Girls* New Delhi: Rupa
Paro Anand (2003) *I'm Not Butter Chicken* New Delhi: IndiaInk (short stories)
Paro Anand (2005) *No Guns at My Son's Funeral* New Delhi: Roli
Anjali Banerjee (2005) *Maya Running* New Delhi: Puffin
Bubla Basu (1998) *It Happened that Year* Mumbai: Navneet
Ruskin Bond (2004) *Rusty Comes Home* New Delhi: Puffin (short stories)
Maya Chandrasekharan (1995) *Priscilla Rebels* New Delhi: Rupa
Maya Chandrasekharan (1998) *Summer Job* New Delhi: Scholastic India
Kavita Daswani (2007) *A Girl Named Indie* New Delhi: Puffin
Swapna Dutta (1992) *Juneli at St Avila's* New Delhi: Indus (an imprint of HarperCollins) – other books in the series are *Juneli's First Term* and *An Exciting Term*
Rupa Gulab (2006) *Chip of the Old Blockhead* New Delhi: Rupa
Subhadra Sen Gupta (2003) *Jodh Bai – Diary of a Rajput Princess* New Delhi: Scholastic India
Subhadra Sen Gupta (2008) *Double Click!* New Delhi: Young Zubaan
Manorama Jafa (2006) *I am Sona* New Delhi: Khaas Kitaab Foundation
Deeptha Khanna (2006) *The Year I Turned 16* New Delhi: Puffin
Ranjit Lal (2007) *The Battle for No19* New Delhi: Puffin
Poojitha Prasad (2004) *Wrong Side of the Bed* New Delhi: Rupa
Devika Rangachari (2000) *Growing Up* New Delhi: Children's Book Trust
Devika Rangachari (2002) *When Amma Went Away* New Delhi: Children's Book Trust
Poile Sengupta (2003) *Role Call* New Delhi: Rupa
Shankhdeep and Nagaraj (2002) *For Teens from Teens* New Delhi: Rupa (short stories)
Sigrun Srivastava (1992) *No Time for Fear and Other Stories* New Delhi: Publications Division
30 Teenage Stories (2003) New Delhi: Children's Book Trust

themes of mystery and suspense, it is an admirable attempt to document the lives of teenagers outside of school and in an adult environment.

In a country that actively discriminates against the girl child,* Not Just Girls *is marked by great gender sensitivity

Various teenage girl protagonists confronting, challenging and making sense of their worlds are depicted in Deepa Agarwal's *Not Just Girls*. In a country that actively discriminates against the girl child, Agarwal's effort in foregrounding the issues confronting them – ranging from gender stereotyping to child marriage – is a commendable attempt, marked by great gender sensitivity. So, too, is Manorama Jafa's *I am Sona*, which highlights the travails of an adolescent afflicted with HIV – a problem of epidemic and terrifying proportions in India.

Short story compilations for teenagers include Sigrun Srivastava's absorbing and often humorous stories on everyday fears and realities; Paro Anand's stories on school life, which explore various sensitive themes confronting adolescents; Poile Sengupta's accounts of school life; Ruskin Bond's stories of the adolescent Rusty; teenage story compilations of the Children's Book Trust; and a set of tales entitled

For Teens from Teens compiled by teenagers, Shankhdeep and Nagaraj, which include stories about adults as well.

Finally, I would like to mention a series called 'A Princess's Diary', published by Scholastic India. The titles in this series belong to the genre of historical fiction, but they examine the teenage experiences of historical Indian women and target today's young adults. One example is Subhadra Sen Gupta's *Jodh Bai – Diary of a Rajput Princess*.

Young adult fiction in India has only taken baby steps so far and does not yet constitute a clearly identifiable genre. Fresh themes are being approached with caution by authors and publishers alike. However, the very fact that new waters are being tested and boundaries of themes being pushed augurs well for the future. It is a very positive sign that, despite crippling infrastructural and ideological constraints, authors are willing to make sustained efforts to explore the field and publishers are increasingly willing to test new ground. Young adults, eagerly seeking alternatives to the surfeit of mythology and folklore in the Indian market that would actually reflect on and impact their lives, have a lot to look forward to. One can predict that young adult literature in India will soon be able to shed its fledgling status and attain glorious flight.

THE ILLUSTRATOR'S NOTEBOOK, an account of an artist's creative sources, invites children to truly see the world and to find inspiration in the ordinary. It is an introduction to the visual charm of Egypt, a demonstration of the beauty of written Arabic and a testament to diversity. While some people read from left to right, others read the opposite way, as the book demonstrates; the title page appearing where, to English-speaking readers, is the back of the book. The book reads from right to left; the pages from the artist's notebooks, written in Arabic, are reproduced in their entirety, with a translation alongside. Using words and images to describe what inspires him as an artist, Ellabbad asks readers to consider such questions as WHERE DO STORIES COME FROM? WHAT FAVOURITE BOOK OR MAGAZINE AWAKENS YOUR IMAGINATION? Although he is well known and acclaimed in the Arab world for his talent and imagination, the NOTEBOOK brings Ellabbad's work to North America for the first time.

Glenna Sloan

Mohieddin Ellabbad (trans Sarah Quinn)

THE ILLUSTRATOR'S NOTEBOOK

Originally published in Arabic; published in French as LE CARNET DU DESSINATEUR by Mango Jeunesse (Group Fleurus 1999); first English edition: Toronto: Groundwood Books/House of Anansi 2006

30pp ISBN-13: 9780888997005; ISBN-10: 0888997000

(non-fiction picturebook, 10+)

Monkey King's Journey to the West

Transmission of a Chinese Folktale to Anglophone Children

by IRENE CHEN (CHEN YING-YU)

Irene Chen is a children's book critic in Taiwan and assistant regional adviser for the Taiwan chapter of the Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators

In versions for children of the renowned Chinese folktale 'Journey to the West', people tend to shorten the text and eliminate the religious tone in order to make the story more appealing; and in English retellings, the character of Monkey King is traditionally given prominence. In recent retellings for children, the figure of Monkey King is starting to be adjusted to reflect western ideologies, according to Irene Chen. She compares a range of English-language adaptations of 'Monkey King', which, she argues, act as a medium for the integration of eastern and western cultures

The renowned Chinese folktale 'Monkey King's Journey to the West' is based on a real pilgrimage that was undertaken in the early seventh century by a monk called Xuanzang, who went to India in search of Buddhist scriptures. Over the

centuries Xuanzang's journey became the subject of ballads and oral tales that added characters and adventurous episodes to his journey. In the 1590s an anonymous hundred-chapter version of 'Journey to the West' was published in China in the vernacular of the time.

Monkey King has to undertake his own journey of transformation to enlightenment

The protagonists of this folk story are Xuanzang, the master monk, and his disciples, Monkey King, Pigsy the pig monster and Sandy the river monster. It is Xuanzang's pilgrimage, and logically he should be the central character, but Monkey King's strong character makes him the most prominent figure in the story. The first seven chapters narrate Monkey's early impetuous behaviour and his punishment of being buried under a rock mountain for five hundred years, until Xuanzang arrives and releases him. The rest of the story focuses on the journey of the foursome and mostly on how Monkey rescues the others from troubles on the way.

The majority of adaptations highlight Monkey's intelligence and heroism, but with his origins as an audacious and irrepressible monkey monster, Monkey King has to undertake his own journey of transformation to enlightenment. Monkey's transformation from a culpable monster to a venerated saint has a pedagogical purpose. The story teaches that violence, suppression and abandonment are less effective than companionship as a way of being. For instance, Heavenly Generals attempt to defeat Monkey using violence, but their efforts are in vain and make Monkey even more impetuous. Buddha puts Monkey under a mountain of rock for five hundred years as a punishment for misbehaviour, yet this does not make him submissive. In contrast to these physical punishments, Xuanzang rejects Monkey twice for misbehaving, which hurts Monkey's feelings so deeply that he can hardly recover from the pain of banishment. The longer Monkey is on the pilgrimage the more he learns empathy, philanthropy, fraternity and the courage to admit his limitations; the result is better behaviour. Monkey King's transformation as facilitated by the monk represents the proper way to treat people, especially young adults at their coming of age.

Monkey King in English: cultural reproductions

The story of Monkey King is available to western children only as retellings. According to Stephens and McCallum (1998), retellings take the form of either cultural reproductions or reversions. *Cultural reproductions* are almost replicas which stick closely to the pre-text (the original source); *reversions* involve new narratives, with new ideological configurations. English retellings of 'Monkey King' comprise both types, sometimes in combination, and each presents a different facet of cultural transmission.

Monkey is made more attractive to children by emphasising the boisterous aspects of his personality

Abridged versions for Anglophone children often restrict themselves to the early life of Monkey King and a selection of adventures on the journey. Monkey is made more attractive to children (for example in Wu's retelling of the story) by emphasising the boisterous aspects of his personality. For instance, as in the original story, Monkey King transforms himself into Pigsy's wife and makes fun of Pigsy by pushing him out of bed instead of undressing and sleeping with him. He then threatens Pigsy that the renowned

Monkey King is coming to catch him. Pigsy is panicked, putting on his clothes and preparing to escape, until Monkey reveals himself.

