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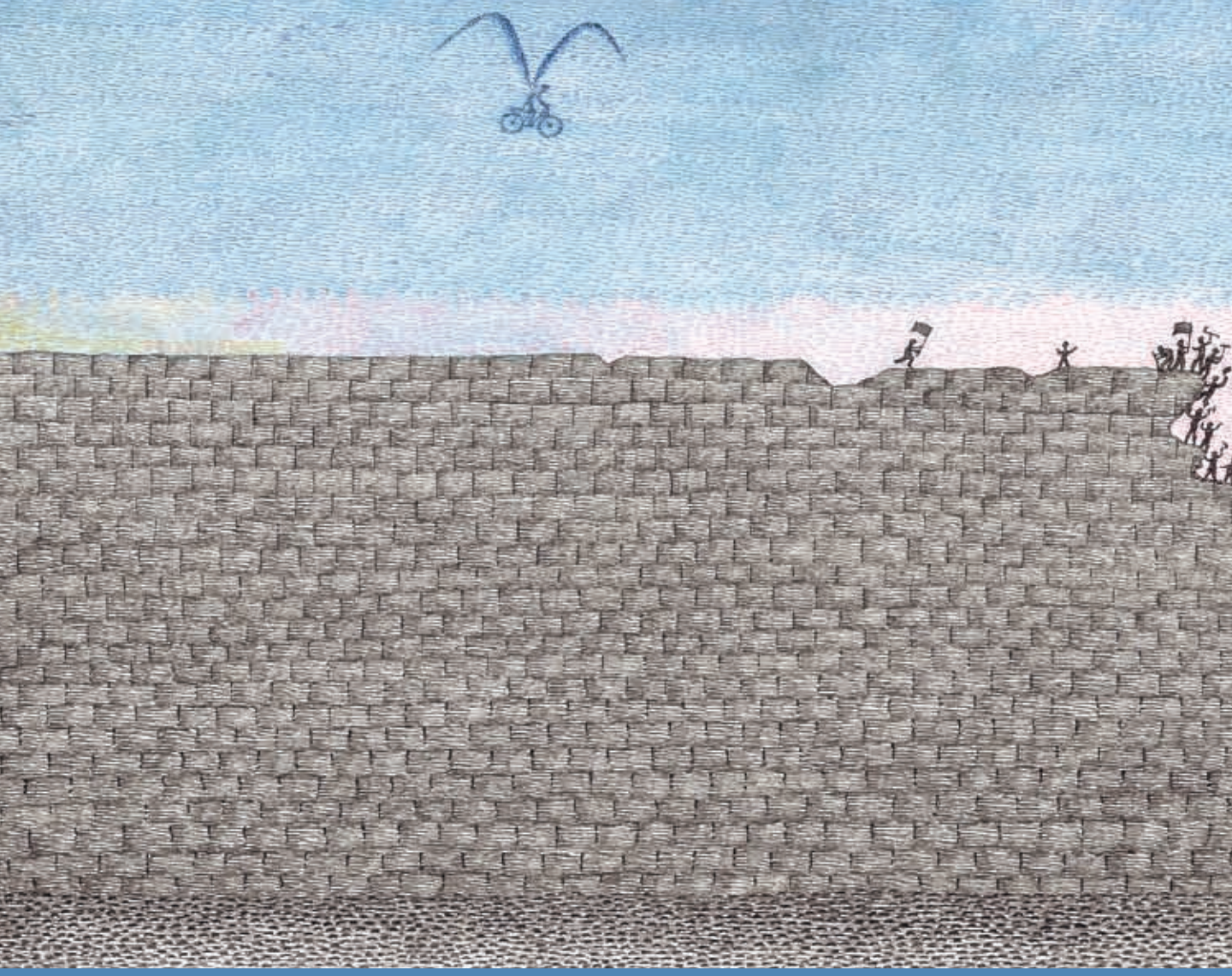
Bookbird

A JOURNAL OF INTERNATIONAL CHILDREN'S LITERATURE



ON CENSORSHIP • We Can Work It Out: Challenge, Debate and Acceptance • Picturing the Prophets; Should Art Create Doubt? • Sex and Violence in Fairy Tales for Children • Hidden Forms of Censorship and Their Impact • Peter Sís: A Quest for a Life in Truth • My Life with Censorship • Behind the Wall under the Red Star

INTERNATIONAL BOARD ON BOOKS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE IBBY

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A JOURNAL OF INTERNATIONAL CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

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

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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 must speak!

FIT THE FIRST: JAM AND JUDICIOUS ADVICE

FIT THE SECOND: THOUGHTFUL AND GRAVE

FIT THE THIRD: SUCH QUANTITIES OF SAND

FIT THE FOURTH: OF SHOES AND SHIPS AND SEALING WAX

FIT THE FIFTH: CONUNDRUMS TO GUESS

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: On Censorship

Bookbird editors

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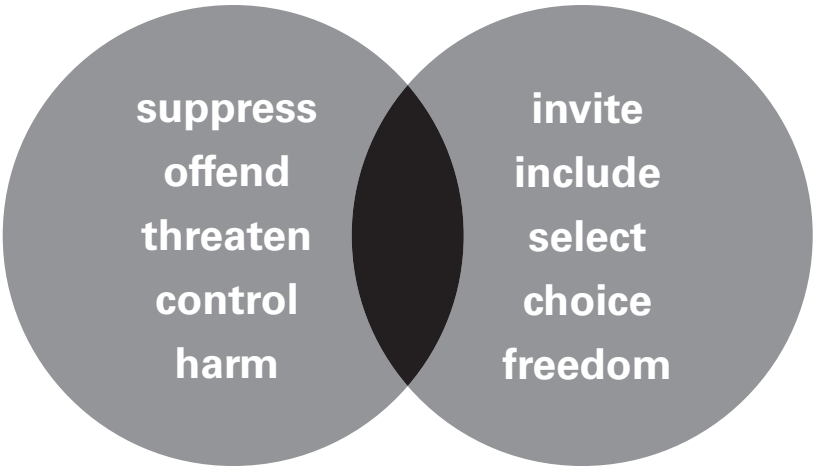


Dear *Bookbird* readers,

Anyone who shares books with children cares about what they read. We look for literary quality, for books that match the needs of the child, for books that share authentic cultural content, for books that prompt emotional responses, etc. Parents seek out old favorites, teachers read aloud during story time, librarians select books to build inviting collections, and all of this is often without the input of the constituent at the core: the child. Who can say what is appropriate in a children's book? Who controls the content? How do we decide what is good, right, or best for children? Who decides?

This issue of *Bookbird* focuses on the construct of censorship, an important topic in children's literature because it brings to light differing attitudes toward children and childhood, clashing personal and public world views, beliefs and social theories that we hold dear, and pedagogical principles that we may consider nonnegotiable. The articles in this issue show us varying dimensions of censorship in children's literature revolving around pre-censorship (prior to publication), post-publication censorship, and self censorship occurring on many levels. The writers grapple with big questions pertaining to censorship and provide an insider's view of what it is like to have one's art censored.

Feature articles

In **We Can Work It Out: Challenge, Debate and Acceptance** by Patrick Shannon he asks, "Do I oppose or favor censorship? After making his thinking process visible to the readers, his response is a resounding "Yes!" He concludes that it is more useful to ask "Why does censorship exist?" and "How does it work?" Shannon explores the multi-faceted nature of censorship and argues against the possibility of coming to consensus among clashing viewpoints. Rather, he argues for a process in

which we reach "dissensus" which involves talk that locates our differences in relation to each other. In the reading of this piece, questions emerge such as "Can we live and work together with our clashing differences?" and "Can we dream of differences without fear of domination?"

More queries that may generate debate are raised in **Picturing the Prophets: Should Art Create Doubt?** by Danish children's author Kåre Bluitgen. He tells of his quest in 2005 to find someone willing to illustrate his newly written book about the prophet Mohammed. Bluitgen tells of the self censorship he found among illustrators and their unwillingness to depict the image of Mohammad fueled by their fear of reprisal. When Bluitgen brings his concern regarding self censorship to the newspapers, the events of the *Jyllands-Posten* "Cartoon Crisis" unfold. Bluitgen suggests that self censorship is not only motivated by those who fear reprisal, but also by those with the desire not to offend. He argues that artists have an obligation to help us question and view things in a new way. Bluitgen primarily addresses the notion of self censorship, but also takes issue with the alteration of works of art AFTER publication, as in the case of altering the work of deceased authors. He causes us to ponder questions about the nature of art and the role of the artist. One might also wonder about works of art that might never come into existence because of self censorship.

Niklas Bengtsson gives us an historical perspective on censorship in his discussion of German and Finnish folktales that included sex, violence and horror. In **Sex and Violence in Fairy Tales for Children**, Bengtsson argues that the censorship that the Grimm brothers and Finnish writer Laura Soinne experienced was not a violation of freedom of speech because they themselves freely omitted objectionable content that they considered taboo for children. The further removal of objectionable aspects of their work was done willingly after full publication. Bengtsson's work raises the issue of censorship in relationship to what is appropriate for children and challenges us to question our notions of childhood and what constitutes objectionable content for children.

Cherie L. Givens' **Hidden Forms of Censorship and Their Impact** highlights ways that children's books may be censored BEFORE they are published by educational publishers, trade publishers, and even seen by award committees. The practices that Givens describes provoke questions regarding what contributes to a great work of literature, versus one that is mediocre at best. It invites discussions on the portrayal of stereotypes, as well as what constitutes authentic, culturally rich literature. Based on her research, she provides anonymous excerpts from Canadian authors who experienced this clandestine form of censorship. Authors were "invited" to cleanse their texts of religious references, scientific terms that might offend religious groups, characterizations that were too religious, and the like. Other examples are provided in which multicultural guidelines are blindly implemented thus rendering the text and illustrations inaccurate, inauthentic and/or insipid. By making the public aware of what goes on behind the scenes prior to publication, Givens hopes to rally support for intellectual and artistic freedom for authors and illustrators of children's books.

The final three articles in this collection on censorship tie together as a kind of trilogy representing the lives and work of those who grew up under totalitarian governments in which censorship was the order of the day. Illustrator and author Peter Sís writes about his own experiences growing up under Communism in **My Life with Censorship**. He tells how censorship influenced his work and mindset and how it continues to ripple through his thinking and creating as he lives and works in the United States. Ironically, Sís's vignettes of his interactions with the censors are reminiscent of the examples presented in Givens'

excerpts that take place in a democratic country like Canada.

In her article about Sís, **Peter Sís: A Quest for a Life in Truth**, Barbara Scharioth contends that Sís's life and work have been deeply scarred by the dualisms of the Cold War Era and that his artistic choices even today are still in response to his reflection on state-ordained and controlled propaganda and his attempt to evade their influence. Scharioth characterizes Sís's work as multi-layered, with deeper meaning residing between the lines "as if he is still playing hide and seek with the censors." With this frame of reference, Scharioth takes us on a tour of his books revealing themes and recurring motifs that resonate throughout Sís's life's work.

The last article in this trilogy, **Behind the Wall under the Red Star** by Olga Maeots, looks at how three children's books, Peter Sís's *The Wall* (2007), Boris Minaev's *Leva's Childhood* (2001) and Natalia Nousinova's *Jerick's Adventures* (2006) each depict the experience of growing up under totalitarian governments. Each of the books is autobiographical and is written to convey to children what the author's life was like. One theme that is woven through all three texts centers around the contradictions they each experienced between their private and public lives.

The departments

The departments bring our readers information about professional resources and children's books from around the world. In **Books on Books**, reviews address a wide range of topics some of which intersect with issues of censorship. For example, Toin Duijx reviews *The image of Blacks in Dutch illustration 1880-1980* by Jeroen Kapelle and Dirk J. Tang, a book that studies the portrayal of Black people in Dutch children's literature over time, a sensitive topic. Similarly, Jochen Weber reviews two books that address topics that are often the targets of censors, sexuality and gender roles, with Victoria Flanagan's *Into the closet*; *Cross-dressing and the gendered body in children's literature and film* and Annette Wannamaker's *Boys in children's literature and popular culture*.

Glenna Sloan brings us **Postcards from Around the World** that review a wide range of topics and genres within culturally specific contexts. These outstanding children's books will inspire and delight; they will warm your heart and will make you laugh or cry.

What is the latest news about the upcoming Hans Christian Andersen Awards, the jury and the nominees? What can you learn about the upcoming IBBY Congress in Santiago de Compostela in 2010 and the eighth IBBY Regional Conference set for the Chicago area in the USA? What is going on in the national sections in Ireland, Zimbabwe, and India? You will find answers to these questions and more in the **Focus IBBY** column.

Finally, our back-page **Poem** features a new poet writing for young people, Dorothy Wharehoka, from New Zealand. She incorporates words and elements from the Te Reo language and culture of the Maori in her poem, "Chanted Word," and reminds us of the importance of celebrating each and every voice.

The topics and points of view in this issue hail from the U.S., Russia, Finland, Denmark, Canada, Germany, the Czech Republic, and New Zealand. Each writer brings a unique perspective to the question, "What should children read?" This collection provides food for thought, generates more questions than it answers, and sends an invitation to think deeply about the relationship between ourselves and others, and about the power of literature to create or bridge the divisions between us.

We Can Work It Out

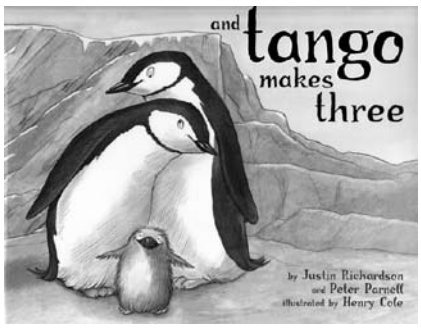
Challenge, Debate and Acceptance

by PATRICK SHANNON

Patrick Shannon is a professor at Pennsylvania State University who specializes in the politics and policies of literacy and learning to be literate.