Aaron Shepard's short novel *Monkey: A Superhero Tale of China* (2005) is a text that maintains the cultural tradition of the story. From Monkey's birth to his punishment under the mountain, this version focuses on Monkey King's early life. In order to mitigate the foreignness of this piece, Shepard compares Monkey King with western superheroes in his blurb, and provides a simple aid to pronunciation in his introduction. Although he retains many elements of the original, Shepard alters several details of the story for readers' better comprehension. For example, the amount of weight and the weight-measuring system of the Scimitar of the Waning Moon is changed from three thousand six hundred catties to a hundred pounds. While the names of items remain the same, Shepard adapts things of less priority to the western system to make this story seem less foreign. This strategy of domesticating culture-bound elements is well established, and as Irma Hagfors states (quoted in Emer O'Sullivan 2005), it is done 'in order to help the readers identify with the story'. Shepard also changes the plots to abridge the original hundred-chapter story into less than forty pages. His focus is on episodes such as how the Heavenly Gods capture Monkey, giving each an original twist. For instance, in the original, Monkey is captured by Er-Lang the Warrior God, but in Shepard's version Monkey is caught because he is knocked unconscious by Kwan-Yin's vase. Regardless of its slightly incoherent structure, Shepard's reproduction of this cultural icon and traditional story has been well received by quite a wide audience. It is short enough for younger readers and can serve as a starting point for young adults who may then go on to investigate other, more complete versions of the story.

The central theme of the Japanese TV series is features of Monkey as an irrepressible central figure

The story of Monkey King also emerges in the West in other media. The Japanese TV series *Monkey* (1979) is the most influential of the screened versions and has continued to affect subsequent adaptations of Monkey King's story. Dubbed with quasi-oriental accents in English by the BBC in 1980, this Japanese production has Xuanzang played by a woman. The central theme of this series is tilted from a pilgrimage to achieve enlightenment to the feature of Monkey as an irrepressible central figure. Nevertheless, it successfully introduces the Chinese folk story to

western countries, and its popularity influenced adolescents in the 1980s so greatly that this series has achieved cult status in Japan, the UK and Australia. The theme song 'Monkey Magic' was a hit for more than two decades on Australian radio programmes (see 'Monkey', Wikipedia 2008). From oriental fusion (Chinese folk story adapted by Japanese) to western cult, *Monkey* displays a dimension of cultural integration.

Monkey King in English: reversions

The diverse reproductions of Monkey King already discussed maintain his robust image, but more recent retellings transform the figure of Monkey King from a venerated figure into an antagonistic one. The transformation results in a reversion – a new narrative which configures the ideologies of an original story to develop its own cultural agendas (Stephens and McCallum 1998). It is noticeable that Monkey King reversions appear in North America in particular. In the United States, Chinese Americans are opening a dialogue between American culture and their ethnic culture. One way of doing this is by requiring Chinese literary figures to transcend their ideologies. Monkey King is one example of this process. In Patricia Chao's novel *Monkey King* (1997) and Gene-Luen Yang's *American Born Chinese* (2006), Monkey King is no longer heroic. He becomes an anti-hero or even a sinister monster to represent the dilemmas Chinese Americans have to conquer in the USA.

In Chao's movel, the heroine, Sally Wang, is an American-born child of Chinese immigrants. Her father used to call himself 'Monkey King' during his sexual abuse of Sally when she was 8 years old. Her mother keeps this as a shameful family secret because in China one should always respect the central figure of the family – the patriarch or father. For this reason, Sally's mother pretends to ignore the incident instead of helping her. Sally's bruised childhood contributes to her constant self-harm, unstable mental condition, and later her attempt to commit suicide. Years later, even when her father has passed away, Sally can still feel Monkey King's shadow.

More recent retellings transform the figure of Monkey King from a venerated figure into an antagonistic one

Unlike in the traditional story, Monkey King in Patricia Chao's story is negatively depicted. He is a father, the patriarch of a Chinese family, yet he is not his child's protector. Instead of being a crime-fighter, Monkey King in this story is the demon, the child molester. Pearson (2006) further points out that Chao's Monkey King breaks Chinese cultural and religious taboos. In a scene when Sally describes how she was raped as a child, she narrates:

> ***Nails as rough as crab claws between my thighs. That stick he has, that he can make bigger or smaller when he feels like it. Or is it his tail? I can't tell. … With one hand he holds my wrists together over my head, with the other he covers my mouth. He is the Monkey King, he is immortal, he cannot be stopped. Tears wet my hair, but I do not make a sound.***

According to this passage, Monkey's magic weapon, the iron cudgel, becomes the means of incest. And against the chastity of Buddhist monks, Monkey King becomes a sexual predator (Pearson 2006). Chao questions traditional values through Monkey King's ferocity, and examines the reinforcement of patriarchy in the modern world.

However, in Sally's retrospective view of her childhood and from her piecing together of her father's life, Monkey King is shown as pitiable. This Monkey King arms himself with traditional values when he comes to the West on his own. His refusal to assimilate ideologically with other Americans makes him an outsider to himself and to others. Once Sally confronts her father about their identity:

> ***'We're American,' I say.***
> ***'You are an American citizen. In your heart you are a Chinese.'***
> ***I'm not listening. I've learned not to listen to my father. What I secretly know is that I am the most American kid I have ever met.***

These strategies convert the once heroic figure of Monkey King into a pathetic old man. The traditional values turn out to be a mockery. Monkey King in Chao's story is antagonistic. His lingering ghostly existence serves to question old values and to present the father as a humiliated, alienated Chinese American. As a self-conscious narrator and representative of the current generation of Chinese Americans, Patricia Chao raises these issues for further speculation through generating a reversion of Monkey King.

His lingering ghostly existence serves to question old values

In Gene-Luen Yang's *American Born Chinese*, Monkey King also performs an intercultural task. Yang's graphic novel exploits several boundary-breaking features, which constitute the story as a reversion of *Monkey King*. One of them is the braiding of the narrative of three seemingly unconnected stories to become one. The first story is a retelling of Monkey King's early life. In Yang's version, Monkey King wreaks havoc at a heavenly party because he is not allowed to enter as a monkey, who does not wear shoes. Feeling embarrassed and humiliated, Monkey King goes back to his kingdom, forcing all the monkeys to wear shoes, no matter how inconvenient they find it, assuming a human form and also naming himself 'the Great Sage, Equal of Heaven'. He thinks he can parallel deities in heaven, so he goes up to heaven and down to hell to convince all the deities of his prestige. Later he is punished and buried under a mountain of rock for five hundred years until the master pilgrim comes and saves him. When Monkey meets the pilgrim master, Master reminds Monkey that only by finding one's true identity can one be free. And so Monkey gives up his human form and is freed from under the mountain of rock. Master also tells Monkey that there is no necessity to have shoes on the journey. So Monkey takes off the unnecessary footwear and faithfully accompanies his master to the West in the end.

The second story is set on the west coast of America where a Chinese American boy, Jin Wang, moves to an all-white community. His teacher never pronounces his name correctly, and his classmates think he is weird

The juxtaposition of the Monkey–reader relationship investigates adolescent and intercultural issues

and exclude him. What is worse, Jin suddenly falls in love with a white girl, Amelia, and he feels miserable. He is only able to tell his secret to his best friend, Wei-Chen Sun, a new transfer student from Taiwan. When there are chances that Jin can finally date Amelia, a white boy forbids him to do so because he is *different*. Jin has no outlet to release his fury and gets mad at Wei-Chen, calling him 'F.O.B.' – Fresh Off the Boat, a newcomer to America. Wei-Chen hits him, and they never meet each other again.

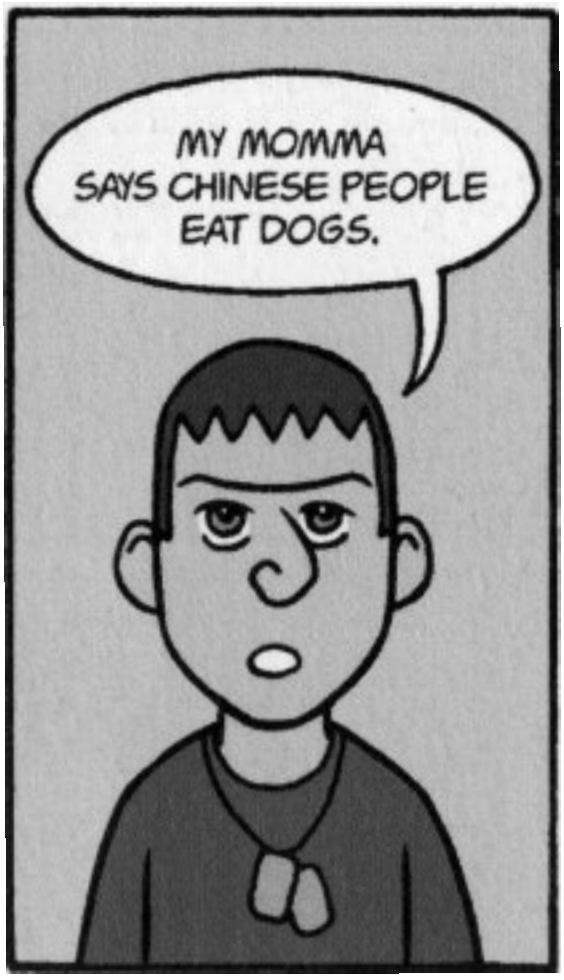
The third story is about a popular white high-school boy, Danny, who is visited by his Chinese cousin Chin-Kee every year. Chin-Kee goes to school with Danny during his stay, and acts as a concoction of negative Chinese stereotypes. He embarrasses Danny so much that Danny transfers to another school immediately following Chin-Kee's visits. This time, Chin-Kee urinates in Danny's friend's soda, eats bizarre, smelly food, answers all the questions in classes over-enthusiastically, and even dances and sings aloud in the library. Chin-Kee makes Danny feel so disgraced that Danny cannot stand it any more and fights with Chin-Kee.

The three stories seem unrelated, yet reaching the end of the story readers find a twist when Danny turns out to be what Jin Wang calls himself after a magical change of appearance, and Chin-Kee is revealed as Monkey King in disguise. Monkey King becomes Chin-Kee when he visits Jin after Jin's transformation; he also tells Jin that Wei-Chen is his son. However, Monkey does not come to punish Jin; he wants to help Jin retrieve his soul, as Monkey's master had done for him. Jin returns to his original appearance, and he uses the only trace Monkey leaves for him to find Wei-Chen. When he finds his friend, Jin apologises to him, and the two are reconciled.

The intertwining of three stories is innovative and groundbreaking. It also leads to the second boundary-breaking quality: the juxtaposition of the Monkey–reader relationship in such a way as to investigate adolescent and intercultural issues. Yang first shows young adults' urge towards power through Monkey King's story. When Monkey pretends to be divine with his humanoid form and shoes, he is constricted and blinded; he loses his true form. This can be compared to the stage when children are eager to become strong and powerful as they think adults are and thus act like adults. Then, Monkey jumps from his original status as the hero of his story to the reader of Jin's story, and further acts in the story of Jin to present the everlasting dilemma of Asian Americans: the quest for identity. Despite being genuine American citizens, they are still considered outsiders or 'F.O.B.'. Through the comic relief of the horrendous cousin Chin-Kee (Monkey King in disguise), the issue of identity arises. In order to expel the stereotype represented by Chin-Kee (also a homonym of Chinky), Chinese children will do anything to assimilate themselves with white children, even repel their traditional culture and values. However, they can only free themselves by knowing their true identities. Monkey King crosses boundaries of story frame, time and place to convey the idea of true identity. Although Yang's story deviates a great deal from the original, the intertextuality and duality of ancient (Monkey King's story) and modern (Jin Wang's story) stories results in a dynamic postmodern structure and a carnivalesque treatment of serious issues.

Monkey King crosses boundaries of story frame, time and place to convey the idea of true identity

The third boundary-breaking quality is explored via the visual presentation. There are several sophisticated but easily ignored layouts in the illustrations of this graphic novel. One of them is the contrast between the appearances of Asian and Caucasian children. Asian children are slant-eyed or buck-toothed and in old-fashioned, conservative or awkward costumes, while Caucasian children have big, round eyes and wear casual but stylish clothes. The Asian stereotype is best represented by Chin-Kee in the illustration who wears a long braid and a traditional Chinese outfit that altogether make him resemble Fu Manchu and abnormal to children in the modern world. The Caucasian child we see in the second illustration, whose



hairstyle, facial features and clothes and accessories deviate greatly from those of Chin-Kee, is typically normal, making it likely that child readers will identify more with him.

The nuanced layout includes framing and the insertion of visual sound effects. Basically, story frames appear in the middle two-thirds of each page, but they can be flexibly extended or shrunk according to their importance to the scene. Moreover, visual sound effects often appear in the bottom of the frames. Chin-Kee is always accompanied by the words 'HA HA' or 'CLAP' at the bottom, indicating canned laughing and clapping sounds associated with comedies on television and radio and encouraging readers simultaneously to produce the sound effects themselves. From the plaiting of storylines, issues of coming of age and identity, to the delicate layout designs, Gene Yang's story composes a creative and sublime reversion of 'Monkey King'.

Conclusion

From the example of 'Monkey King', we can see the difficulties of transmitting an ancient story from a foreign culture to a target culture.

To Anglophone child readers, translations of Monkey King's story can hardly refrain from cut-and-paste and fabrication. Originally a long story for Chinese adults, there are two factors that make the translation difficult: from adult readers to child readers, and from Chinese language (culture) to English language (culture). Mieke Desmet (2006) suggests that an original text may not maintain its authoritative status when it is translated: 'Emphasisng the role of the reader in creating meaning from a text leads to the recognition of multiple legitimate interpretations of any one text.'

Translations of Monkey King's story can hardly refrain from cut-and-paste and fabrication

As an ancient piece of a foreign oral tradition, 'Monkey King' acquires new meanings with each retelling. With retellings and abridgements for children, 'Monkey King' is not only a signifier of Chinese culture but it also renders a space for intercultural discussion. As a result, 'Monkey King' helps to bridge cultural gaps and stimulate more cross-cultural literature for children.

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When the time comes for Martina to marry, she is beset with suitors. What is the most beautiful cockroach in Cuba to do? Her Grandmother gives her some extraordinary advice: The Coffee Test will reveal her best choice. Martina is sceptical, but discovers it really works! What Martina does with the coffee and what happens when she finally meets her true love will delight all ages.

Based on a traditional Cuban folktale, this sumptuously illustrated book has recently been awarded the American Library Association's Pura Belpré Award, presented to a Latino/Latina writer and illustrator whose work best portrays, affirms, and celebrates the Latino cultural experience in an outstanding work of literature for children and youth.

Tanja Nathanael

Carmen Agra Deedy and Michael Austin (illus); Cristina de la Torre (trans)

MARTINA UNA CUCARACHITA MUY LINDA: UN CUENTO CUBANA [MARTINA THE BEAUTIFUL COCKROACH: A CUBAN FOLKTALE]

Atlanta, GA: Peachtree Publishers 2007
32pp ISBN-13: 9871561454259
ISBN-10: 1561454257
(picturebook, 8–12)

Kibuuka has been living with tough Uncle Jethro and is taken care of by the housekeeper, Mama Mimu. Kibuuka does not know what happened to his parents until the day his classmate, Alinda, forgets her homework. During the school holidays, Alinda helps Kibuuka with his project but forgets to do her own work. She has only one day to complete her assignment, so Kibuuka helps her look for materials in Uncle Jethro's study. She is researching AIDS. Through the study and after confirmation from his uncle, Kibuuka learns that his parents died of AIDS and is not only saddened but also worried about his own health.

This story explores how these 12-year-olds cope with life experiences, both minor and major. Readers witness their terror on forgetting homework, the tension that accompanies getting work done in a limited time while breaking rules and the acceptance of hard realities as they learn about AIDS. The author effectively teaches without preaching.

Nyambura Mpesha

Susan Mugizi Kajura

THE FORGOTTEN HOMEWORK

Nairobi, Kenya: Phoenix Publishers 2006
47pp ISBN: 9966470166
(fiction, 10–12)

Promoting International Children's Book Day

International Children's Book Day is celebrated each year on (or around) Hans Christian Andersen's birthday, 2 April, to call attention to children's books and inspire a love of reading in children all over the world. Niklas Bengtsson traces the history of ICBD and comes up with some ideas to help national sections to promote ICBD in their own countries

by NIKLAS BENGTSSON

Niklas Bengtsson, who served on the IBBY Executive Committee 2006–08, is a Finnish non-fiction writer with a special research interest in children's literature

International Children's Book Day (ICBD) is sponsored each year by one national section of IBBY. The national section in question publishes a poster and a message to celebrate ICBD, and these materials are made available to national sections all over the world. Nevertheless, every national section of IBBY still needs to find ways to celebrate and promote ICBD in their own countries.

ICBD is an institution with a long tradition, and luckily the messages and posters have been documented in a publication called *International Children's Book Day 1967–2002*. However, there are some gaps in this documentation. In 1976, for example, when the Children's Book Council of Iran was ICBD sponsor, stickers were available in addition to the usual poster, and in 1978, when the Australian illustrator Robert Ingpen designed the poster, he also drew a bookmark which was sent out to the national sections. Both of these promotional ideas are useful for all national sections interested in promoting International Children's Book Day.

The early history of ICBD is not well known, but we do know that things were not easy. As far back as 1965, Jella Lepman tried to

As far back as 1965, Jella Lepman tried to encourage national sections to celebrate ICBD

encourage national sections to celebrate ICBD, in *Bookbird* 1 of that year. The year 1966 saw the first Children's Book Day event. In a circular letter dated December 2, 1966, Zorka Peršič, the president of IBBY, and Jella Lepman wrote that the University of Michigan USA had inaugurated

> ***an International Children's Book Exhibition, representing the Hans Christian Andersen Prize Winners in all available languages as well as other important children's books in this field. The Exhibit not only won the hearts of the children and grownups but it was marked as a big step onward in International Understanding through Children's Books.***

This exhibition was arranged by a librarian named Doreen Graham, and and assistant professor, Sarita Davis, who also wrote a selective catalogue with notes on translations and short biographies as mentioned in *Bookbird* 2/1966.

However, it was not until 1967 that ICBD really got under way internationally. In April 1967, IBBY proposed to all member states of UNESCO, all big international organisations and definitely to all national sections of IBBY that they should celebrate ICBD. Schools, kindergartens, libraries, publishers' and booksellers' organisations, organisations working with children and young people, together with radio and television, were seen as the main undertakers of ICBD. Children themselves were counted as the most enthusiastic helpers for the party.

In the above-mentioned circular letter, Peršič and Lepman proposed that story hours for children and young people, book quizzes, children's plays, discussion panels for youngsters, films, radio and television programmes, exhibitions of children's books, competitions, children's paintings and record-playing could all be part of the celebrations of ICBD.

Co-operation between different organisations and individuals is still highly relevant as a method for gathering support for ICBD today

A short guide to how to celebrate ICBD was attached to the circular letter. It contained practical advice about forming a committee by first inviting organisations and individuals to an initial meeting. This kind of broad co-operation between different organisations and individuals is still highly relevant as a method for gathering support for ICBD today.

The tone of the guide was both encouraging and demanding: 'In other years you will have more time,' it said, 'but there is enough time to do at least something. This has to be started now!' Without a little pressure, it seemed, things might not go any further.

A worldwide message to be translated was promised as well as a free copy of the Swiss film *Schellenursli*. The 16mm film was very up-to-date

because Alois Carigiet had just won the first Hans Christian Andersen medal for illustration in 1966. Nowadays we regard *Schellenursli*, a picturebook illustrated by Carigiet and written by Selina Chönz, as a classic.