This essay weaves together personal and political reflections in considering how one takes a stance for ***and*** *against censorship, particularly when it comes to the needs of children.*

At the tea store this morning, I heard an interview on National Public Radio concerning an attempt to broker peace between the government and the Taliban in the Swat Valley of Pakistan. The chief negotiator for the government is an elder Islamic cleric who hopes to eliminate the violence that has disrupted life in the valley for approximately ten years. The cleric is negotiating with his son-in-law, whom he characterizes as intolerant of Western ways. Chief among the issues of contention is the education of women and girls. According to the report, the son-in-law's group has destroyed scores of schools for females because schools are spreading obscenities by teaching women to read. Although this story might appear to be a long distance from the recent censorship controversies about "gay penguins" from *And Tango Makes Three* and the word "scrotum" in *The Higher Power of Lucky* in the United States, I think they are directly connected by continuums of fear and control.



The report triggered an

Upon arrival at my office, I had convinced myself of the superiority of my social theories to the theories of those who oppose the equality of the sexes.

immediate, negative response from me. Clearly the closing of schools for females is wrong because it attempts to control their lives while not similarly constraining males. The Taliban's official sanction of inequities between the sexes cuts deeply into my understanding of justice, positioning the son-in-law and his group as atavistic villains who fear a world in which females are able to acquire ideas beyond their immediate circumstances. Their violent reaction to their fear made it easier for me to assume a higher ethical ground. I fussed about the report on Swat Valley all the way to work, connecting to it to the *Jyllands-Posten* Muhammad cartoon controversy that escalated into more than 100 deaths, bans of burkas in schools across parts of the European Union (EU), and even my mother's association with the Susan B. Anthony House in my hometown of Rochester, New York. Upon arrival at my office, I had convinced myself of the superiority of my social theories to the theories of those who oppose the equality of the sexes.

Complications

My certainty began to wane almost instantly, however, because my associations with the Pakistani negotiations would neither stop nor confirm my convictions uniformly. Thoughts of the Muhammad cartoon in Denmark raised a memory trace to Sean Delonas' recent cartoon of a policeman shooting a monkey and exclaiming to his partner that they'll have to find someone else to write the next economic stimulus bill for the United States. One reading of the cartoon could be that the bill is so poorly written that a monkey must have used the typewriter, but even that reading leads to the association of President Obama, a black man, with a monkey. The cartoon was published in the *New York Post* and caused an immediate outcry of racism – no destruction of buildings or deaths, but direct calls for censorship. The ban on burkas – even mothers wearing burkas when meeting their children at the school door in the Netherlands – evoked thoughts of dress codes in our local high schools. Boys cannot let their pants hang exposing their colorful boxer underwear and girls must refrain from wearing halter tops. Students claim that their rights of expression are violated by this censorship of sexual representation. In our house, Susan B. was nearly a saint, but few heeded her warnings about intemperance.

Do I oppose or favor censorship? And my answer was, "Yes!"

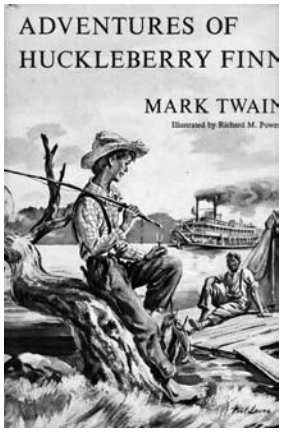
This second wave of associations to the negotiation of peace in Swat Valley complicated the issue of censorship for me. Although the Taliban seemed clearly wrong, a negative evaluation of those who called for censorship of racism in the newspapers, sexualized dress in schools, and giving free rein to alcohol consumption are not so clear to me. I guess I do fear racism and seek to control racists. I believe that our society in the United States has made sex a commodity and is selling it to children. I understand this is wrong because it seems to lead men to commit violence against women. I live in a college town in which students and local bar owners just invented "State" Patrick's Day as an excuse to begin drinking at dawn on a weekend when the Saint Patrick's Day holiday falls on a weekday. This year, fifty students were admitted to the emergency room at the hospital for alcohol poisoning. The NPR story and its personal aftermath began to take over my entire day. Do I oppose or favor censorship? And my answer was, "Yes!"

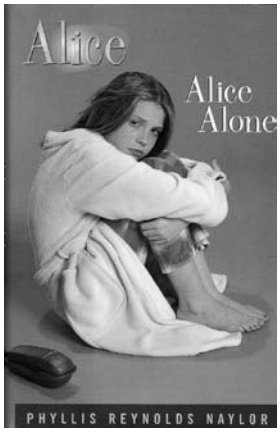
For the kids

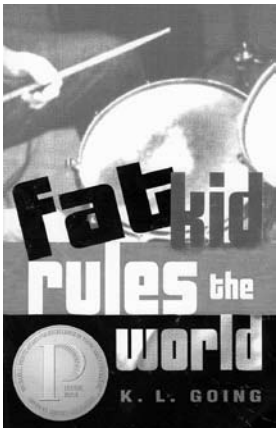
I appear to justify censorship, if by its use we are protecting people from harm. Overt racism harms the racial minorities and dehumanizes the racist. Sexualized dress endangers women and girls, and again, makes men inhumane. Unlimited consumption of alcohol injures the drinkers and threatens the physical and economic welfare of the innocent. In these cases, censorship seems justified. Yet, I'm certain that the son-in-law believes that he represents a 'we' who are protecting Islamic females from harm by limiting their access to the ideas of modern Western life. In this case, I consider censorship to be wrong. Ironically with these criteria, I find myself aligned with censors of *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, the *Alice* series (such as *Alice Alone* and *Alice in Blunderland*), and *Fat Kid Rules the World* from children's and adolescent sections of the library.

Avoiding the too-soon revelation of adult sexuality appears to be the rationale for most challenges to children's books since the turn of the century.

During the 1980s, Neil Postman made a similar plea in his book *The Disappearance of Childhood* when he stated that television (and later, films and the Internet) revealed adult secrets to children too easily before they were cognitively and emotionally ready to deal with them. He advocated limiting children's access to these media because they make too few demands on users, permitting a ready flow of the seamier sides of adult life to youngsters. (Consider the practice of "sexting" among preadolescents on cell phones). Avoiding the too-soon revelation of adult sexuality appears to be the rationale for most challenges to children's books since the turn of the century.







Two immediate responses to Postman's thesis concentrated on his notion that television's messages are transmitted to watchers without mediation. Media literacy experts argued that even the youngest children are selective in their attention to media messages; and therefore, they construct meanings rather than simply receive a single intended understanding from the telecast, film, or website. Poststructuralists pointed out that selective attention is intentional, demonstrating that people (even children) use media for their own interests that are often not closely aligned with the senders' interests. The exploding research on computer games and children's emotional, intellectual, and social engagements lays waste to Postman's claims of linear and singular effects for media. These criticisms suggested that Postman and others who seek to protect children through censorship (including me) underestimate the child as an interpreter of adult secrets.

Postman dated the reinvention of childhood to the end of the 15th century with the invention of the printing press. Prior to that time, he claimed that by the age of seven or so children were treated as adults.

A second set of criticisms of Postman's argument called into question his singular definition of childhood, even in the Western world. Postman dated the reinvention of childhood to the end of the 15th century with the invention of the printing press. Prior to that time, he claimed that by the age of seven or so children were treated as adults. They worked in household economies, participated in any conversations, and engaged in adult entertainments. Postman argued that starting in the 17th century, a growing percentage of families began to postpone children's transition to adulthood by encoding adult secrets within print texts that required considerable teaching for children to gain access. As evidence of this trend, Postman offers the development and growing popularity of public schooling across time. Yet even my family's experience challenges Postman's timetable for universality of his notion of childhood. My father and his 17 brothers and sisters all started full time work at age 11 or 12, and he was filled with stories about his induction into the adult world at the lumber camp where he began his 'career.' U. S. child labor laws (which were not federal until 1938) still exclude farm work from their restrictions. Across cultures, classes, and genders (consider the recent controversy over childhood on the Yearn for Zion Ranch in Texas in 2008), there are children to be sure, but childhood does not seem to have a single meaning.

Is protection from information or participation in adult or modern worlds necessary in order to keep children from harm?

These criticisms of Postman's work push hard against the terms I used to justify censorship – "protection," "harm," and "we." If people, even children, mediate messages in order to construct meanings according to their own intentions and interests, does censorship make sense at all? Is protection from information or participation in adult or modern worlds necessary in order to keep children from harm? Won't children make what they will of any type of 'text' regardless of the symbols involved? The feminist stories of young girls' Barbie alteration parties come quickly to mind. Isn't the idea of censorship as protection from harm paternalistic, even patriarchal? After all in *The Higher Power of Lucky*, the word "scrotum" is understood by one character as "something green that comes up when you have the flu or cough."

And if some group could identify criteria in order to justify censorship as legitimate protection from harm, then what would make their claims for censorship universally appropriate for all groups?

My original plans for my workday in tatters, I headed home with some temporary resolution to the puzzle that began with the NPR report on the Swat Valley in Pakistan. The world is too complex to be either for or against censorship. Perhaps more useful questions, at least for me, are why does censorship exist and how does it work? It's too simplistic to believe that censorship protects some group from assumed harm caused by exposure to some idea, value, or action. Censorship can't stop girls and women from thinking and working to better their lives (however they define better). It can't stop racism, blasphemy, sexualized commodities, or even dangerous drinking. (College students drank during prohibition in the United States – I know this from my mother's stories about how she met my father.) These differences among thoughts, beliefs, and actions exist, and apparently they find an infinite number of ways to manifest themselves – some even too subtle to raise my consciousness. Rather, censorship, then, appears to be a tactic for challenging other people's views of what should come into being and for demanding respect for one's own views from other people. At its best, calls for censorship are invitations to discuss differences; and at its worst, censorship is a club for beating others into acquiescence.

Rather, censorship, then, appears to be a tactic for challenging other people's views of what should come into being and for demanding respect for one's own views from other people.

Another day

I hoped that NPR would air another story that would help me sort my way through my new thoughts about censorship. And perhaps in an odd way, it did. With an apparent smirk to his tone, the radio host offered a brief report that the semi-official Vatican newspaper had just published a longish article entitled "The Washing Machine and Women's Liberation: Put in the Detergent, Close the Lid, and Relax." It explained how laborsaving technology had freed women from household drudgery in the West and would do the same eventually for women in developing countries. The subtext, of course, was that the other labor-saving technology, the birth control pill, which offers women greater control over their bodies, did not, and cannot, liberate women anywhere. Although not identical to the son-in-law's position from the day before, the Vatican newspaper offered a social theory about normal life intended to control women in some ways that it does not seek to constrain men. The Vatican's version of normal life seems to offer women and girls more options than the Taliban. Ultimately however, it still rests on the fear of a world with knowledgeable females and

works aggressively to control what can and cannot be thought, said, or done in order to prevent that feared world from coming to existence.

That active work to control is the crux of censorship – with an ultimate goal of transferring the requirement of external social policing to internal personal monitoring in order to enforce its sense of normalcy.

That active work to control is the crux of censorship – with an ultimate goal of transferring the requirement of external social policing to internal personal monitoring in order to enforce its sense of normalcy. Until that internalization is complete, the work of censorship is daunting and endless. On the surface, censorship appears to be a form of silencing, in which groups are denied certain information, and therefore, are unable to speak about the topic in any way. Certainly since 1968, when the Pope issued an edict against the pill (which the new Pope reconfirmed on its fortieth anniversary in October 2008), the Vatican has withheld information from Catholic women and non-Catholic women who use Catholic institutions. Moreover, the Church sanctioned any Catholic worker who attempted to subvert the Pope's edict.

Yet in order to invoke and maintain the 'silence,' the Church, and therefore its faithful, must engage in two discourses continuously until the goal of internal personal monitoring is realized. First, the Church must construct and maintain an apparatus to enforce the silence. It needs effective policing and surveillance systems that can ensure fidelity to the edict and punish those who transgress. In order to construct these systems, it sponsors conversation about the pill and how to stop its use. Against its ultimate goal, this talk keeps the censored topic in the mouths and ears of those who are to be protected through this action.

Second, in order to encourage the transfer from external to internal monitoring, the Church must develop believable narratives to justify its position and consequent acts, by positioning the pill and the women who use it as assaults on normalcy. The central Vatican narrative is that the pill negates the intimate truth of conjugal love with which the divine gift of life is communicated. That is, the pill stops God's will. A second narrative, as reported by NPR, maintains that women's development is achieved through technology that enables their leisure. Women don't really need the pill to better their lives, and they are selfish to do so. A third Vatican narrative from the same newspaper claims that the pill harms nature and men as well. The President of the International Federation of Catholic Medical Associations states that the pill causes environmental pollution and male infertility. In total, then, the pill is evil, ruining nature, men, and God's gift. Yet in attempting to censor information about birth control pills, the Catholic Church cannot stop talking about them.

I don't mean to make light of censorship or how it works with this example. Many Roman Catholics believe these narratives and reject the pill in order to remain members of the Church. Many Muslims are faithful to the son-in-law's version of Islam as well. Yet from my perspective (I was a Catholic and many in my extended family remain members), Catholic women suffer because they are denied information that could help them make decisions about their bodies and lives - decisions that should be theirs to make. Although the Catholic apparatus for silencing differs from the son-in-law's, it does seem violent to me as well - women are shunned from the decision-making process about the Church and their bodies. Both the Church and the son-in-law hammer and cajole others to accept gender inequalities and remain silent about the issue.

Narratives to legitimize censorship as a normal act invite counter narratives intended to disrupt the censors' projections of harm to argue for different visions of what could be and should be considered normal.