One very popular way of celebrating ICBD is to mount book exhibitions

The guide for the first ICBD hinted also that a children's painting competition could be arranged. It was pointed out that as a theme the International Children's Book Bridge was especially appreciated. The influence of this competition was not restricted only to the national level: it was suggested in the guide that a selection of the paintings could later tour different countries.

One very popular way of celebrating ICBD is to mount book exhibitions. Indeed, exhibitions are the very essence of promoting ICBD, but traditional book exhibitions can be problematic. If the books are inside a locked bookcase, visitors are annoyed at the situation where they can only see the books but they cannot read and leaf through the books. On the other hand, some visitors might be disappointed if the books are placed on open shelves or tables, from where they may be freely 'borrowed': after a couple of weeks there might not be very many books left. Such problems can be avoided by making a both-and

The media are usually not interested in exhibitions that come around every year

(instead of an either-or) exhibition. One part of the exhibition can be placed in closed glass cabinets and the other part can be freely leafed through on a nearby table. These parts can of course operate as totally independent exhibitions.

To maximise the publicity for ICBD exhibitions is hard work. The media are usually not interested in exhibitions that come around every year, as this may seem a tired and uninteresting format to them. For the average cultural journalist, a children's book exhibition unfortunately doesn't sound like a media-sexy event. However, there are different ways to attract journalists' attention. If famous authors or illustrators are speaking about their work during the exhibition, this may guarantee at least some publicity.

Books can be presented as extraordinary objects

But a children's book exhibition can achieve publicity on its own merits also. If the exhibition is put together in an unconventional way the media will be interested in it. Books

can be presented as extraordinary objects. For example, an exhibition featuring books such as Katsumi Komagata's sophisticated and curiously folded Japanese picturebooks, Robert Sabuda's excellent pop-up books, Enzo Mari's puzzle book *The Fable Game* (1965) or Danish Joh. Th. Lundbye's book scroll *Rejse i billeder* (originally drawn in 1847–8 but printed and hand coloured in 1941) could be a source of great interest. Many so-called 'toy books' are kitsch, but there are still many possibilities for high-quality exhibitions concerning book design.

A charming idea could also be to base an exhibition on immaterialism in children's books. Holes in picturebooks is a lovely subject for an exhibition which could contain for example Tove Jansson's classic Finnish picturebook *Moomin, Mymble and Little My* from 1952.

Organising events for ICBD might be hard without paid staff, but small things can suddenly grow bigger and bigger. For instance, for ICBD 2008 I set up an exhibition of pop-up books in the cultural centre of the city of Vantaa in southern Finland. The library was inspired by the idea of ICBD and put together an exhibition of books by HC Andersen; they even started a joint programme with the nearby kindergartens. This year, the cultural centre plans to mount an exhibition of bookmarks, concentrating on bookmarks for children from all over the world. One part of this exhibition will be bookmarks published by the Lithuanian section of IBBY. A light exhibition of this kind is easily circulated around the country and there is no need to worry about loosing valuable materials, because the exhibition is heavily based on advertising material, which is freely available and inexpensive to replace.

One problem with organising ICBD events these days is that there are so many special days or weeks connected to reading. In Finland alone, we have reading week, favourite book

day, special days for nationally important authors, a day for *Kalevala,* which is the national epic of Finland, a day for a book and a rose and a fairy-tale day. The last one is definitely a Finnish speciality, because 'Satu', the Finnish word for fairy tale, is also a rather popular first name for ladies and thus fairy tales and children's books are celebrated according to the calendar of name days. Unfortunately, book and reading promotion campaigns do compete with each other – at least at the level of publicity.

This year, the cultural centre plans to mount an exhibition of bookmarks

One way of maximising publicity for ICBD is to use news agencies. Short press releases might not arouse much interest, but articles about the importance of reading, presented in such a way that they are connected to ICBD, might easily get published in several newspapers. I found this worked when I wrote an article about ICBD in 2008 for the Finnish news agency.

It's not easy to evaluate the success of an article distributed through a news agency. The bare number of articles published in newspapers is not the only relevant fact. Even those papers that did not publish the article got information about ICBD, which is also important for IBBY. Some of them – for example, *Hufvudstadsbladet*, the biggest newspaper published in Swedish, the minority language in Finland – wrote their own short article about ICBD, which they have not done in previous years. I encourage all national sections of IBBY to use their national news agencies as a way of distributing material about ICBD. This is the way to get more people involved in celebrating ICBD in your country – and if all national sections can achieve good coverage, then ICBD will truly be a worldwide celebration of children's books.

The Development of Puffin Books

Puffin, the children's imprint of the famous British publishing house Penguin Books, has been publishing children's paperbacks for almost 70 years. With their distinctive colophon in the form of a black and white puffin, Puffin books are instantly recognisable all over the world. Kate Wright traces the development of this quality children's list, which has encouraged several generations of readers

by KATE WRIGHT

Kate Wright holds an Arts and Humanities Research Council collaborative doctoral studentship at Newcastle University and Seven Stories, the Centre for Children's Books, Newcastle, UK

Penguin Books was founded by Allen Lane in 1935 with the aim of publishing, in paper covers, books that were already available in hard covers, making use of mass production and mass distribution to keep them low priced but of high quality. In the face of opposition and prophecies of failure, Lane, together with

The Puffin imprint was launched during World War II

his brothers Richard and John, established the Penguin Company, which rapidly became such a success that by the end of the 1940s, the words 'Penguin' and 'paperback' were synonymous. As the company developed, additional imprints started up, with the same emphasis on excellence of content and design. By 1940, Lane was ready to extend his list to reach child readers. The Puffin imprint was launched during World War II, when much of the workforce was away fighting and when paper shortages meant that publishers had to make severe economies in their use of paper. This did not curtail Lane's ambitions to reach more readers.

Puffin Picture Books

The initial suggestion for Puffin Picture Books came from Noel Carrington in 1938. Carrington was not a specialist in children's books, but a printing and design expert. He suggested the Picture Books in part as a result of his knowledge of Soviet children's books. These books were colourful, exciting and produced in large quantities. Carrington's idea was to edit a series of similarly stimulating books which could be sold for sixpence a copy, making them more affordable than the majority of children's books at the time. Lane did not immediately take up the idea, but returned to it later, and the Puffin Picture Books series was launched in December 1940. The first four titles, published simultaneously, were *War on Land*, *War at Sea*, *War in the Air* and *On the Farm*. The series was largely factual and part of the aim was to enable children to understand the war and the countryside to which many of them were being evacuated. This opportunistic and yet principled approach to business was typical of Lane. The books were intended for readers of 7–14 and, in keeping with the tradition established for the adult readers of Penguins, the writers and artists engaged to work on individual titles were all experts in their field. The books were paperback, landscape in format, with 32 pages, half of them illustrated in colour, half in black and white. Initially they were produced from plates which the artists drew themselves. This was not popular with the print unions, but kept costs down. By 1948, most of the illustrations were reproduced by photolithography, enabling a better range of colours and more detail on the black and white pages. The size of the books was exactly twice that of a Penguin, a pragmatic decision which enabled economies to be made in packing and distribution costs.

Puffin Picture Books – more affordable than the majority of children's books at the time

The series was an immediate success and was translated widely not long after the end of the war. Despite paper rationing, Carrington produced ten new books annually. In all, 119 books had been produced when the series ended in 1965. In addition there was an experimental series of picturebooks for younger children: Baby Puffin Books. These were half the size, thus using less paper, but only nine titles were produced between 1943 and 1948. Picturebooks were reintroduced in 1968, and became a permanent part of the Puffin list.

Puffin Picture Books covered subjects such as calligraphy, model-making and wildlife. Although always predominantly a factual series, the Puffin Picture Books also contained some

'Bold design, bold colour printing, unashamedly didactic intention and low price' – added up to success

fiction, beginning with Kathleen Hale's *Orlando's Evening Out* (1941). JE Morpurgo (1979), in his biography of Allen Lane, attributes the success of the series to 'a combination of good design, bold colour printing, unashamedly didactic intention and low price'. In other words, the Penguin ethos was firmly adhered to.

Puffin Story Books

The success of Puffin Picture Books bolstered Lane's confidence in children's publishing: a year after the first four picturebooks were published, he established Puffin Story Books. This is the series which is perhaps most associated with Puffin. They looked very similar to Penguins, having the trademark plain-coloured cover – red in the case of Puffin Story Books, where the original penguins were orange – with black typography. They were also very much in tune with the Penguin ideal. In 1972, writing about the history of Puffin Books, Kaye Webb wrote

that 'Puffins were to contain some of the best writing available in all fields – fiction, poetry, biography, myths and 'classics'.'

Eleanor Graham

Eleanor Graham was the first editor of Puffin Story Books. Her background was in children's book selling and reviewing: she was head of the children's room at the celebrated Bumpus bookshop in London and reviewed children's books for the *Sunday Times*, and the *Bookman*. She had previously edited children's books at the publishing firms of William Heinemann and Methuen as well as writing for children herself. Exactly a year after the first Puffin Picture Books came out, in December 1941, the first five Puffin Story Books were published. The very first was *Worzel Gummidge* by Barbara Euphan Todd, a story of a scarecrow who comes to life. The others were *Cornish Adventure* by Derek McCulloch, *The Cuckoo Clock* by Mrs Molesworth, *Garram the Hunter* by Herbert Best and *Smoky* by Will James.

Graham was editor of Puffin Story Books for twenty years, from 1941 until her retirement in 1961. During this time, she never published more than twelve titles a year. Looked at in terms of the annual publishing figures for children's lists nowadays, this seems like a minuscule number, and in comparison even with her successor, Kaye Webb, the number is small. However, Graham was starting from scratch and building up the children's list in wartime. She met great resistance from the

'Puffins were to contain some of the best writing available in all fields – fiction, poetry, biography, myths and "classics"' (Kaye Webb)

hardback publishers to the idea of leasing some of their titles to Puffin for reprinting in paperback format. Additionally, libraries, booksellers and many potential book buyers were all in various degrees resistant to the ideals which Puffin sought to promote and were therefore unwilling to buy the books. Graham, admirably, was not prepared to compromise over quality. She published what she could, provided that it met her high standards. Amongst her choices were *The Incredible Adventures of Professor Branestawm* by Norman Hunter, Mary Norton's *The Borrowers* and *The Family from One End Street* by Eve Garnett. When she was refused permission to publish the books she wanted, she chose to commission new books, known as Puffin Originals, to augment the list, rather than to accept second best. As a result, she was responsible for titles which include *Worzel Gummidge and Saucy Nancy* by Barbara Euphan Todd and Roger Lancelyn Green's *King Arthur*.

Libraries, booksellers and many potential book buyers were resistant to the ideals which Puffin sought to promote

Graham's policy of developing a small but consistently good list undoubtedly helped to give Puffin Story Books its reputation for publishing only the best. By her retirement, however, some of her decisions were also beginning to look old fashioned. For example, she declined to publish JRR Tolkien's *The Hobbit* because of its violent content. Morpurgo (1979) characterised Graham as 'conventional' and 'fuddy-duddy' and as someone whose list, whilst wholesome, reflected these qualities. He contrasted Graham unfavourably with her successor, Kaye Webb, believing that Lane saw Webb as 'young, energetic, attractive' and as someone who rejuvenated Puffin, bringing the division closer to the ideals of Penguin. Certainly the two editors seemed very different in character. Elizabeth J Morse (2004) describes Graham as 'a soft-spoken woman whose wide-apart shining eyes gave her a childlike appearance'; Webb, on the other hand, was outgoing and a high-profile and glamorous member of fashionable literary and artistic circles. Nevertheless, despite these outward differences, they shared a deeply held conviction that children deserved only the best in the books provided for them and to place such a simplistic interpretation on the achievements of these two women reduces both of them. Webb tried, in vain, to get the comments about Graham taken out of Morpurgo's book, as correspondence in her archive shows (Webb 1978). On her retirement, Graham expressed relief that Puffin Books was in such capable hands and Webb always acknowledged with warmth the foundations laid by Graham.

Graham's policy of developing a small but consistently good list helped to give Puffin its reputation for publishing only the best

Kaye Webb

Kaye Webb came to Puffin in 1961 from a background in journalism. In the 1940s she had been assistant editor of *Lilliput*, an iconic general-interest magazine for adults, and later she edited the children's magazine *Young Elizabethan*. Under Graham, the Puffin list grew slowly but steadily, establishing a reputation for quality and building up trust in the new paperback format. Under Webb's editorship, sales grew dramatically but this is not indicative solely of the difference in personality between the two editors. Webb benefitted from Puffin's firm foundations and from improving economic conditions in the country as a whole. Increased public spending under a Labour government in the mid-1960s led to increased book sales to schools and libraries. However, it is true to say that Webb was dynamic and energetic and that this did have a great impact on Puffin Books, to the extent that during her reign as editor (and she was known as Queen Puffin, so I use the word advisedly) she became as identified with Puffins as Lane was with Penguins.

Initially, she felt herself to be lacking a solid background in children's books, so she sought the advice of specialists like Naomi Lewis, Marjorie Fisher, Roger Lancelyn Green, Elaine Moss and John Rowe Townsend, and she visited bookshops to see how the books were displayed and sold. As a result, she was well placed to promote the case for Puffins, firstly within the Penguin Company, and then to the bookshops. When the sales director of the WH Smith bookshop told her that she needed an advertising jingle, Webb produced one by asking her office colleagues – helped by Laurie Lee – to write the words, and persuading Puffin author Joan Aiken's son to write the music. It was this combination of energy, creativeness and enterprise which played such a significant part in the expansion of the Puffin list.

Webb's combination of energy, creativeness and enterprise played a significant part in the expansion of the Puffin list

Webb had an eye for both literary worth and market value

In addition to dramatically increasing the number of Puffins published, Webb's other great achievement was the creation of the Puffin Club. This club, for subscribers only, included a quarterly magazine called *Puffin Post* which brought readers directly in touch with authors, illustrators and each other. One of Webb's particular desires was that readers would contribute themselves and she went to great lengths to encourage their creativity, through competitions, holding an annual exhibition to display winning work and through the creation, with the illustrator Jill McDonald, of the dog Odway, who was a vehicle for asking quirky questions for the readers to answer with whatever form of writing or drawing inspired them. The club was immensely popular and, in its creation of a community of Puffin readers, also had the side-effect of providing a pool of consumer response for Webb and her colleagues at Puffin. During the difficult economic period of the 1980s, the club was effectively disbanded, with only the sales-focused schools' branch surviving, but it is about to be relaunched.

Kaye Webb edited Puffin books from 1961 until 1979, and she remained as an adviser to Puffin for another few years. She was responsible for the publication of over seven hundred books including Clive King's *Stig of the Dump* and Richard Adams's *Watership Down*. These two books, which went on to become

classics, also achieved very high sales figures, demonstrating that Webb had an eye for both literary worth and market value. Webb, like Graham, also commissioned original books.

The publishing world was already changing when Webb retired, and although Penguin and Puffin had weathered the economic downturn of the 1970s, new approaches to book selling were necessary. The advice once given by Eleanor Graham to Kaye Webb, 'If you can nurse a children's book for 5 years, you can sell it for 20' (Webb, undated), was no longer always practical. In 1981, Puffin published a book by a 13-year-old boy named Patrick Bossert on how to do Rubik's Cube – a craze which was sweeping playgrounds all over the country. In a little over four months, more than a million copies of *You Can Do the Cube* were sold. Webb's successors, Tony Lacey, then Liz Attenborough and others, were perhaps less well known by name to their readers, but embraced the commercial challenges which the firm faced. In 1985, Puffin Books was responsible for one third of the annual sales of Penguin Books. In 2010, they will celebrate seventy years of publishing books for children.

Today, the landscape of publishing for children is almost unrecognisable when compared to that of forty years ago. In part, this is a result of wider changes in business practice and public funding. In part it can be seen as a result of a number of specific publishing events, and surely no article on publishing would be complete without mentioning the Harry Potter sequence of books and the impact which they have made on the children's book world. While sales and profits do not tell the whole story of a publishing house, and can tell us little if anything about the reception of the books, their impact on the readers and their literary merit, publishing is a business, even children's book publishing, and businesses measure success in these terms. For Puffin to be more than holding its own in the current market speaks volumes.

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Webb, Kaye (1978) Kaye Webb to Jack Morpurgo (KW/07/01/05/08), unpublished letter held at Seven Stories, the Centre for Children's Books, Newcastle, UK

Webb, Kaye (undated) unpublished typescript (KW/11/03/05) held at Seven Stories, the Centre for Children's Books, Newcastle, UK

In this exciting novel, the wise scientist Harry Ment and his family visit the moon, Venus, and the 'I don't know where' planet, where they experience unbelievably crazy adventures of complicated and magical dimensions. Finally, they come back to Earth more rational, wiser and experienced. In refreshed mood, they are ready to prepare and impatient for their next trip.

In a simple and fairy-tale way, this book talks to children about universal developments and the possibility of people's future locomotion to other planets! Giolanda Paterakï is considered one of the most eminent and prolific of Greek children's book writers. She has published more than 42 books, ranging from tales of fantasy to novels. The author is the recipient of sixteen national prizes and distinctions, among them the Academy of Athens Children's Book Award and, for the body of her work, the Penelope Delta Award of IBBY Greece.

Vassiliki Nika

Giolanda Paterakï (Giannïs Apostologiannïs illus)

O planïtïs tu Den Xerõ pu

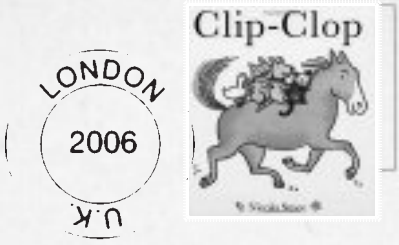
[The 'I don't know where' planet]

Athens: Psichogios (Xinomïlo) 2007
216pp ISBN: 9789604531547
(fantasy fiction, 11+)

This is my favourite book to share with 4- and 5-year-old children at the beginning of the school year. It has it all – a large format, rhythm and rhyme, minimal text which is repetitive and set in a large font, recognisable farmyard characters, a simple storyline, and a completely age-appropriate level of humour. The illustrations are rendered in delicate watercolours outlined boldly in black. The facial expressions on the five creatures reveal curiosity, surprise and delight with simple, clear artistry.

This is an excellent storytime selection if the group includes children for whom English is a second (or third) language. The text repeats the same request as each animal hopes to have a ride on the back of Mr Horse. There are no surprises at this point, only clarity. As the story is also told through the clear, engaging visuals, listeners are supported in understanding the story. Expect your young audience to shout, 'Read it again, please!' the moment you reach the final page.

Jeffrey Brewster



Nicola Smee

CLIP-CLOP

London: Boxer Books Ltd 2006
32pp ISBN-10: 1905417039
(picturebook, 3–5)

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 kurkjianc@ccsu.edu AND one to svardell@twu.edu **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!