Yet in working to deny and silence, censorship must invent discourses of control and justification that bring the topic to life. In turn, those discourses provoke more talk from so called 'abnormal groups,' proposing opposition and resistance to censorship - however loudly and publicly they are able to speak. Attempts to control through censorship bring resistance, and resistance must be planned and coordinated through talk about action and the censored topic. Narratives to legitimize censorship as a normal act invite counter narratives intended to disrupt the censors' projections of harm to argue for different visions of what could be and should be considered normal.

These flows of discourses and counter-discourses about the censorship of children's books is perhaps most apparent during banned book months. Then, censors' apparatuses for removing books from libraries and classrooms - according to their articulated, normalized narratives of single messages that disrupt their vision of life - are directly and publicly challenged by groups with different views of normal life and different stories of the past and future. This talk of books and values has been so loud that commercial entrepreneurs have identified it as a market - Amazon.com advertises banned books on its website. Rather than silence, censorship of children's books evokes chatter of all types.

Because the talk surrounds censorship on many sides, we face the Utopian goal that we might find ways to work out the differences in every instance. Talk could lead to negotiation, in which group members participate actively and meaningfully in social life, which in turn, could bring understanding. Censors expect eventual consensus - a collapse to a single position - through the transfer of social to personal systems of control. To me, however, such expectations are more a working-over than a working-out, and the 'we' is much too small a group to stand as a solution for long. Rather, if talk might lead to understanding, we should expect "dissensus" - a process of identifying differences and locating those differences in relation to each other. The talk surrounding censorship could achieve collective explanations of how people differ, where their differences come from, and whether we can live and work together with these differences. In this talk, we can dream of difference without fear or domination.

. . . if talk might lead to understanding, we should expect "dissensus" - a process of identifying differences and locating those differences in relation to each other.

Censorship of children's texts

Calls for censorship and the act of censorship around children and youth implicate all of us in complicated struggles over different social theories of life and how it should be lived. We feel responsible for their experiences and for the ways in which children and youth come to understand those experiences. We believe they are not ready to handle the complexities of life. Even as we acknowledge that they will construct their understandings according to their intentions and that they live in different childhoods, we recognize that they will do so according to the language and ideas available to them. Because those words and ideas are always embedded in differing social

theories, we act to control ideas and language, fearing that what is said or thought will lead them to harm. Our fears slide unevenly along continuums, triggering when and how we act directly.

Censorship, even of children's texts, can serve a not-always-rational public space in which the complex and dynamic play of ideas and forces can make differences real to us, revealing our social theories and corresponding sense of normalcy and challenging us to acknowledge, if not accept, those of others.

Consider the placement of representations of specific commercial products within school textbooks. Advocates, publishers, and businessmen provide narratives concerning this placement as a normal practice, rendering textbook information more relevant to students' lives. According to their social theories, other groups construct narratives of potential harm in order to justify censorship of those representations. Along this fear continuum, some worry about the promotion of commercialism in schools educating the young to buy; others might speak of branding children's desires, leading to lifelong loyalties conceived in the classroom; and perhaps, a few raise the point that textbooks treat knowledge as a commodity that students will sell later in order to make their way in the world. At each point along this continuum of concern, adults can jump off in order to act according to their theories. At the same time, these potential censors seek mechanisms to secure the end of placements in textbooks, and their opposition seeks to block this action. In the din of all this talk and struggle, different ways of thinking, believing and living are named, explained, and defended, enabling negotiations concerning how we wish to live together.

Censorship, even of children's texts, can serve a not-always-rational public space in which the complex and dynamic play of ideas and forces can make differences real to us, revealing our social theories and corresponding sense of normalcy and challenging us to acknowledge, if not accept, those of others. When adults voice concern about two male penguins raising an orphan chick or Lucky Trimble's Ramona-esque consideration of the word (not the object) "scrotum," it's probably time to bring children into this public space in order to begin to prepare them for the complexities of the lives before them.

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Marguerite Abouet

illus Clément Oubrerie trans Helge Dascher

Aya

Montreal, Quebec, Canada: Drawn & Quarterly, 2008.

Previously published in French as Aya de Yopougon. Paris, France: Gallimard Jeunesse, 2007.

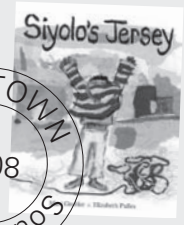
136 pp ISBN-10: 1-894937-90-2;

ISBN-13: 978-1-894937-90-0

(graphic novel, 14+)

Set in the Ivory Coast in 1978, this graphic novel follows the daily lives of 19-year-old Aya and her friends. While her girlfriends dream of opening dress shops and hair salons, studious Aya has loftier goals of getting a university degree and becoming a doctor. Aya's determination is tested by distractions such as the local disco, flirtatious young men, and her father's conservative attitude. This book is a nostalgic look at the Africa of Abouet's childhood, when the Ivory Coast's booming economy surpassed the tragic news items from the rest of the continent that dominated the media. Oubrerie's amusing illustrations bring each individual character to life and recreate Yop City with loving detail. Local language, recipes, and clothing styles add rich cultural flavor. The appeal of this first novel lies in the discovery that teenagers in Africa aren't so very different from their peers in the West. 2008 Children's Africana Book Award Winner.

Tanja Nathanael



Mari Grobler, illus Elizabeth Pulles

Siyolo's Jersey

Cape Town: Tafleberg, 2008

32 pp ISBN978-0-624-04606-6

(picture book, 4-8)

In a year that saw South Africa viciously torn by xenophobic violence, one gives thanks that children can grow up with such open-hearted picture books as this one, another glowing proof that simplicity creates focus and can steer home a winner. Siyolo, a boy in a South Africa of small shacks, donkeys, and autumn winds, has a favourite but fraying jersey. Elizabeth Pulles's clever pictures are partly in wool collage, emphasizing how Siyolo gallantly gives away bits of wool to needy causes. By the end Siyolo is saying, "Now I am cold and my jersey is gone!" But a new one will come soon, and he has made many people happy along the way. Artistry, imaginative typography, and compassionate storytelling combine to create a warm-hearted story that expresses the importance of kindness of heart.

Jay Heale

Picturing the Prophets
Should Art Create Doubt?

by KÅRE BLUITGEN

translated by Nanna Gyldenkærne

Kåre Bluitgen is a Danish author of more than 30 books for young people.

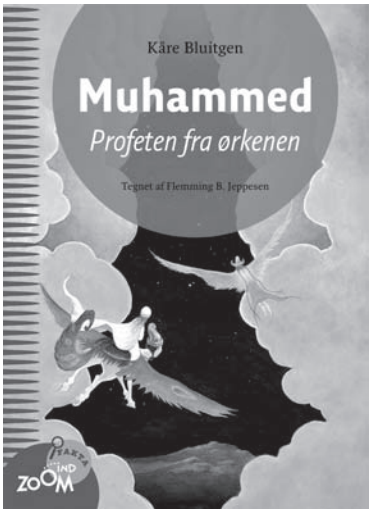
In this essay, the author explores the controversy surrounding the writing and illustrating of his children's book about Muhammad, raising interesting questions about art, doubt, freedom and censorship.

In 2005, a Danish newspaper published twelve drawings made by twelve different newspaper illustrators, some of them satirical and some of them not. What all the drawings had in common was that they were all answers to a question asked by the newspaper: *Is it true that Danish illustrators are afraid of depicting the prophet Muhammad?* This led to the so-called "cartoon crisis." As a result, Danish embassies were set on fire and more than 180 people were killed around the world.

Is it true that Danish illustrators are afraid of depicting the prophet Muhammad?

What was the origin of this case that made the name of "Denmark" alternately heavenly, or like Hell itself, to people in many parts of the world? The whole thing started in September 2005, when I told a journalist that I had difficulties in finding an illustrator for my new children's book about the prophet Muhammad *(Koranen og profeten*

Muhammeds liv). Some of the illustrators I had asked were afraid of depicting the prophet's face and pointed to the fact that people had been killed or beaten for alleged provocation or ridicule of Islam during the previous months.



For two weeks, this debate raged in Denmark until the newspaper *Jyllands-Posten* decided to test to see if I was right when claiming that Danish illustrators exercised self-censorship in their artistic choices. The paper asked newspaper illustrators and cartoonists to draw Muhammad as they saw him. Twelve illustrators submitted their drawings to the editor. Today these drawings are by far more famous than the drawings that were actually published in my book that launched the discussion.

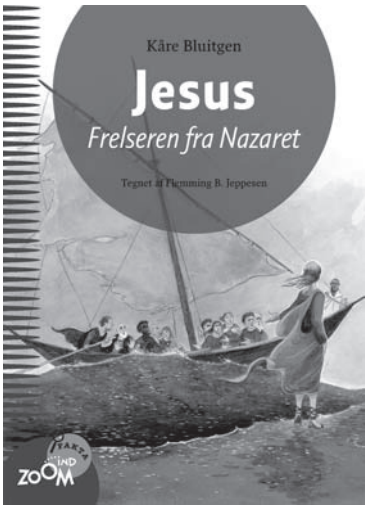
Depicting Muhammad

At that time I had been looking into existing children's books in Danish about the prophet Muhammad. Two features made these current biographies of Muhammad different from children's books about other men (and women) of historic importance: Most of them showed no illustrations of the main character Muhammad, and they were all written without any traces of criticism of him.

In the Muslim tradition, we find different views on pictorial representations of human characters. The Sunni Muslim tradition is generally against such depictions; some, for example the Taliban, ban any form of pictorial representation, while others allow depictions but avoid showing the face of Muhammad. Shia Islam has generally been tolerant of pictorial representations of human figures, including Muhammad. Surprisingly enough, the majority of illustrators of Danish biographies of Muhammad have chosen the stricter interpretations of Islam, even though there is a strong tradition for showing pictures of the main character's face in children's books. I knew from the start that I wanted my book illustrated like any other book about any other person, just like my book about Jesus of Nazareth.

Two features made these current biographies of Muhammad different from children's books about other men (and women) of historic importance: Most of them showed no illustrations of the main character Muhammad, and they were all written without any traces of criticism of him.

If you go to the old sources of Islam like Muhammad Ibn Ishaq's "Sirat Rasul Allah," you will also find a story very different from the story in many children's books. Here, too, Muhammad is described as a hero with almost godlike qualities, but these qualities are of course related to values very different from Western ways. Muhammad lived about 1400 years ago in the Arab desert after all. Seen through modern eyes, those ancient sources contain narratives just as horrible as the history of the Romans, the



Aztecs, and the Vikings. However, in most of the contemporary books I examined, the brutality and the intolerance of the ancient times are cleansed from the children's books about Muhammad, while children can read about brutality among Romans, Aztecs and Vikings.

In the first centuries after Muhammad's death, Muslim historians didn't feel that it was wrong to tell about the episode where, as they say, Satan slipped some verses onto Muhammad's lips that appeared to be a revelation from God when Muhammad spoke them. This expanding religion that was building up a whole new civilization offered enough spiritual space to allow the man Muhammad to be less than perfect. Today, however, with the pressures of the modern world, a novel with the title "The Satanic Verses" can send furious believers into the streets with matches ready for the "auto-da-fé."

I went through the currently available books as I was in the process of writing a children's book about Muhammad myself. I accepted all the ancient Muslim stories at face value to show children in Denmark how the story was originally told. But I wanted the book to be illustrated and I wanted the illustrations to include the main character. As I mentioned, some illustrators refused the job. They referred to the public tensions in Denmark and in Europe. Could it really be that some illustrators were afraid of depicting Muhammad? In the end, the illustrations in my book do indeed show Muhammad's face, but they were drawn by an anonymous illustrator.

Could it really be that some illustrators were afraid of depicting Muhammad?

The "hobgoblin" of Puritanism

A kind of frightful hobgoblin seems to stalk through Europe. This is the "hobgoblin" of Puritanism, nourished by all the offended people on both sides. Claiming to feel offended has become an argument in the debate, and if you want to be exposed in public, you just need to feel offended. Religious extremists, in particular, feel offended; and generally artists are accused of doing the offending, especially writers and illustrators. But it is neither the provocations nor the offense as a form of art that creates the divide among people that we see developing all over Europe. In fact, it's quite the opposite. Artists help to fill up the gaps by questioning and undermining all the dogmas that truly divide people.

Religious fundamentalists are joined by very well-meaning people in their crusade. In some translations, for example, Pippi Longstocking's father is no longer allowed to be a Negro king, he is transformed into a king from the South Seas instead. This is a sign of the current tendency to "revise" history to avoid offending any group. There is a growing inclination to demand from a historic work of art that it meet today's political demands

in order to be allowed to be read or shown. And the revising or sanitizing of existing works of art is always explained in positive terms: It is done to avoid offending anybody. Attacks on an artist's freedom of expression – including the freedom of deceased artists – have never been performed without camouflaging the act with positive words like "respect," "decency," and "good manners." But art has never been about politeness.

One might say that the Nazis didn't gain power in Germany because there were a lot of them, but because only a few dared to resist them – and we realized the danger of unification and intolerance in time. Whether totalitarian forces are supported by ten or thirty percent of a population is not decisive for a totalitarian development. The important question is whether the minority succeeds in threatening the artists to keep quiet and in scaring the silent majority out of doing anything but minding their own business. You can have a formal right to freedom of expression in a country, but that freedom is partly subdued by a permanent underlying threat of violence, or merely a threat of exclusion from a religious or social community. This is the trend events are taking in Europe in the beginning of this century. But it is even more worrisome when artists agree in censoring their own work before presenting it to the public – or when they don't protest when the works of their deceased colleagues, with the best of intentions, are corrected and retouched.

But it is even more worrisome when artists agree in censoring their own work before presenting it to the public.