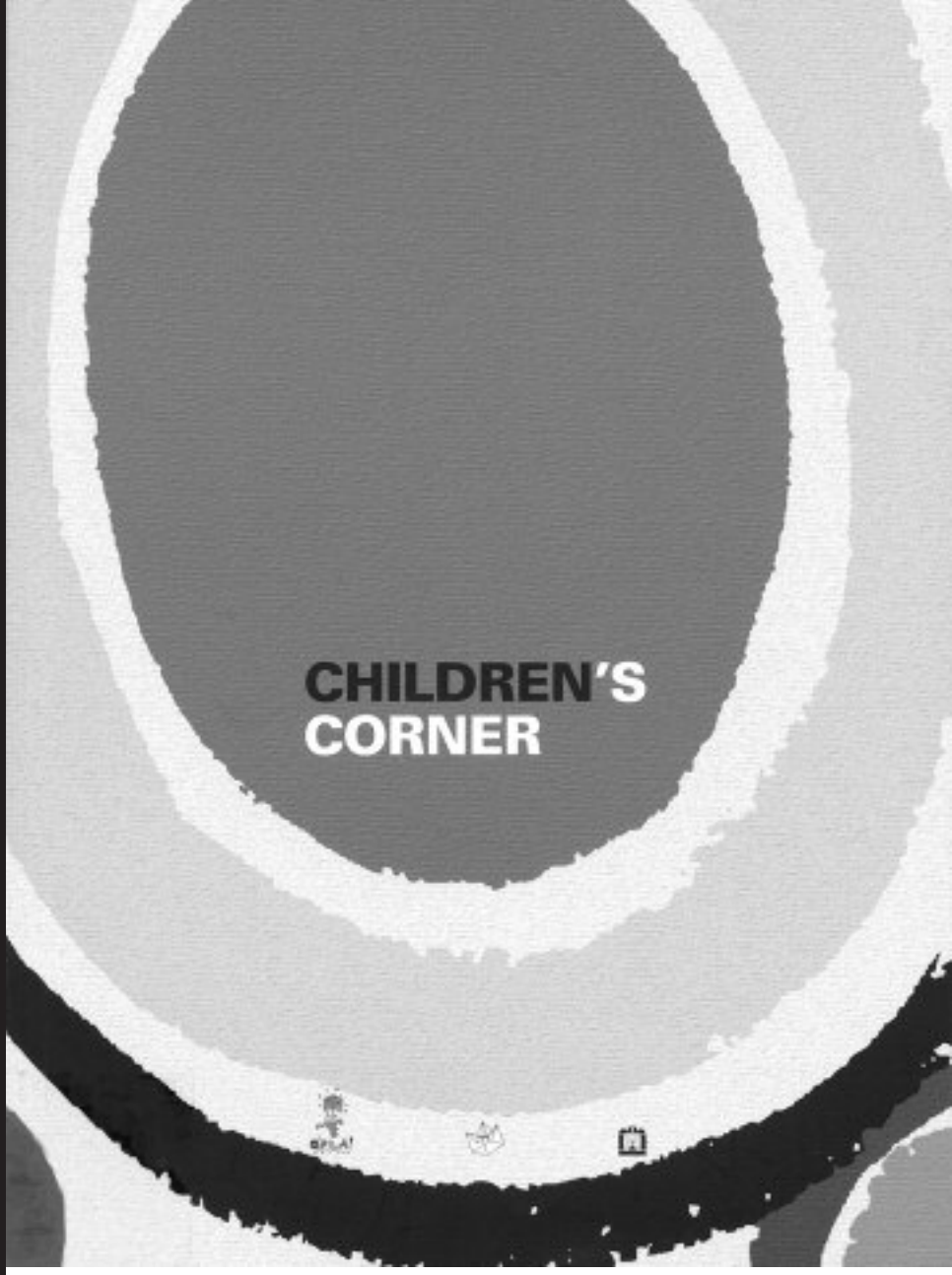
Notices on international children's books, distributed throughout* Bookbird, *are compiled from sources around the world by Glenna Sloan, who teaches children's literature at Queens College, City University of New York.

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 Books



edited and compiled by

CHRISTIANE RAABE

(translations by Nikola von Merveldt)

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

A new look at German-language children's literature, especially that of Austria; and a new look also at fairy tales and retellings in German, Dutch and English; two specialist artists' books for children, from Italy and Belgium, respectively; and from the United States, a book celebrating the African American contribution to children's literature, and one about the representation of Caribbean peoples and culture in British children's literature

AUSTRIA

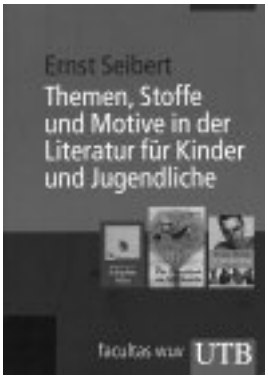
ERNST SEIBERT

Themen, Stoffe und Motive in der Literatur für Kinder und Jugendliche

[Themes, subjects, and motifs in literature for children and young adults]

(Series: UTB; 3073: Literaturwissenschaft)

Vienna: Facultas wuv 2008 206pp ISBN 9783825230739; 3825230732 €18.90



This monograph is an ambitious attempt to revise scholarly approaches to German-language literature for children and young adults. Its aim is twofold: firstly, Seibert makes the case for regarding literature for children and young adults not merely as a pedagogic subsystem of literature in general, but as an integral part of that larger poetic system. Secondly, he wants Austrian literature to act as a player in the theoretical debate, which is still dominated by a specifically German perspective.

The book is divided into four loosely connected chapters: chapter 1 traces shifting genre boundaries as well as the growing intertextuality between literature for children and young adults and literature in general beginning in the 1970s. This leads Seibert to redraw the boundaries of the canon of children's literature in chapter 2, and to further explore the intertextual, intergenerational and highly self-reflexive nature of 'childhood literature' from an interdisciplinary perspective. A brief survey of the history of children's literature from the 18th century to the present in chapter 3 nuances the traditional narrative by calling attention to the particularities of each of the four German-language literatures: German (including East and West), Swiss and particularly Austrian. The final chapter focuses exclusively on the characteristics and concerns of postmodern Austrian literature for children and young adults and demonstrates how the decompartmentalisation of this still underestimated literary genre can open up new avenues for interpretation.

Nikola von Merveldt

BELGIUM

VANESSA JOOSEN

New Perspectives on Fairy Tales. The Intertextual Dialogue between Fairy-tale Criticism and Dutch, English and German Fairy-tale Retellings in the Period from 1970 to 2006 = Sprookjes opnieuw bekeken. De intertekstuele dialoog tussen sprookjestheorie en duitse, engelse en nederlandse sprookjesbewerkingen in de periode van 1970 tot 2006

Antwerp: Universiteit Antwerpen 2008 487pp (PhD thesis, to be published in 2009)

This doctoral thesis, written in English, explores the inter-textual dialogue between fairy-tale criticism and Dutch, English and German fairy-tale retellings between 1970 and 2006 – a period that witnessed a renewed interest in the previously disdained fairy-tale genre by authors and critics alike.

The first chapter proposes intertextuality as a theoretical framework, which allows adequate

analysis and description of the ways in which postmodern fairy-tale retellings and literary criticism of traditional fairy tales interrelate. Chapters 2 to 5 examine this intertextual dialogue in a series of four case studies and identify a wide variety of intertextual overlaps as feminist, psychoanalytic and socio-historical agendas of authors and critics converge.

The analysis of the retellings reveals that fiction, like literary criticism, has its own (albeit specifically narrative and literary) means of producing insight and voicing social or political criticism. The popularity of feminist fairy-tale adaptations in this period, for instance, perfectly echoes Liebermann's criticism of the sexist and stereotypical representations of men and women in traditional fairy tales. Other literary adaptations reflect the positions of Bruno Bettelheim, Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar and are further evidence of a symbiotic relationship between literary production and criticism during this period.

Apart from providing thoughtful answers to the question of the intertextual dialogue between literary creation and criticism, this book also offers a fascinating survey of the richness of fairy-tale adaptations in the three languages. The plot summaries and quotations taken from a captivating kaleidoscope of post-modern fairy tales signal that this traditional genre is still very much alive and kicking.

Toin Duijx

It is difficult to find artbooks designed and realised by artists or sculptors for children to enjoy

ITALY and BELGIUM

VALERIO DEHÒ [ET AL]
Children's Corner. Libri d'artista per bambini = Artists' Books for Children
Mantova: Ed Corraini 2007 123pp
ISBN 9788875701123; 8875701121 €35

NADIA CORRAZZINI (ET AL)
Livre et enfance. Entrecroisements
[The book and childhood. Intersections]
Noville-sur-Mehaigne: Ed Esperluète 2008 141pp
ISBN 9782930223902 €16

Almost any museum shop will offer instructive books about the life and work of famous artists targeted at children. It is much more difficult, however, to find artbooks designed and realised by artists or sculptors for children to enjoy. Their refusal to comply with didactic or commercial demands makes it difficult for these artists' books to find their way into the conventional children's book market.

Thankfully, however, two recent exhibitions have featured artists' books for children. To mark their tenth anniversary, the ÓPLA Archive (Oasi per libri artistici/Oasis for Art Books), founded in 1997 and housed at the Biblioteca Civica di Merano (Merano City Library, Italy), showcased artists' books for children and artistic book objects from their superb collection. This institution collects *avant garde* books and book objects crafted by artists that treat text and image as an aesthetic whole.

The collection encompasses about 500 books, including classic artbooks by Sonia Delaunay, El Lissitzky, Bruno Munari and Joan Miró as well as picturebooks by pop-art artists Keith Haring and Andy Warhol. Along with essays on artists' books for children, the bilingual (Italian/English) catalogue *Children's Corner*, itself designed like a quality children's book, displays full-colour reproductions of the books and book installations featured in the exhibition.

Livre et enfance. Entrecroisements was the title of an exhibition put together in 2008 jointly by the Service de la Diffusion et de l'Animation Culturelles (Department for Cultural Activities) of the Franco-Belgian province of Luxembourg and by the Atelier du Livre of the Musée Royal de Mariemont in Saint-Hubert (Wallonia, Belgium). Under the heading of 'Art, books, and childhood', it brought together artists' books and book objects originating from the artists' ingenious, childlike desire to play, construct, deconstruct, and experiment. Michel Defourny, Belgian children's book specialist and curator of the exhibition, aptly describes the engaging exhibition of high-class art-, toy- and playbooks as a cabinet of curiosities. The exhibition featured books by famous artists such as Gilbert & George, Katsumi Komagata and Paula Cox and spanned all formats imaginable, including pop-up, pull-out and lift-the-flap books, book boxes and book card games. Apart from a wide variety of toybooks, the Atelier du Livre contributed delicate paper and intricate fabric objects as well as book objects for children from five renowned book artists. The commendable catalogue, which includes detailed information about formats and artists as well as many high-quality, full-colour reproductions, will surprise and seduce readers by compellingly demonstrating the great potential of children's book art.

Christiane Raabe

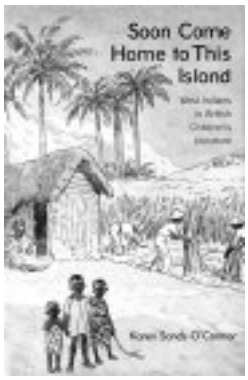
UNITED STATES

KAREN SANDS-O'CONNOR

Soon Come Home to This Island. West Indians in British Children's Literature

(Series: Children's literature and culture; 45)

New York: Routledge 2007 xviii + 238pp ISBN 9780415976305 US $95



Unlike Africa and India, the Caribbean territories played a less prominent role in the British Empire. Both British literature and literary colonial studies reflect this fact. Thanks to Karen Sands-O'Connor's seminal study, readers can now learn more about the representations of West Indians and their culture in British children's literature.

Focusing on the territories under British rule, most notably the island of Jamaica, Sands-O'Connor, associate professor at Buffalo State College, traces the theme in novels, picture-books, poetry, comics and school textbooks published between 1700 and the present.

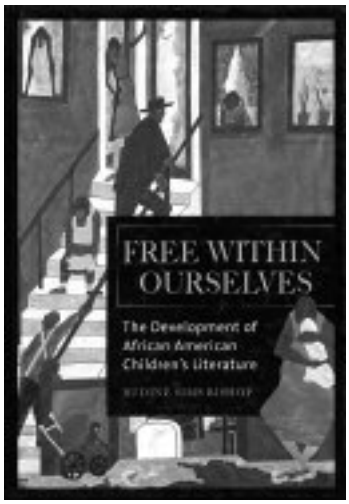
She convincingly demonstrates that children's literature has always mirrored its historical and sociocultural contexts. Countless examples illustrate the conflicting but complementary workings of deprecatory/stigmatising and romanticising stereotypes, most readily recognisable in the figure of the savage, who was in turn perceived as either primitive and threatening or noble and unadulterated. This racist and colonial gaze gradually changed as large numbers of West Indian immigrants settled in Britain following World War II. Beginning in the 1960s, authors of Afro-Caribbean origin enriched British children's literature with their specific perspective and idiom, introducing a new tone.

Extensive footnotes and a comprehensive bibliography as well as a person and subject index round off this thorough and worthwhile volume, which finally puts the West Indies back on the map of the history of (British) children's literature.
Jochen Weber

UNITED STATES

RUDINE SIMS BISHOP
Free Within Ourselves. The Development of African American Children's Literature

Westport, Conn. [et al]: Greenwood Press 2007 XVI, 295pp ISBN 9780313340932 US $65



African American children's literature only began to take off properly in the late 1960s and has since played an important role within contemporary American children's literature (if not in terms of numbers then in terms of influence).

In this comprehensive study, renowned expert Rudine Sims Bishop explores the emergence of a distinct literature in the 19th century 'written by African Americans, focused on African American people and their life experiences, and primarily intended for children up to age fourteen' and traces its development until the beginning of the 21st century. Following an overview of the publishing history of African American children's literature, Bishop goes on to provide background information about the social, economic and political factors that led to a rich oral culture among the African slaves in America on the one hand and to their hunger for literacy and education on the other. Chronologically detailing the early African American publications primarily addressed to black children, she describes works such as the influential children's magazine *The Brownies' Book* of 1920/1921 and the books by Langston Hughes, Effie Lee Newsome, Arna Bontemps and others up to 1970.

In the second half of her study, she analyses the evolution of various genres within the field of African American children's literature since the 1970s, among them poetry, the picturebook, contemporary realistic fiction and historical fiction, and introduces the writings of some crucial authors and illustrators. The wealth of information and the engaging writing style make this an indispensable treasury for academics as well as librarians, teachers and general readers.
Claudia Söffner

Focus IBBY

IBBY Congress 2008: Stories in History – History in Stories

The 2008 IBBY World Congress took place in Copenhagen with all the finesse and excitement that we have come to expect from a successful IBBY congress.

For the first time an IBBY pre-congress workshop/seminar took place. The one-day event was divided into two sessions: the first was devised to focus on how to create dynamic and viable national sections by showing participants how to network, fundraise and establish useful relationships. The second session had the objective of giving concrete examples that are practical and useful ways of helping to relieve the trauma caused by wars, civil disruptions, natural catastrophes and extreme poverty through the use of books and stories. We aimed at encouraging our national sections to support the Children in Crisis projects in other countries or regions, either through fundraising, or technical or logistic support. By sharing the experiences and know-how of the invited experts, the members would be inspired to establish projects or react swiftly in times of crisis.

The invited speakers were **Julinda Abu Nasr** (Lebanon), who has led the 'Conflict Management for Traumatised Children of War in Lebanon' project since 2006; **Carole Bloch** (South Africa), who co-ordinates PRAESA's Early Literacy Unit in Cape Town and whose work involves helping to introduce and familiarise educators at all levels with approaches to literacy; **Murti Bunanta** (Indonesia), who organises IBBY Indonesia and successfully co-ordinated the IBBY Tsunami relief project in Indonesia; **Silvia Castrillón** (Colombia), whose project, 'Creation of Reading

compiled and edited by
ELIZABETH PAGE

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

Clubs with Children and Young Victims of the Armed Conflict in Colombia', has just begun; **Carmen Diana Dearden** (Venezuela), who initiated the 'Read to Live' project in 2000, after a devastating mudslide near Caracas; **Jacqueline Kerguéno** (France), former international development manager of Bayard children's press and consultant for publishing programmes in developing countries; **Ahmad Redza A Khairuddin** (Malaysia), who is vice president of Malaysian IBBY (MBBY) and chairman of Rhythm, a book publishing and distribution company; **Elizabeth Serra** (Brazil), general secretary of IBBY Brazil, FNLIJ; and **Ivanka Stričević** (Croatia), who was responsible in the early 1990s for librarians' capacity-building training to support trauma-healing reading programmes during the war in Croatia.

Reading and books can transform a child's possibilities and even save lives

Representatives from sixty national sections took part in the event and special guests included **Ingrid Bon** from IFLA, **Larry Lempart** from ALMA and **Scott Walter** from CODE. The day was sponsored by the Paterson Family Foundation, for which we are extremely grateful.

The grand opening of the congress was in the spectacular Tivoli Gardens *Glassalon*. The auditorium was full of the chatter of old friends meeting up again, new friendships being made, and an overall feeling that something special was about to happen. Queen Margrethe II arrived and it all began. The evening's master-of-ceremonies kept the pace and lightness of the programme going throughout the speeches, singing and dancing.

Patsy Aldana in her opening speech talked about IBBY's growing and expanding work and reminded us of today's reality:

> ***We have just had a very fruitful day looking at ourselves to see how we can work more effectively to help the children of this world. For amidst the splendour of this congress we must not forget that children everywhere need and have the right to the richness, knowledge, joy and power that comes from being able to read the best books from their own cultures and from other cultures around the world.***
>
> ***… Far too many of the world's children are tragically denied the decent, full life they are entitled to because of poverty, war, natural disaster, displacement, racism, ignorance and hunger. We cannot fail to be moved by this reality and so we keep trying to improve our work on behalf of the most vulnerable people in the world – the children – and to remember that reading and books can transform a child's possibilities and even save lives.***

The highlight of an IBBY congress opening is always the presentation of the Hans Christian Andersen Awards. The president of the HCA jury, Zohreh Ghaeni, gave a wonderfully succinct and warm *laudatio* for the 2008 winners, summing up as follows:

> ***Schubiger's stories are stories for thinking. His stories are very simple and about very ordinary things and happenings. Sometimes they seem too simple. But children can find answers to their questions about life in these deceptively simple stories. Schubiger says: 'I retell the stories of adults' childhoods.' The blend of fantasy and philosophy is something that Schubiger employs to push children to look at life around them carefully and think.***

Left: Pre-congress workshop (photo: Forest Zhang)

Top: HM Queen Margrethe II presenting the 2008 Hans Christian Andersen Awards (photo: Forest Zhang)

Roberto Innocenti's works reveal his poetic genius. For him the structure of a story is something beyond the ordinary main characters, events and actions. His stories include the entire world in which the events occur. All creatures and things, landscapes and buildings, children and adults, women and men, even dogs passing by or birds flying over yards or streets, play a role in the world of Innocenti's stories. … He encourages children to discover new perspectives in the visual world of stories. And because of this, the readers of his stories can feel every feeling in every scene; they can touch the fabric in the clothes people wear, the trunks, branches and leaves of trees and the feathers of birds.