But why is it that the concept of offense is taken seriously when the talk is about artistic expression, or even when it is about daily debate and popular knowledge? The answer is that offended feelings create a climate of self-censorship. In such a climate intolerance flourishes; this is the platform for their attacks on the freedom that made it possible for them to grow strong in a tolerant society.

People for whom art is not a part of everyday life often tend to generalize. Some demand death to cartoonists whose drawings they have never seen and to authors whose books they have never read. Assuming that they know the artist's motive is sufficient for them. When it comes to art, nothing matters less than the artist's reasons. We can try to guess why this or that masterpiece or mess has been produced. Guessing can be an entertaining academic exercise, but it can never be the background for an accusation. The definition of art is very personal, but if we judge a piece of music, a novel, or a cartoon from what we assume to be the motive, then we are going down a very dangerous slope.

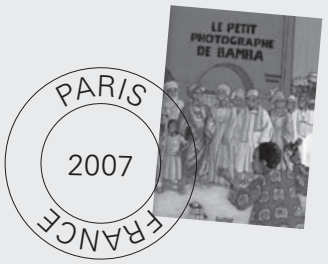
Offense is not an argument for censoring art in the public domain. And sometimes the artist has an *obligation* to offend and to provoke a strong emotional response. Otherwise, the most conventional and conformist

Throughout history art has, knowingly or unknowingly, been wonderfully offensive. It has broken the shield of dogmas, orthodoxy, and lack of imagination and it has caused scandals, wondering, and new thinking.

of assumptions become invisible and will not be questioned or revised. Throughout history art has, knowingly or unknowingly, been wonderfully offensive. It has broken the shield of dogmas, orthodoxy, and lack of imagination and it has caused scandals, wondering, and new thinking. An author or an illustrator who isn't disrespectful doesn't create art, but entertainment. Art raises doubts about inflexible and sanctified worldviews. And more than anything else, it is doubt that creates a chink in the wall that divides us from one another. And doubt is the rescue and the future of any human community; it is a part of the process that bridges the gap between people.

Available now only in French, this title offers an authentic look at city life in contemporary Mali. The Cameroonian author-illustrator, Christian Epanya, expertly captures in oil paint the vibrant colors of a sun-drenched environment. The rich patterns in the clothing and headgear of the characters are particularly striking. The story is based on a well-known photographer who lived and worked in Mali. Instead of quietly accepting his destiny to live the life of a fisherman like everyone else in Bamba, the young protagonist, Amadou, follows his own path and becomes a highly accomplished photographer. The powerful message - that one is able to shape one's own destiny with the support of a mentor - has universal appeal. The brief text might be used effectively in a French class or be translated by a French speaker. (Thanks to Cécile Toubou for her English translation for this reviewer). The images convey the story so effectively that one can "talk" the book in languages other than French. We need more titles like *Le Petit Photographe de Bamba*; picture books that accurately reflect modern life in African countries.

Jeffrey Brewster



Christian Epanya

Le Petit Photographe De Bamba (The Little Photographer Of Bamba)

Paris: Sorbier, 2007.
24 pp ISBN: 9782732038827
(picture book, 4 – 8)

Sex and Violence in Fairy Tales for Children

By NIKLAS BENGTSSON

Niklas Bengtsson is a Finnish nonfiction author and researcher of children's literature who has written or edited 18 books. He was a member of IBBY's Executive Committee, 2006-2008.

In this article, Bengtsson considers the role of editing, revision, and self-censorship in handling sexual content and aspects of horror in the folk and fairy tales of the Grimm Brothers in Germany and Laura Soinne in Finland.

Should an author limit his or her freedom of speech when writing for young people? Should sexual content be omitted from fairy tales for children? Or should we omit elements of horror and violence? Surprisingly there are interesting and similar cases in 19th-century Germany and 20th-century Finland where some versions of fairy tales have disappeared due to the self-censorship of just such elements.

The first examples are classic stories from Germany. It is a well-known fact that the Grimm brothers' fairy tales have been edited several times. Maria Tatar (1987) has studied this editing process extensively in her book *The Hard Facts of the Grimms' Fairy Tales*. According to Tatar, the original German folktales were not children's literature, because of the sex and violence they contained. However, Tatar contends that

Wilhelm Grimm's editing process also resulted in works that became classics of children's literature in many cultures around the world.

The first edition of the Grimms' fairy tales was published in 1812, and it was meant for other folklorists; but the people of the Grimms' own era read it as children's literature, which prompted the Grimm brothers to edit the collection further. The seventh and last edition, which Wilhelm Grimm edited, was published in 1857.

Sex and violence were significant elements in the original folk tales, according to Tatar. The folktales that the Grimm brothers recorded included incest and the abuse of children. Wilhelm Grimm systematically edited out all hints of sexuality and changed those depictions that involved incest. However, some of the abuse of children - such as starving them to death and the cruel punishments they endured - were not censored.

The editing process of these oral folk tales, which grew into a censoring process of literary fairy tales, is not a welcome development. For folklore in particular, the actual voice and message can be lost in the printed versions of Grimms' fairy tales. For instance, in the first edition of *Kinder und Hausmärchen* or *Nursery and Household Tales*, the witch drove Rapunzel away because she was pregnant. In the new edited version, Rapunzel doesn't herself understand that she has become pregnant. She just asks the witch why her clothes are too tight and why don't they fit any more. In the second version, she just asks why it is so much easier to lure the prince to the tower than the witch.

In the history of the literary fairy tale genre for children, Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm were not the first ones who edited and censored written versions of oral folk tales. Charles Perrault had already done this in the seventeenth century, a process Jack Zipes calls "bourgeoisification."

In the history of the literary fairy tale genre for children, Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm were not the first ones who edited and censored written versions of oral folk tales. Charles Perrault had already done this in the seventeenth century, a process Jack Zipes calls "bourgeoisification." In his book *Fairy Tales and the Art of Subversion* (1991, originally 1983), Jack Zipes discussed the tale, "The Frog Prince." According to Zipes, the frog just wanted to get in bed with the princess in the 1810 version of the manuscript of this folktale. This tale is openly sexual. In another variant, the princess doesn't throw the frog to the wall, but instead she kisses him. In the printed versions of "The Frog Prince," the sex was sweetened up and made harmless.

Tatar contends that, according to the Grimms, sex is unsuitable but violence is acceptable in stories for children. The problem with Maria Tatar's study is that she merely lists a catalogue of horrors of the darker side of the classic fairy tales. However, this kind of list of cruelties is then taken out of context. Evil is as much a part of folk tales as it is part of mythology

or other narratives. There is no need to criticize the fact that there are cruelties in fairy tales. Without evil there cannot be a clear sense of good either.

Maria Tatar is also interested in another aspect of fairy tales, the change from featuring mothers to stepmothers as characters. Hansel's and Gretel's mother became a stepmother in the fourth printing, Snow White's mother is already a stepmother in the second printing, like the protagonist's mother in the fairy tale called "Mother Holle." This means that very early on, Wilhelm Grimm became aware of the collections' nature as children's fairy tales rather than as adult entertainment. Those elements that were acceptable to adults and scholars had to be edited to be more suitable for children. That's why a mother who wants her children to starve to death in the forest was changed into an evil stepmother. According to Tatar, Wilhelm Grimm believed that most children would find it easier to bear the idea of an evil stepmother, rather than the idea of a cruel mother.

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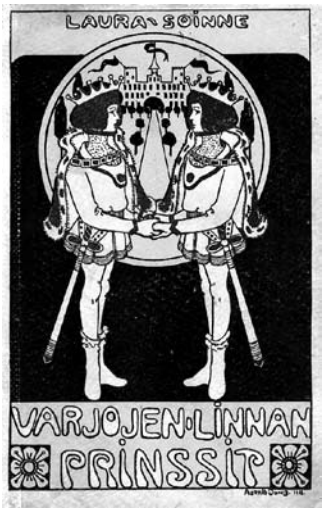

Finnish horror

Finnish equivalents of the Grimms' *Nursery and Household Tales* are the fairy tales penned by Laura Soinne. However, many of her fairy tales can be classified as horror-influenced fairy tales. In her tales, elements of horror and violence were the focus of revision.

Laura Soinne was born in 1897 and died in 1992. During her career, Soinne wrote plays for both adults and children, women's fiction, and of course fairy tales. Even though some movies have been made based on her novels, her most interesting works are her six collections of fairy tales. The first of them came out over ninety years ago, in 1918, entitled, *Varjojen linnan prinssit*, which can be translated as *Princes from the Castle of Shadows*. Her last collection of fairy tales (*Tuulitunturin jättiläinen*, 1979), along with her previous work, brought her the state prize for literature in 1980 (Bengtsson, 2008).

The close relationship between the Grimms' fairy tales and Laura Soinne's fairy tales is not just based on horror. Soinne's fairy tales were also edited several times – not seven times, but three times following the first edition. Some of the revision was intended to modernize the level of language or just to make the text more fluent. More remarkable is that there were several omissions. These censored elements included long strings of beads made from human eyeballs, eyes that are turned upside down with a stick, pierced arteries, and the blood of a newborn baby being used as a payment.

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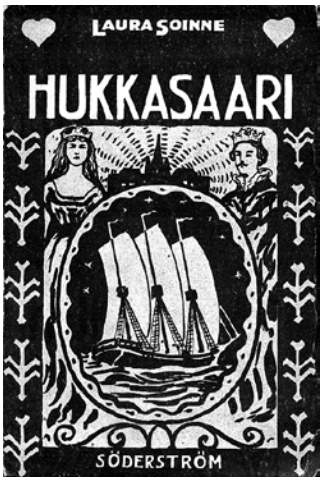

Taken out of context these examples sound really horrible. But when considered within the story as a whole, they make more sense. Consider the following example of a man-eater which was totally censored from later editions of the fairy tale entitled, *Tarina valkoisesta ruususta (The Story of a White Rose,* 1918):

> *When the door closed, total darkness fell down, though there was not a single window in the room. For a while Heleena didn't see anything... But then, faraway in the other end of the room, two lamp-like things were lighted... However, their light was so dim, that Heleena couldn't see anything else. Then all of a sudden, underneath the lights an oven was opened – and Heleena could see flames there. Something red was moving among the flames, it was like an extremely big tongue... Heleena became paralysed by fear. There were no lights or oven in the room, but some kind of dreadful beast... when the beast noticed Heleena, the eyes of the beast started to circle round, its nostrils became bigger, and the tongue was moving up and down in its open mouth. Dark steam started to puff from its mouth and it rolled slowly down towards Heleena. More and more steam was puffing out and Heleena felt how her limbs became stiff and how she had to stay standing still and rigid in the middle of the room. Heleena tried to shout, but she just couldn't.*

Unfortunately there are no records of who decided to cut these elements from Soinne's fairy tales. I would guess that those decisions were made in the publishing house. When some of these cuts have been made, the plot has been affected – sometimes it seems that there are minor holes in the edited tales. Therefore I don't think that the author made them herself; however, she must have been aware of these changes and probably also accepted them.

The reason why Soinne's fairy tales were continuously edited probably lies in the reviews published in a publication called *Arvosteleva luettelo suomenkielistä kirjallisuutta* and its successor *Arvosteleva kirjaluettelo*. This publication was a critical book catalogue that came out from 1902 to 1988. *Booklist* magazine published by American Library Association can be seen as a parallel example of the Finnish publication. It was aimed to help librarians in their work as they selected books for public libraries, but it could also be seen as a potential tool of censorship. Especially erotic books and translations of light literature, for example, were not desired from 1918 to 1939 when over 10,000 reviews were published and guided book selection and purchase (Eskola, 2007).

Reviews could be quite frank. For example, Soinne's novel for adults *Miehen vankina (As a Prisoner of a Man)* was defined in 1932 as light literature that could be bought for larger libraries (H.H., 1932). It was

not supposed that smaller libraries would waste their money on popular literature, but also that larger libraries understood they could be selective in choosing it or not. These kinds of recommendations were definitely powerful before World War II and rather long after the war too.

Soinne's first fairy tale collection was reviewed in the critical book catalogue in 1919 (M. Gt., 1919). Response was rather positive. Even though it was noted that protagonists sometimes got involved in horrifying adventures, the reviewer emphasized that positive characters survived their struggles, but evil characters met a bad end. Thus horror itself was not seen as a negative entity in the early part of the century. How much of this attitude was connected to the cruel Finnish civil war in 1918 is hard to estimate. The actual criticism was directed only towards the author's lively imagination and writing.

As the public libraries have been – and they still are – very good customers for the Finnish publishing houses, there is no doubt that publishers have taken into account the reviews written in the critical book catalogue

One of the most edited of Soinne's fairy tales is entitled *Hukkasaaren salaisuus (The Secret of the Lost Island)*. In 1923, Soinne rewrote a play from this tale and in the critical book catalogue it was described as a broad and exacting play that could only be played in a real theatre (Anonymous, 1923).

However, both in 1931 and 1947, the critical book catalogue pointed out that Soinne's fairy tale collections published in 1931 and 1946 were not suitable for small children (T.H.-T., 1931 & A.-K.K., 1947). According to the critics, the stories contained too much gothic influence and the horror atmosphere was too strong for sensitive children. Because of their length they were not seen as proper fairy tales to read aloud. And in both cases, Soinne's fairy tales had already been edited. In some cases, the omissions concerned elements of horror, but *The Secret of the Lost Island* was mainly edited for more fluent language. The biggest excisions in this tale were made in the 1976 edition. This fourth version of Soinne's fairy tales was also no longer reviewed in the critical book catalogue.

As the public libraries have been – and they still are – very good customers for the Finnish publishing houses, there is no doubt that publishers have taken into account the reviews written in the critical book catalogue. There were very few reviews published in the newspapers; thus, it seems clear that the reviews in the critical book catalogue were the main reason that Soinne's fairy tales were edited three times.

Freedom of speech and self-censorship

If we compare the editing process of the Grimms' fairy tales with that of Soinne's fairy tales, there are several things that pop up. First, we must notice the extraordinary connection between the Grimm's and Soinne's fairy tales in

the editing and revision of content. In many cases, an author has composed a tale to resist censorship and to smuggle his or her actual message to the audience; for instance Marina Warner (1999) has noticed this. But both the brothers Grimm and Laura Soinne censored themselves – or approved the censor's work in Soinne's case – so that the original messages of their tales often disappeared or was changed.

In the 19th century, sex, sexuality and a mother's cruelty were edited away in German tales, but in the 20th century, Finnish horror and violence were censored. In both cases, the rationale was that what was suitable for adults was not suitable for children – or at least small children. However, if we re-examine how the original tales were changed, we make an interesting discovery. Grimm's fairy tales moved toward becoming more literary fairy tales and away from the concept of written oral folktales, but they were still not purely literary fairy tales.

In the 19th century, sex, sexuality and a mother's cruelty were edited away in German tales, but in the 20th century, Finnish horror and violence were censored. In both cases, the rationale was that what was suitable for adults was not suitable for children – or at least small children.

According to Maria Tatar, *Nursery and Household Tales* live a double life in folklore and literature. Parts of the Grimm's tales come close to being folktales and other parts of them are classified as literature, but most of them are somewhere in the middle. Because of this problem in categorizing Grimm's tales, several critics have coined the terms, "Gattung Grimm" or "Grimm-genre" to describe them and tales like them.

Both the Grimm Brothers and Laura Soinne got their tales published as they wanted, but afterwards they decided to alter the tales themselves or allow them to be altered. They both fell prey to the pitfalls of self-censorship.

On the other hand, Laura Soinne's edited fairy tales do not function as artistic fairy tales because they now contain illogical gaps and holes in the plot. Therefore, it is acceptable to categorize them also as Grimm-genre. They are definitely not folktales, but after extensive rewriting they are also not literary tales.

Interestingly enough, neither of these censorship examples is a clear instance of the violation of freedom of speech. Both the Grimm Brothers and Laura Soinne got their tales published as they wanted, but afterwards they decided to alter the tales themselves or allow them to be altered. They both fell prey to the pitfalls of self-censorship.

We might ask, would the Grimms' fairy tales and Laura Soinne's fairy tales be children's classics without this self-censorship? The Grimms' fairy tales would probably be classics for folklorists, but they would definitely not be children's classics without the rewriting and revising. The question of Laura Soinne's fairy tales is more difficult. Without alterations there probably wouldn't be reprintings of her tales. However, Laura Soinne would still be mentioned in Finnish histories of children's books.

Her reputation as an author of horror and the influence of her fairy tales is still being discussed. In the newest children's book history from 2003, Laura Soinne's fairy tales were called "rather tame" by K. Kolu, even though they had been classified

earlier as horror fairy tales. It seems quite obvious that Kolu had read only the edited tales. Former historians (Mäenpää, 1958; Kurki-Suonio, 1970 & Lappalainen, 1979) had seen Soinne's value as a master of horror fairy tales.

Thus we notice that long traditions of extensive editing and even self-censorship are problems for writers of literary history, particularly in the case of the Grimms' fairy tales. How should historians handle the eight versions of the Grimms' collection? We should also bear in mind that there is another manuscript from 1810, not just seven different editions from 1812 to 1857. And what about the nearly endless adaptations of *Nursery and Household Tales* throughout the world?

If we look at both the Grimms' and Laura Soinne's fairy tales through the lens of freedom of speech, we end up with a rather surprising notion: without censoring sexual and horror elements as well as the cruel mother image, they might not have reached the same level of publicity and popularity. Even though freedom of speech is highly appreciated in western countries, it is clear that we still have—or at least have had—some taboos in the subjects that can be included in children's literature. Consequently, avoiding such taboos has sometimes resulted in very appealing and influential literature. It raises interesting questions about the intersection of freedom of speech and self-censorship when it comes to creating books for children.

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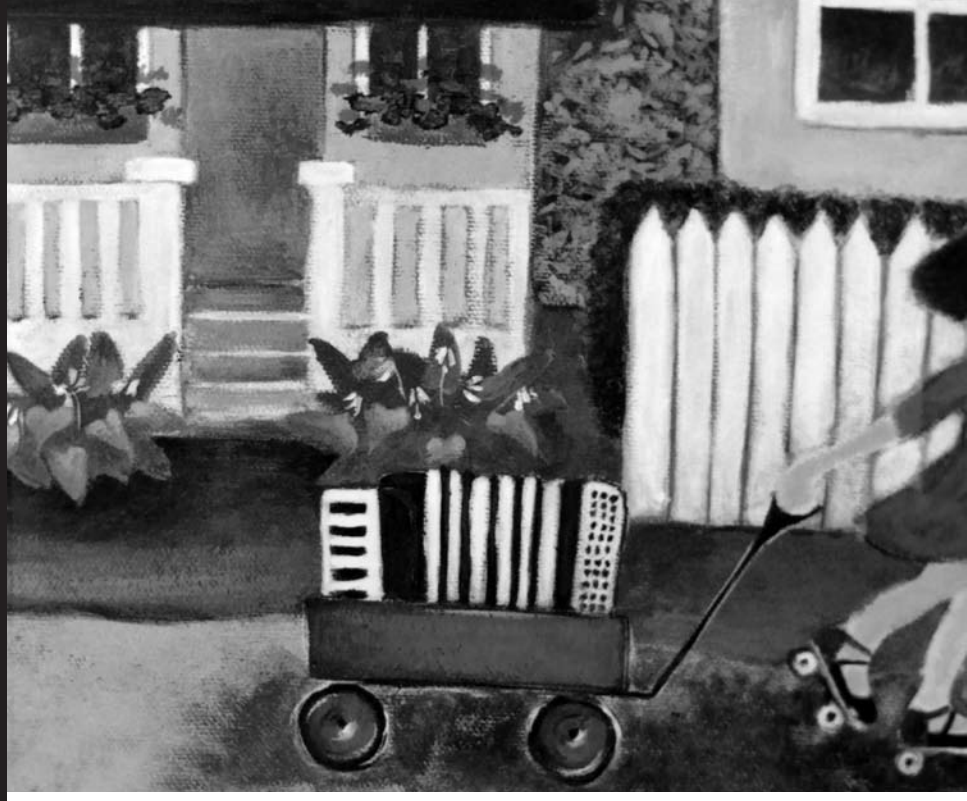
Hidden Forms of Censorship and Their Impact



In this article, the author highlights ways that children's authors may be censored by educational publishers, trade publishers, and even award committees.

by CHERIE L. GIVENS

Cherie Givens, JD, is a PhD Candidate in the School of Library, Archival and Information Studies at the University of British Columbia.

The purpose of this article is to highlight some forms of censorship that commonly escape public notice. The discussion of these forms of censorship is supported by experiences of Canadian children's authors and illustrators documented in interviews that took place in Canada in late 2007 as part of a study about pre-censorship. Most interviewees participated on a confidential basis and their names are withheld by mutual agreement. Their experiences provide a glimpse into forms of censorship that have remained largely clandestine.

The term "censorship" is defined in the *Online Dictionary of Library and Information Science* (2007) as the "prohibition of the production, distribution, circulation, or display of a work by a governing authority on grounds that it contains objectionable or dangerous material." Denise Fourie and David Dowell (2002) provide a broader definition of censorship, explaining that it is "the practice of suppressing or deleting material considered to be objectionable." Censorship "may occur at any stage of publication, distribution, or institutional control" (Foerstel 2002). Censorship that occurs prior to publication, often in

an attempt to avoid post-publication censorship, is known as pre-censorship (Ingram 2000, Khan 1999). These definitions give us a general idea of the meaning of the term "censorship," but do not address the specific motivations for censorship or the means by which it is accomplished.

Motivations

In order to understand the nature of censorship, it is helpful to examine the motivations behind censors' actions. According to the Office for Intellectual Freedom (OIF) of the American Library Association (2002), "in general, there are four basic motivational factors that may lie behind a censor's actions." These are family values, religion, political views, and minority rights. Family values in this context encompass concerns about "changes in the accepted, traditional way of life" and in the desire "to protect children" from exposure to material that deals frankly with sexual themes or topics. Works censored on religious grounds may include "explicitly sexual works," those containing "unorthodox ideas," "antireligious works," or materials considered to be damaging to religious beliefs. Works censored based on political views can include "material that advocates radical change." Censorship based upon minority rights may include censorship based upon a material perpetuating a "long established stereotype" of a group.

Censorship that occurs prior to publication, often in an attempt to avoid post-publication censorship, is known as pre-censorship

According to Rubin (2004), content is "the single most important factor that prompts a desire to censor" and it can be broken into "two categories: offensive subjects [such as sex] and offensive language." Combining the motivations and factors for censorship identified by the OIF and Rubin, it becomes clear that material addressing sexual content, offensive language, depictions of minorities, and political views may be likely targets for censorship generally and pre-censorship in particular. As we shall see, some of these motivations and factors have influenced actions of educational and trade publishers as well as award committee members.

. . . there now exists "an elaborate, well-established protocol of beneficent censorship, quietly endorsed and broadly implemented by textbook publishers, testing agencies, professional associations, states, and the federal government."

Censorship in educational publishing

Diane Ravitch (2003), a historian of education, notes that "the regime of censorship . . . has quietly spread throughout educational publishing in response to pressure groups from both the left and the right." She asserts that there now exists "an elaborate, well-established protocol of beneficent censorship, quietly endorsed and broadly implemented by textbook publishers, testing agencies, professional associations, states, and the federal government." Guiding the acts of censorship are bias guidelines that are promulgated by educational publishers, test development companies, states, and scholarly and professional associations. These guidelines dictate the type of language and content that is acceptable in an effort to present unbiased, sensitive portrayals "that will be completely inoffensive to all parties."

Ravitch uses multicultural guidelines published by Scott Foresman-Addison Wesley as an example to illustrate this level of censorship. These guidelines call for "'a fair and balanced

representation' of people from various cultural groups, racial groups, ethnic groups, and religious groups; males and females; older people; and people with disabilities." The multicultural mandate is applicable to illustrations as well as characters, and forty pages of the 161 page guidelines include "photographs of children from different racial and ethnic groups" to assist illustrators. These types of overly restrictive guidelines can inevitably lead to censorship.

An illustrator of more than thirty materials for children described her early experiences with an educational publisher that mirror some of the concerns raised by Ravitch. "I was sort of in on the ground floor when they [the educational publishers] started promoting diversity." The author illustrated a book, published in 1980, which was set on an American plantation in the South in 1850. The illustrations included "a mixture of black and white kids." One editor thought that she should include a Chinese child. The illustrator explained that she did not think that there were many Chinese people on plantations at the time. She commented, "I thought now that is the wackiest. Talk about diversity. Yes, I am all for diversity, but let's be appropriate." The illustrator changed the hair of one child slightly "so she looks like she could be Asian." She added, "It's really that was the silliest thing I ever heard."

She was told by the editor that "there is too much pink, the boys won't like that." She redid the illustration in a variety of colors to reduce the pink, but found the request "silly." "How are they ever going to like pink, if they never have any pink?"

Another incident that she recalled involved a large illustration for a poster for a music book, published in 1994-1995, which contained a magical toy box. The illustration was done "in kind of pinky blue tones." She was told by the editor that "there is too much pink, the boys won't like that." She redid the illustration in a variety of colors to reduce the pink, but found the request "silly." "How are they ever going to like pink, if they never have any pink?" I know that resonates with a lot of people who know their little boys don't like pink, but I mean we also perpetuate these things. You know, it becomes institutionalized. No pink."

This illustrator also mentioned a couple of issues that arose when dealing with a religious educational publisher. She was told by the publisher that they did not want to include Halloween spreads in a couple of books that the illustrator was working on. This prohibition is in keeping with guidelines examined by Ravitch that label Halloween "sensitive material" and mandate that the topic, along with other "emotionally charged" topics "must be avoided . . . unless they are directly relevant to the curriculum." The illustrator acknowledged that, as a religious press, "They have a point of view. What would be the point of my taking a hard line on that?" She did refuse

to create a spanking scene the publisher requested, but notes that the publisher listened to her objection (Interview, September 9, 2007).

One English Canadian author of more than twenty-five books for children and young adults, discussed how an educational publisher was interested in publishing a children's story that she had written about a forgetful older woman. The publisher asked her to change the older woman to a younger woman. She agreed and the publisher went so far as to have someone illustrate the story. It then went before an educational committee and was rejected because of the depiction of women (Interview, October 26, 2007).

French Canadian author Laurent Chabin, author of over fifty books in French for readers of all ages, spoke briefly about being asked to change names in a short tale he wrote that was published by an educational publisher. The story was set in a Québec classroom and the publisher requested that the names of characters, including the teacher, be changed "because the book had to reflect the multiculturalities." The teacher's name was changed to "Mr. Philipo" and one character was renamed "Rashid." "Everything was modified" in the story; "you were to show this, to show that, and not to say this, and not to say that." Chabin stated that he would "never do it again" (L. Chabin, interview, October 4, 2007).

Jackson counseled an author to use the word **imp** instead of **devil** "to sidestep the religious issue and the religious censors"

Censorship in trade publishing

Concerns about offending would-be censors and acts of pre-censorship are not limited to educational publishing. Editor Richard Jackson admits that he thinks about censors when editing. Jackson counseled an author to use the word *imp* instead of *devil* "to sidestep the religious issue and the religious censors" (Scales 2001). One English Canadian author has also had to deal with censorship motivated by religious concerns. In this instance it was the editor who felt that the author's character in a middle grade novel, was "too Jesus-ish" and wanted the character removed. The author, with the help of his agent, fought the pre-censorship and won (Interview November 15, 2007).