Both were present and were able to present their speeches in their own languages, and captivated the audience.

The congress began in earnest the next morning with everyone eagerly waiting to hear Fernando Savater speak on the theme of narrative thinking. The IBBY Honour List presentation is a traditional part of every IBBY congress, and the 2008 list includes a record-breaking number of 169 titles in 48 different languages. Another record was broken when 44 of the honourees were present to receive their diplomas personally from IBBY president Patsy Aldana. Junko Yokota gave a comprehensive visual overview of the 2008 selection.

That afternoon a debate between members of ALMA and the Hans Christian Andersen Award 2008 jury was very enlightening. The long years of experience of the international IBBY jury and the very serious efforts these jurors made to judge fairly and to extend their knowledge of and receptiveness to authors and illustrators from around the world were an inspiration to us all.

One of the most welcome innovations of the Copenhagen congress was the time allowed for visual presentations of the winning projects of the IBBY-Asahi Reading Promotion 2008 Awards. Representatives of the winning projects Chanthasone Inthavong from **Action with Lao**

Children from Laos and Agnes Gyr of **Editions Bakame** from Rwanda gave presentations that allowed us to see why these projects were chosen as the winners. Hirohito Ohno from the Asahi Shimbun European office in London presented the winners with their diplomas at the award-giving ceremony that evening in the Copenhagen Town Hall, where a fascinating exhibition of Nordic children's book illustrations was on display. The cool colours and the sometime melancholic pictures seem to capture the essence of the far north. A grand buffet dinner given by the mayor of Copenhagen was certainly enjoyed by all!

Top: Chanthasone Inthavong and Agnes Gyr with their diplomas (photo: Hasse Ferrold)

Middle: Winners and jury members; left to right, Hannelore Daubert, Ira Saxena, Agnes Gyr, Reina Duarte, Elda Nogueira (jury president), Chanthasone Inthavong, Ann Lazim (not in picture), Ahmad Redza A Khairuddin (photo: Ira Saxena)

Bottom: Storytelling Tepee (photo: Maria Eugenia Coeymans)

During the congress twelve speakers gave keynote lectures, coming from Spain (Fernando Savater), Brazil (Ana Maria Machado), Denmark (Torben Weinreich and Josefine Ottesen), France (Michèle Petit), Norway (Grete Haagenrud), Thailand (Ngarmpun (Jane) Vejjajiva), Palestine (Sharif Kanaana), Angola (Ondjaki), Canada (Rukhsana Khan), Sweden (Mats Wahl) and the USA (Peter Sís). One hundred seminar speakers presented during 21 sessions, and four storytelling sessions took place outside the venue in the Storytelling Tepee with storytellers from Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Denmark, FYROM, India, Norway, the Philippines, Poland, Romania, Sweden, Uganda and Zimbabwe.

By universal consent the participants enjoyed an outstanding programme, comprising a wonderful balance of inspiring, moving and intellectually challenging presentations from a very representative group of speakers. All available seminars and speeches are posted on the IBBY website at www.ibby.org.

The closing gala took place in another spectacular location, this time the former circus building of Copenhagen. The programme, again, was well put together and we were treated to a fine dinner, speeches, a very tantalising preview of the 2010 congress in Santiago de Compostela, as well as music from Galicia and Denmark. Two of the three newly honoured IBBY honorary members were in Copenhagen to receive their diplomas in person.

As is traditional, everyone was warmly thanked from the stage. The participants were busy exchanging promises to write to each other. The atmosphere in the round circus building was relaxed and happy – a tribute to the success of the 31st IBBY congress.

IBBY Elects Executive Committee 2008–2010

Patricia Aldana (Canada) was re-elected as IBBY president for the next two years. Over the past two years Patsy has pursued goals that she laid down in 2006 after being elected IBBY president in Macau:

i) Skills training so that everywhere in the world there is the ability to produce excellent local children's books

ii) Ability to respond to children in crisis situations thorough the use of bibliotherapy, replacement of infrastructure, etc.

iii) Building the capacity and professionalism of our national sections so that they can effectively work on the first two priorities

These goals are being met through the IBBY-Yamada workshop programme, the IBBY Children in Crisis programme and events such as the 2008 pre-congress workshop.

Reina Duarte (Spain) and **Ahmad Redza Ahmad Khairuddin** (Malaysia) were elected by the executive committee as the IBBY vice-presidents 2008–2010. For the past fifteen years Reina has worked at Ed. Edebé, a publishing house with branches throughout Spain as well as in Latin America. She manages the publications department, which focuses on fiction and non-fiction for children and young people up to the age of 18. She also teaches a course in editing children's books at Pompeu Fabra University, Barcelona, and supports a fortnightly radio programme related to children's books. Redza has been actively involved in publishing, especially in the national publication of children's books. He loves reading and is passionate about the education of children especially in the areas of children's books and other media. Due to his passion for education, he was appointed as vice-president of the Majlis Buku

Left: Katherine Paterson and Carmen Diana Dearden receive their Honorary Membership diplomas from Patsy Aldana (photo: Forest Zhang)

Below: Closing ceremony with old and new Executive Committee (photo: Majken Jørgensen)

Kanak-Kanak & Remaja Malaysia (MBBY). He is also a member of the board of directors of Universiti Teknologi MARA, adviser to the students in free enterprise (SIFE) team, at local universities and panel judge at SIFE competitions at national level and world cup final and also pro-tem chairman of the SIFE Malaysia business advisory board. Reina and Redza served as EC members 2006–2008.

Other members elected (or re-elected) to serve for a two-year term are as follows:

Anastasia Arkhipova (Russia), a well-respected artist and illustrator and an Honoured Artist of Russia (re-elected)

Elisa Bonilla (Mexico), who works for Fundacion SM as director of institutional liaisons and who, for the past four years, has been actively involved in the civil group that worked towards the authorisation of a law for literacy and books, which was finally approved in July 2008

Hannelore Daubert (Germany), a lecturer on children's literature and didactics at the Johann Wolfgang Goethe University in Frankfurt (re-elected)

Wally de Doncker (Belgium), a writer (several of whose books have been adapted for stage, musical, animation and dance movies), specialist teacher of children's literature and founder of a pre-reading and initial reading method *Leesdraak* (reading dragon), which is now used in over 200 schools

Nikki Gamble (UK), formerly a teacher (secondary and primary) and teacher educator, she is now a lecturer, writer and education consultant, who is currently working as director of the 2012 IBBY congress in London

Jehan Helou (Palestine), formerly director of the Tamer Institute and editor of the *Taif Journal on Children's Literature* and currently leader of the IBBY section in Palestine

James Tumusiime (Uganda), managing director of Fountain Publishers Ltd – the largest indigenous publishing house in Uganda – and founding chairman of the National Book Trust of Uganda (NABOTU)

Mingzhou Zhang (China), vice-president of CBBY and president and general manager of Bridging Consulting Co., (Beijing) Ltd, who set up the first model district for China Children's Reading Promotion in Shandong Province and the first model library of China Children's Reading Promotion – Beijing Capital Children's Library

Zohreh Ghaeni (Iran), director of the Institute for Research on the History of Children's Literature and co-writer of a research project on the history of children's literature in Iran (re-elected as president of the Hans Christian Andersen Jury 2010)

Ellis Vance (USA), who, after 42 years in education, is currently an education consultant; he devotes most of his time to USBBY (of which he is treasurer and former vice-president) and IBBY (of which he is a former vice-president); he is also treasurer of Bookbird Inc. (confirmed as IBBY treasurer)

Peter Gyr and **Fritz Rothacher** (both from Switzerland) were re-elected as the IBBY auditors; **Liz Page** and **Forest Zhang** were re-confirmed as the IBBY directors and only staff members, running the IBBY secretariat in Basel, Switzerland, between them; and **Catherine Kurkjian** and **Sylvia Vardell** (both from the USA), who have taken on the position of editors of IBBY's journal *Bookbird* from issue 2/2009, were introduced to the membership at the general assembly.

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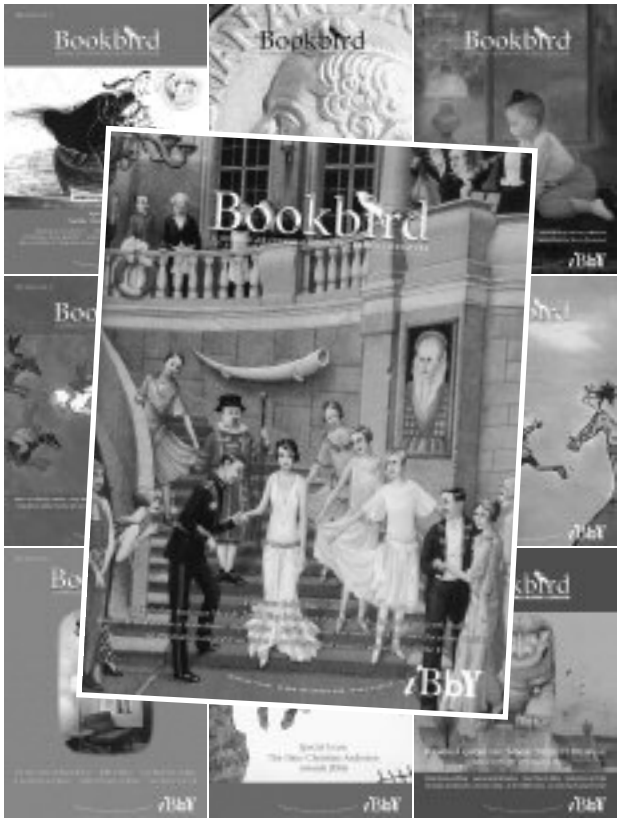

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