After negotiating with the publisher, the chapter title that originally contained the word **evolution** was changed, but the term **evolution** remained in two places in the body of the text

Two other English Canadian authors experienced pre-censorship motivated by religious concerns. These authors were asked to remove the term "evolution" from a nonfiction Canadian children's book. Although the book conveyed the meaning of evolution, the publisher was adamant that the change must be made or "we'll get letters." After negotiating with the publisher, the chapter title that originally contained the word *evolution*

was changed, but the term *evolution* remained in two places in the body of the text (Interviews, October 26, 2007). One French Canadian author experienced pre-censorship motivated by what the OIF (2002) identified as family values. The author was asked to change language in a middle grade fantasy story that the editor felt implied a sexual relationship between two different species (Interview October 4, 2007).

Censorship in award selection

As Foerstel (2002) notes, censorship "may occur at any stage of publication, distribution, or institutional control." Author Victoria Miles has experience with censorship at the level of distribution. In an interview in November 2007, Miles recounted two "disappointing" incidents that occurred with her book *Magnifico* (Fitzhenry & Whiteside 2006), a family story for ages 11 and up. The story, set in 1939, is about an Italian-Canadian girl who is given her deceased grandfather's accordion that had been brought from Italy. She is encouraged to learn to play the instrument and when King George and Queen Mary arrive in her town, she plays on the roof so that they can see and hear her. The book was released in the spring of 2006 and received good reviews.

The incidents concerning *Magnifico* took place after publication, but Miles believes these incidents impacted total sales and perhaps subsequent printings. Miles was hopeful that the book would to be a finalist for the BC Book Prizes, prizes that celebrate the achievements of authors and publishers in British Columbia. Shortly before the Book Prizes Committee was to present their decision, Miles learned that one judge expressed dislike for the happy ending of her book involving the celebration of the Royal Family. It appears that political views motivated the censorship in this instance.

Miles explained that "The way the awards program works is that it doesn't matter if two judges are passionately committed to the story; if one doesn't put it on their list it will not make the finals." Miles feels her book

> *hit all the marks, and to be rejected because of its respect for that time in history and the leadership the King and Queen showed breaks my heart and makes me worry about the future of our country in some ways. Because it's not censorship in the traditional sense, but unfortunately . . . awards programs sell books. Those are the books that survive. . . . Awards programs give sustaining life to book titles.*

Although Miles admits "it's not the end of the world," she is disappointed because she feels the book is "an excellent crossover book . . . [and] BC Book Prizes would have introduced this to adult readers." Another incident, concerning the book *Magnifico*, occurred when it was under consideration for an award in Ontario. Miles' publisher, upon learning that

the book did not make the award list, contacted the award committee to learn why. The publisher was informed that "there was one member of the committee, a librarian, whose family was of Italian-Canadian decent, who said that some of the language in the book was . . . 'really filthy.'" Here the concern about offensive language was the motivating factor in censoring.

Miles believes that the language referred to is a line containing Italian swear words spoken by the bilingual father in the story. He is only allowed to swear in the cowshed where children hear him "sometimes saying these forbidden words." Miles explained that the translation of the words "mean things like *dog* and *miserable pig* and one of the words means *crappy*, or *crappy* as in *crummy*, but some would say *shitty*." The words were not translated in the book, but "the implication was that the committee had been convinced" of their filthiness.

Miles refers to the incident as the "Ontario catastrophe." It was "a huge disappointment" and the experience "nearly broke" her. She was particularly upset about being accused of putting "filthy" words into her novel. "I mean there is a line that you cannot cross. . . . It is still an elementary level story . . . For somebody with my values to be accused of writing anything that's really filthy hit very close to the bone." In seeking translations for the words with every possible connotation and meaning, she and her publisher "came up with virtually nothing. We still think to this day, and they haven't come back with a reply, that it must be the word . . . that could be thought of as *shitty*, that is the word that she means."

Miles is saddened by the loss of exposure of her book to the large Italian-Canadian populations in Ontario and Vancouver. She explained how these awards impact sales and distribution of books. It "doesn't matter if you win, you win if you get on the list because that gets librarians choosing your book, introducing your book, giving your book as an option for kids to read." Speaking specifically about the Ontario award, Miles explains that:

> *Nobody looks at what isn't on the list; they just look at what is. It's very important to make the list. If you've written at a certain level and you've given the story your all, you know how much you're offering to children in the book. Not to have it surface . . . because of the decisions. . . . To have other people decide to label it not suitable, let alone really filthy . . . is maligning at best, and censorship on another level, I think* (V. Miles, interview, November 12, 2007).

Conclusion

Little has been written addressing pre-censorship of trade books for children. Censorship after publication of educational materials is well known, but the pre-censorship practices, guidelines, and motivations for the guidelines identified by Ravitch (2003) have remained, until recently, largely unknown. Victoria Miles' account of the censorship of her book *Magnifico* (2006) by committee members provides a glimpse of a form of censorship that is almost always hidden from the public and known only to committee members and perhaps a few others.

The motivations for censorship identified by the OIF (2002) support Marjorie Hein's (2007) assertion that "censorship . . . inevitably falls victim to highly subjective, discretionary decision-making that reflects the ideological and personal predilections of the censors." The accounts of censorship experienced by Canadian children's authors and illustrators bolster Ravitich's (2003) position that "writers of children's literature . . . must be able to write without fear that noses will be counted and sorted according to their race, gender, disability, age, and ethnicity." It is hoped that increasing awareness of these hidden forms of censorship will result in greater support for the intellectual freedom and creative and artistic choices of authors and illustrators of children's materials.

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Young listeners and readers of all ages will enjoy this trip to Mongolia with the Lewins. Fast-paced text is combined with vivid watercolor paintings to carry them off to attend the Naadam, an annual horse racing festival featuring fast horses ridden by child jockeys. In this stunning large-format book they meet nine-year-old Tamir, who will ride a half-wild horse fourteen miles across the Gobi Desert. They experience, through the text and the detailed full-color illustrations, the race itself as well as the life of families of nomadic horse trainers living 800 miles away from Mongolia's capital city, Ulaanbaatar.

End-notes provide a glossary of Mongolian words as well as facts about life in ger (tent) camps on the Ongiin steppe and help to answer questions that fascinated readers and listeners are certain to have. Those who enjoy this trip may wish to travel with Ted Lewin again in *How Much? Visiting Markets Around the World* (HarperCollins Publishers, 2006).

The Lewins are both recipients of Caldecott Honor citations from the American Library Association for picture book illustration.

Glenna Sloan

Ted & Betsy Lewin

Horse Song: The Naadam of Mongolia

New York, NY: Lee and Low, 2008

48 pp ISBN 9781584302773

(picture book, all ages)

Peter Sís
A Quest for a Life in Truth

This article explores in depth the themes that resonate through the life and work of Peter Sís, particularly the dualisms of growing up in the Cold War era. More than many other contemporary artists, Sís's way of seeing the world, as well as choice of artistic media, are determined by his reflection on state-ordained and controlled propaganda and the attempt to evade their influence.

by BARBARA SCHARIOTH

translated by Nikola von Merveldt

"Any resemblance to the story in this book is intentional." That is the final sentence of Peter Sís's afterword to the original edition of *The Wall*, his most recent and autobiographical book about his childhood and coming of age in Communist Prague. While his previous books gave mere glimpses of his personal experiences, Sís, who has made the United States his home for nearly twenty-five years now, here looks back to tell his own - and all - children what it was like "growing up behind the Iron Curtain." Sís's life and creative work are

Barbara Scharioth is the former director of the International Youth Library in Munich and especially active in the field of children's book illustration.

Sís's life and creative work are deeply scarred by the dualisms of the Cold-War Era: East versus West, totalitarianism versus freedom, communism versus democracy, indoctrination and surveillance versus the ideal of individual freedom and civil liberties for all, censorship versus freedom of expression.

deeply scarred by the dualisms of the Cold-War Era: East versus West, totalitarianism versus freedom, communism versus democracy, indoctrination and surveillance versus the ideal of individual freedom and civil liberties for all, censorship versus freedom of expression.

Born in Brno, Czechoslovakia, in 1949, he grew up in a home that was unconventionally cosmopolitan by Communist standards. His grandfather had brought back children's books and comic strips from his various trips to the United States in the 1920s. His father, a documentary filmmaker who travelled widely, came home with jeans, magazines, and especially records of famous rock-and-roll bands such as the Beatles or the Rolling Stones. Spellbound by this "wild" music, Sís worked as a disc jockey, hosted his own radio show, and travelled with the Beach Boys on their tour through the Eastern Bloc states. But soon enough, he met with opposition from the Communist regime. In 1969, just two years after his show first hit the airwaves, it was cancelled. Sís was twenty at the time.

For twenty-two books, Sís is both author and illustrator. These works have been published in twenty-five countries and translated into more than twenty languages.

He attended the Academy of Applied Arts in Prague, specialising in poster design and, inspired by the great master Jiri Trnka, animated shorts. In 1977, he was granted a one-year leave to study at the Royal College of Art in London. "It was my first escape," he commented looking back at this attempt to free himself from the restrictive situation in Prague. But sure enough, he came back home.

The year 1977 also marked the publication of his first book, an edition of three fairy tales by the Brothers Grimm illustrated with colour plates. Since then, Sís has illustrated 65 books, including titles by Sid Fleischman, George Shannon, and exquisite poetry volumes by Jack Prelutsky. For twenty-two books, Sís is both author and illustrator. These works have been published in twenty-five countries and translated into more than twenty languages, earning him numerous national and international awards. His own books, created over the last twenty years, present the core of his work.

But Sís also takes time for public art projects, such as the mural at the Washington/Baltimore Airport, the wonderfully ambiguous poster "Subway Whale" commissioned by the New York Metropolitan Transport Authorities in 2001 and displayed in many of the Big Apple's subway cars, or the permanent artwork of "Happy City," four mosaic murals at the 86th Street Subway Station in Manhattan, created for the Arts for Transit Program in

2004. In 2003, Peter Sís was named a MacArthur Fellow, an honour recognising "talented individuals who have shown extraordinary originality and dedication in their creative pursuits and a marked capacity for self-direction."

More than many other contemporary artists, Sís's thinking, way of seeing the world, unique themes, as well as choice of artistic media are determined by his reflection on state-ordained and controlled propaganda and the attempt to evade their influence.

His deep creative power and his unconditional determination to live as an artist free from "prescribed" commissions and ideological brainwashing impelled Sís not to return home to Communist Czechoslovakia from a trip to Los Angeles in 1982. He was thirty-three years old at the time, and he had to start all over again.

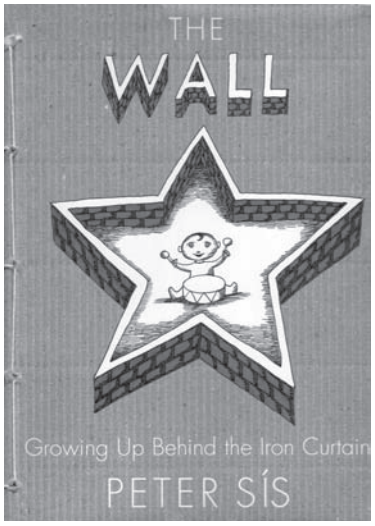
More than many other contemporary artists, Sís's thinking, way of seeing the world, unique themes, as well as choice of artistic media are determined by his reflection on state-ordained and controlled propaganda and the attempt to evade their influence. Trained in the Czech tradition of illustration and animation and steeped in European visual culture, Sís poignantly relates highly complex stories that call for interpretation on multiple levels.

The Wall

The Wall perfectly illustrates this multi-layered artistic approach. In this memoir inspired by techniques of the graphic novel, Sís resorts to mostly small-format storyboard panels in black-and-white, punctuated by red flags and other Communist symbols to tell about his boyhood, coming of age and the events in Communist-governed Prague. Two layers of text add a verbal narrative: Italic text in the margins provides details about the repressive political system, and a spare main narrative at the bottom of the page sketches a laconic political and artistic biography. The visual sequence reminiscent of photos or film is interrupted and authenticated by double-spreads with journal entries, private photos and drawings by the young boy and adolescent. A few double spreads in blasting colours, which express his dreams and longings, introduce yet another narrative level.

Walls, barbed-wire fences, and informers with pig-nosed heads are recurring motifs in this haunting graphic memoir. Time and time again, Sís shows humans attempting to overcome fences, ditches, and other barriers despite permanent surveillance. Finally, there is an image of young Sís, on a bike, his drawings carrying him like wings across one of the innumerable fences: He has finally escaped the system and found his road to freedom.

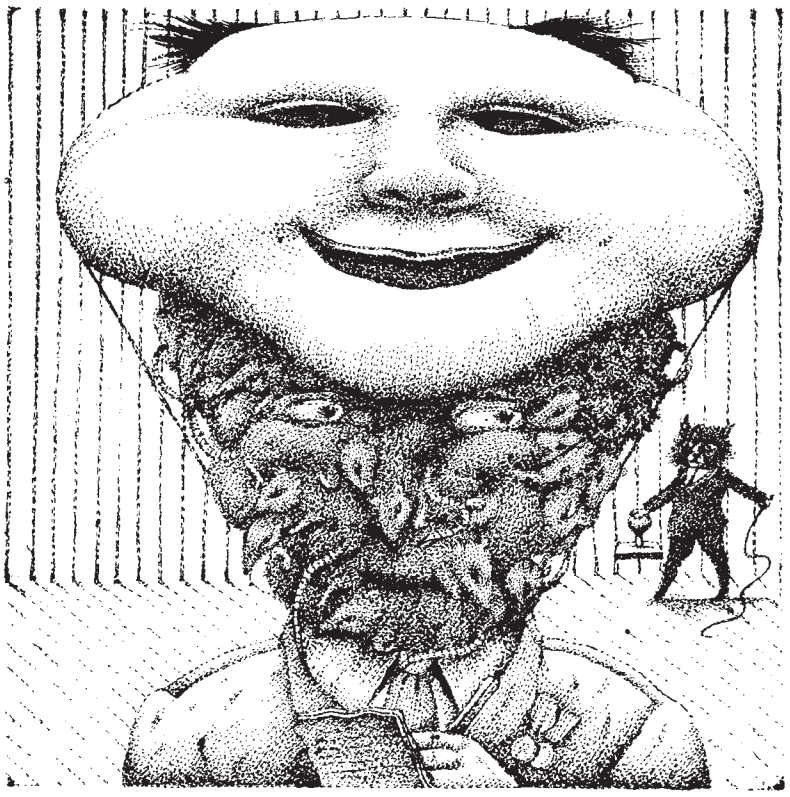
From page to page, Sís explores different layouts, designs, and artistic techniques, aiming for a subtle balance between fantastic elements, formal experiments, and documentary details. The deeper



meaning is often hidden between the lines. Large parts of the visual and verbal narrative only yield their meaning after repeated reading, as if Sís was still playing hide-and-seek with the censors.

In one of the journal entries, for example, he reflects on dealing with censorship: "For instance, if you're making a film or a painting [...] you put in a big church. You can be sure the censors will tell you to take it out, and perhaps they won't notice the smaller, important things."

"For instance, if you're making a film or a painting [...] you put in a big church. You can be sure the censors will tell you to take it out, and perhaps they won't notice the smaller, important things."



On Censorship

Hidden images

These hidden messages are a hallmark of Sís's art, even long after he left the Eastern Bloc. A small-format pen-and-ink drawing illustrating a general essay "On Censorship" for a 1985 issue of the *New York Times Book Review* is a case in point. It shows a head, the top part of which is concealed by a white mask. The remaining face is constructed from bodies of rats, in the style of the mannerist artist Giuseppe Arcimboldo. In the background, there is a tiny tomcat wearing a bright shirt collar and a dark tie, a rubber stamp in one paw, a whip in the other. The message seems obvious, but there is more to it. The fact that Sís visually quotes Arcimboldo is far more than a formal indulgence. It is a veiled reference to his native Prague, where the Italian artist served at the court for many years and is still present with many of his paintings. Sís's fellow Czech countrymen will not have failed to detect this allusion to censorship in their homeland.

It is also a reference to his own animated shorts, which he produced between 1977 and 1980 for the state-owned production company Kratky Film. These animated shorts tell moral tales in highly detailed pictures, mixing different techniques, such as drawing, painting and collage. In his

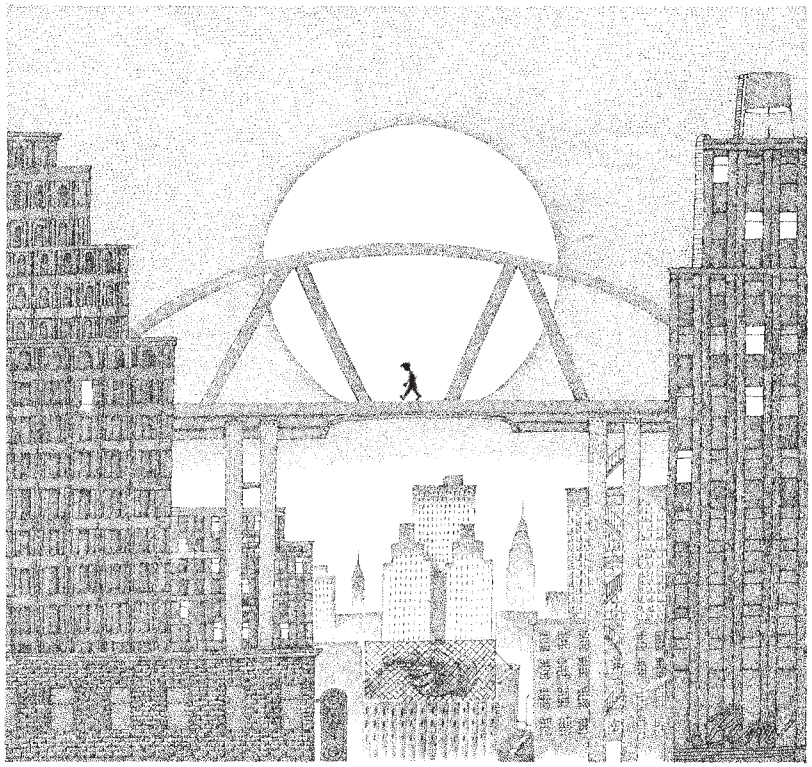
journal entry of May 1977, Sís gives an account of how the censors interpreted his animated fairy tale "Island for 6,000 Alarm Clocks" as an invitation to emigrate – which, perhaps, it may have been – and banned it after only a few public showings.

Departure, farewell and parting, being haunted by doubts and anxiety, and the quest for a life in freedom - these are other recurring motifs in his work.

When "Heads," a surrealist sequence of constantly morphing heads – another Arcimboldo reference – won the Golden Bear award at the Berlin Film Festival, the censorship committee, which had condemned the short as a call for individualism, complied and even repeatedly sent Sís abroad as a representative of Czech film art. This allowed him to defect and to opt for a life in freedom without censorship.

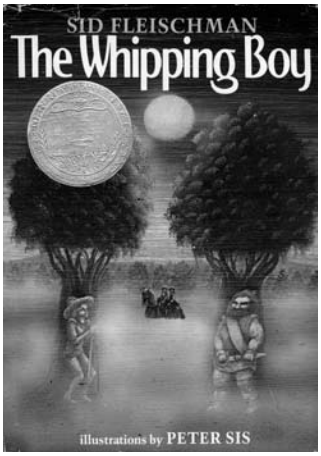
Recurring motifs

Departure, farewell and parting, being haunted by doubts and anxiety, and the quest for a life in freedom - these are other recurring motifs in his work. An early example of this is a 1984 illustration of *Bean Boy* by George Shannon, his first book contract in his new home country. The hand at the lower margin of the image hints at an uncanny resemblance between the story's protagonist and the recent New York resident, who is crossing a bridge between high-rise buildings, leading from East to West.



Bean Boy

During these years, working as a regular contributor to the *New York Times* and other newspapers and magazines, Sís further developed his trademark style. Using a meticulous pointillist approach, similar in effect to the classic technique of cross-hatching practiced by Maurice Sendak, for example, he masterfully shaped contours, surfaces, spaces and bodies. The countless tiny dots, painstakingly stippled with pen and ink, allowed for particularly smooth transitions and a delicate abstraction otherwise only achieved in paintings. The pointillist technique also favours subtle details while evading blatant



realism. It challenges viewers to call upon their imaginations to decode and complement the motifs with their own store of imagery. Finally, it enables the artist to create highly complex and enigmatic thematic and formal allusions. This technique, which he later also applied in his colour illustrations, allowed him to tell his story on different levels in one and the same image. In this way, he avoids redundancies because even autobiographic references operate differently on these various levels.

When Sid Fleischman's novel *The Whipping Boy*, with Sís's pen-and-ink drawings, was awarded the coveted Newbery Medal in 1987, Sís's career as a children's book illustrator was launched. To the present day, this book has sold more than one million copies and has been translated into many languages.

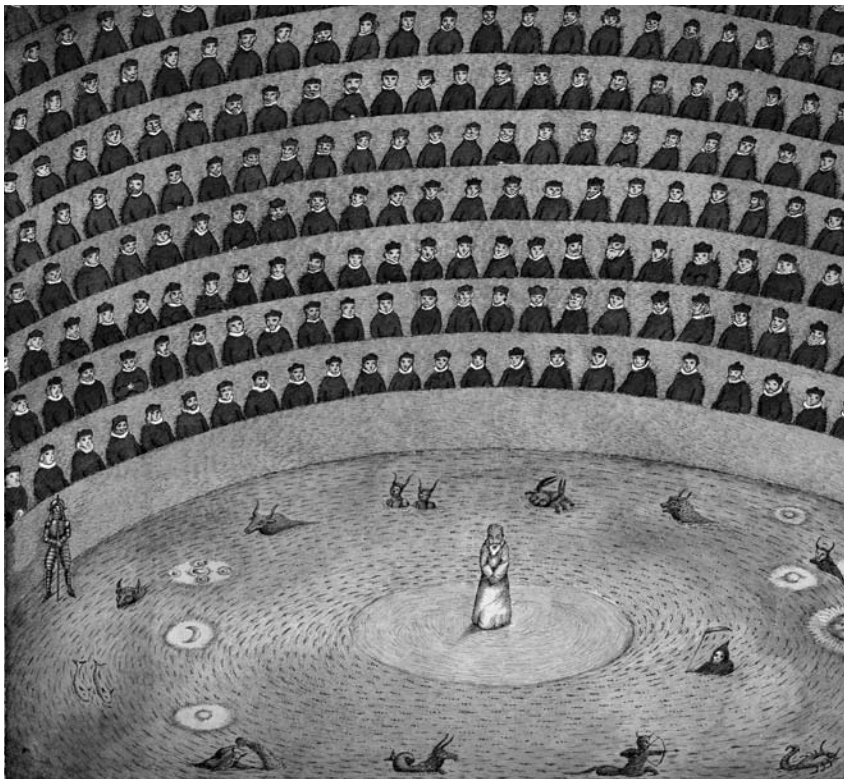
This success served as a stepping-stone to many further contracts for book illustrations, including his first "own" full-page colour picture book, *Rainbow Rhino*. Against the backdrop of a soft-hued, surreal landscape, a stylised rhino and colourful birds illustrate the simple moral that even the most fantastic voyage ultimately proves that there is no place like home – a tale of homesickness, perhaps?

The fall of the Iron Curtain, and with it the possibility to finally return home to his parents, inspired him to recapture the wonder of his childhood and adolescence in Prague – the magic moments, dreams, and stories he had thought long lost.

Sís books and themes

In *Follow the Dream*, Sís relates the "true" story of Christopher Columbus, the man who, more than 500 years ago, firmly believed in his dreams and vision, overcame many an obstacle, and tenaciously pursued his goal with relentless perseverance. Undeterred by the prevailing style of children's book illustration based on simplified forms and colours, Sís opted for a complex array of motifs and structures in this first of his more sophisticated picture books. He gave his illustrations the look of fifteenth-century artifacts by adding ornamental gold frames reminiscent of panel paintings or by imitating old sea-charts and drawings of historic shipping vessels. While the historicizing approach invests the narrative with authenticity, the vast blue ocean powerfully conjures up dreams. Attentive readers will not fail to discover the image on the endpapers and to decipher its deeper meaning: The map of the world, as it was known then, encircled by a wall with four watch-towers not only symbolizes the distrust and anxiety of the people who refused to share Columbus's vision of a New World back then, but also the suffocating complacency of Sís's contemporaries who fiercely sought to protect their familiar limits and narrow worldview.

In his Prague book, *The Three Golden Keys*, Sís explored the world of

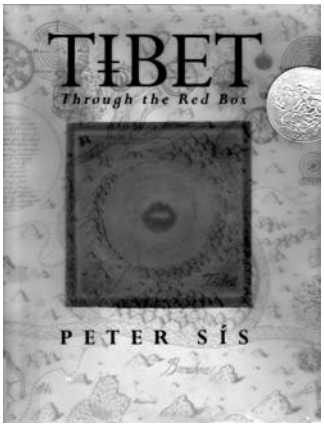


Starry Messenger

his childhood. The fall of the Iron Curtain, and with it the possibility to finally return home to his parents, inspired him to recapture the wonder of his childhood and adolescence in Prague – the magic moments, dreams, and stories he had thought long lost. Three keys help him and the reader to unlock the doors to his past. In the Prague Castle, we once more encounter Giuseppe Arcimboldo, first in the guise of the librarian composed of books, then in the garden where fruits, leaves, and roots figure as members of the emperor's court.

In the preface to this homecoming book, a letter addressed to his young daughter Madeleine, he invites her to visit his native city one day and emphatically reminds her that unlike himself, who grew up in Communist-governed Prague, she enjoys the freedom to live her hopes and dreams: "You are free."

In *Starry Messenger*, Sís retells the biography of one of the great scientists of the Renaissance, Galileo Galilei, who eventually recanted his discoveries out of fear of the Church. In his own unique way, Sís combined historical documents, including maps, portraits, city views, costumes, and quotes from Shakespeare and Galileo's treatise "The Starry Messenger," to bring history to life. All of the illustrations are framed and many include circular motifs,



which betray Sís's obsession with forced enclosure. This complex pictorial composition reminiscent of emblem books both stabilizes and undermines the credibility of the illustrations whose fantastic elements seem to defy their documentary character. We thus see, for example, a circle of red-draped cardinals of the Inquisition closing in on Galileo, while celestial bodies and astrological signs are orbiting around him. This image encapsulates the stifling power of the Church, which ultimately destroys Galileo's resistance. "Even for great minds like Galilei," Sís explained in "My life as an artist" (unpublished manuscript, 1999), "the quest for truth was not easy; even for him it was not easy to believe in himself, but he continued to trust in what he saw as the truth and history proved him right." Sís draws a direct parallel between Galilei's recanting of heliocentrism and his own experiences in Communist Prague of 1977, which he recorded in his diary: "Prominent artists, writers, film directors, actors, and musicians were invited to the National Theater for a 'celebration,'" locked in, and "instructed to sign a document supporting the 'fraternal help of the Soviet Army' in 1968" instead of denouncing the Soviet invasion and cruel crushing of the Prague Spring (*The Wall*). "Most signed," he remembered in an interview published in German, "because otherwise their children would have been kicked out of school or they themselves would have lost their jobs. [...] Many images in the Galileo book grapple with this conflict of conscience and serve to me as an explanation" (Bulletin Jugend & Literatur, 3/1996).

Tibet: Through the Red Box is Sís's most enigmatic and most fascinating book. The red, lacquered box offers a kaleidoscopic vision of fantastic stories and images of the distant and mysterious country of Tibet. It contains the travel diary of his father, written more than forty years ago and carefully locked away ever since to keep it safe from curious eyes – or, given that the Sís family lived in Communist-controlled Prague, should one say to safeguard it from falling into the wrong hands?

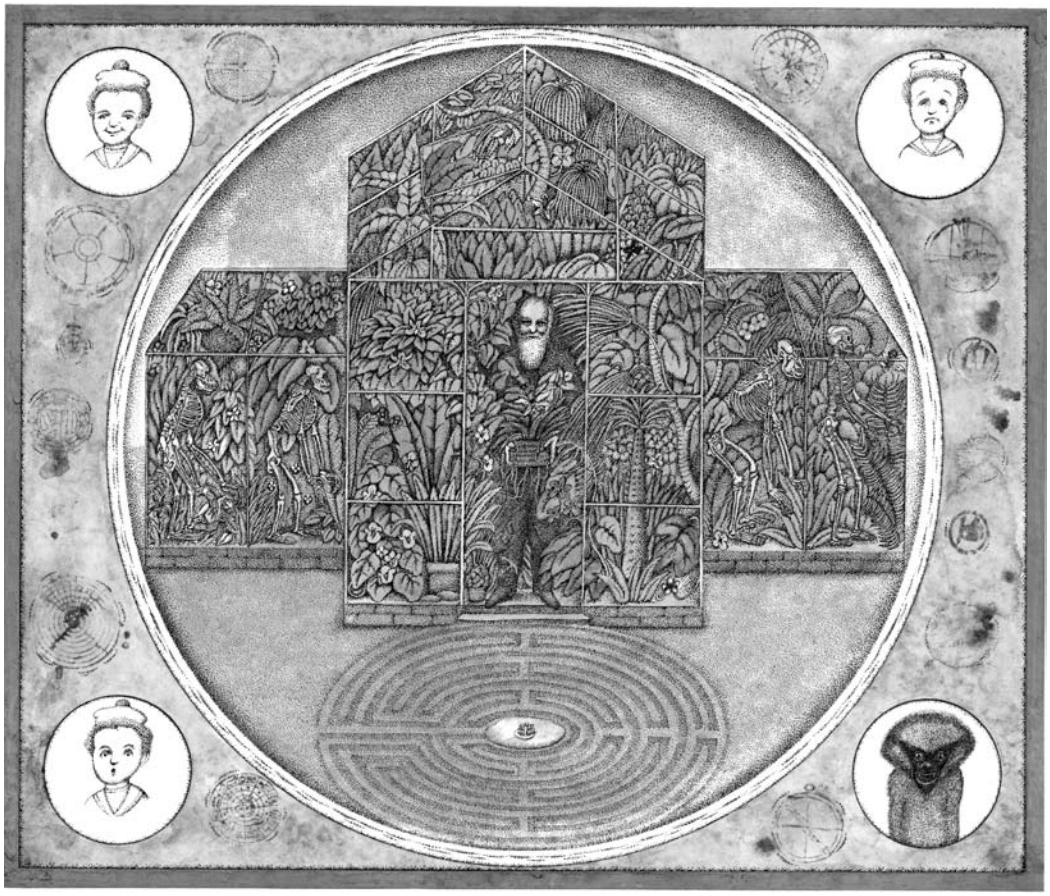
Peter Sís thus suggests that his father knowingly self-censored his writings back home.

In his diary, Vladimir Sís recorded the events of a trip that he undertook in the service of the Czech army. His official assignment was to film the building of a Chinese highway in the Himalayas. As he gradually learned that the Chinese were in fact paving the road to the military occupation of Tibet, he understood his notes were no longer in line with party politics. A sudden landslide separated him from the project, and he was reported missing. But he and three companions succeeded in working their way to the forbidden city of Lhasa, where they warned the twenty-year-old Dalai Lama of the approaching danger. The diary documents the events of this trip in faded handwriting, including the everyday experiences, as well as Sís's father's fantastic imaginings, supported

by drawings, maps, butterfly wings and pieces of cloth. A printed note informs the reader that pages 221 to 285 of the diary are missing, and another one reads: "Following this entry, one half page was deleted from the diary in 1956." Peter Sís thus suggests that his father knowingly self-censored his writings back home.

Did Sís's father, who remained active as a filmmaker in Czechoslovakia throughout the Communist regime, keep the box locked all those years out of fear of coercion? The fact that his son Peter had not returned from a trip to the USA in 1982, no doubt made him and his family all the more vulnerable. An article in the *New York Times* of October 13, 1998 confirms that Peter "discovered no horrible secrets – his father had

How can one live a life in truth if one is relentlessly threatened either by political ideologies, religious dogma, or the constant fear of exposure and betrayal? To this day, Peter Sís keeps exploring the lives of a wide range of historical figures in an attempt to provide his readers and himself with an answer.

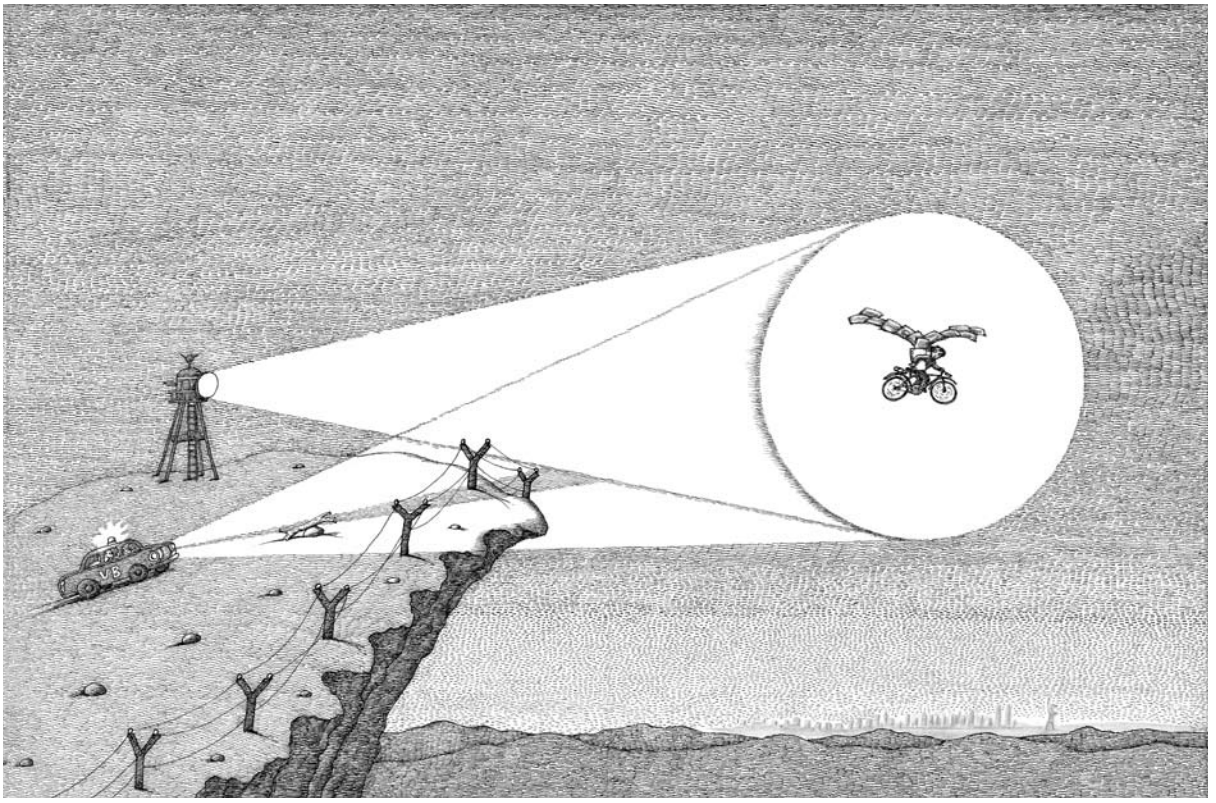


The Tree of Life

kept the diary locked because of a generic fear of communist government officials." *Tibet: Through the Red Box* thus also testifies to the pressures of (self-) censorship, oppression, and surveillance.

The themes of coercion and censorship equally pervade Sís's picture book biography of Darwin, *The Tree of Life*. Sís divides the life of this great scientist and thinker - following his return to England from his voyage on the Beagle - into three domains: Darwin's public, his private, and his secret life – only the last one of which was dedicated to the elaboration of his theory on the evolution of species. Darwin was fully aware of the explosive potential of his theses and feared the power both of conservative scientists and the Church. Until his death, he suffered from the social pressure that condemned his revolutionary theory, which to this day continues to arouse passionate opposition because it dares to contradict the Biblical account of creation.

"As far as I can judge, I am not apt to follow blindly the lead of other men," Sís lets Charles Darwin admit toward the end of his life. But the question remains: How can one live a life in truth if one is relentlessly threatened either by political ideologies, religious dogma, or the constant fear of exposure and betrayal? To this day, Peter Sís keeps exploring the lives of a wide range of historical figures in an attempt to provide his readers and himself with an answer. In his most recent book, he also interrogates his own life. He does not judge these lives, but rather chronicles them, and continues to pursue his quest for truth with his texts and pictures.



The Wall

On Spies

The colour image "On Spies," which he produced for a 1992 issue of *Time Magazine*, aptly illustrates Sís's approach to this complex question. Inside the gaping jaws of a mobile – Russian? – bear mock-up, a man is hiding behind a pair of binoculars. This contraption is as fearsome as it is ludicrous, and thus graphically epitomizes the ambivalent portrayal of the Soviet-controlled government's attempts at ideological indoctrination in *The Wall*. This ambivalence lends credence and vitality to the narrative and helps prevent bias. Last but not least, it can help us reflect on ways to lead meaningful lives as free and self-determined citizens.

PETER SÍS —
Artist, Author, and Filmmaker

Born in Brno, Czechoslovakia, Peter Sís graduated in 1974 from the Academy of Applied Arts in Prague with his first animated short *Mimikry*, and studied in 1977-78 at The Royal College of Art in London.

His work to date includes 26 animated films and shorts and over 60 books published in over 30 countries and translated into 20 languages, as well as editorial illustrations, designs for posters, book and CD covers, stage designs and murals, fine art and three-dimensional objects.

His film awards include: The Golden Bear Award of the 1980 West Berlin Film Festival for the animated short *Heads*, the 1981 Grand Prix Toronto for *Players*, and the 1983 Ciné Golden Eagle Award for *You Gotta Serve Somebody* based on Bob Dylan's song.

His art is represented in numerous public and private collections. He has taken part in group shows at the Stedelijk Museum, the Netherlands, the Museum of Communication, Berlin, and the School of Visual Arts Museum, New York. He has had solo exhibits at the Art Institute of Chicago, the Elvehjem Museum in Madison, Wisconsin, the Public Library in New York, the International Youth Library in Munich, the International Book Festival in Saint Malo, France, and at Prague Castle.

In 2003, Peter Sís was the recipient of a MacArthur Fellowship. This prestigious award is bestowed on "talented individuals who have shown extraordinary originality and dedication in their creative pursuits" and is known as the "genius grant" in the U.S.

Peter Sís lives with his wife, the filmmaker Terry Lajtha, and their two children in the New York City area.

PETER SÍS: AWARDS and PRIZES

Randolph Caldecott Medal for Children's Book Illustration

Starry Messenger, Honor citation, 1997
Tibet - through the Red Box, Honor citation, 1999
The Wall – Growing Up Behind the Iron Curtain, Honor citation, 2008

Robert F. Sibert Gold Medal

The Wall – Growing Up Behind the Iron Curtain, 2008

***The New York Times* Ten Best Illustrated Books of the Year**

Rainbow Rhino
Beach Ball
Follow the Dream - Christopher Columbus
Komodo!
The Three Golden Keys
The Tree of Life - Charles Darwin
The Wall - Growing Up Behind the Iron Curtain

***Boston Globe/Horn Book* Awards**

Komodo!
A Small Tall Tale from the Far Far North, Honor Book
Tibet - Through the Red Box, Special Citation
The Wall - Growing Up Behind the Iron Curtain

Society of Illustrators, New York

Komodo, Gold Medal, 1993
The Three Golden Keys, Silver Medal, 1994
The Tree of Life - Charles Darwin, Gold Medal, 2007

International Awards

Bologna Ragazzi Award/ International Children's Book Fair: *The Tree of Life - Charles Darwin*, 2004; *The Wall*, 2007
Best translated children's book in France, 1995, and nomination for Deutscher Jugendliteraturpreis, Germany, 1996: *The Three Golden Keys*
Best Illustrated Book of the Year and Best Book for Children and Young Adults at the Prague Book Fair, 1996: *A Small Tall Tale of the Far Far North*
Deutscher Jugendliteraturpreis, Germany, 1999: *Tibet - Through the Red Box*

Books Cited;
written and illustrated by Peter Sís

The Wall: Growing Up Behind the Iron Curtain (2007) New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux.

Rainbow Rhino (1987) New York: Alfred A. Knopf.

Follow the Dream: The Story of Christopher Columbus (1991) New York: Alfred A. Knopf.

The Three Golden Keys (1994) New York: Doubleday.

Starry Messenger: A Book Depicting the Life of a Famous Scientist, Mathematician, Astronomer, Philosopher, Physicist, Galileo Galilei (1996) New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux.

Tibet: Through the Red Box (1998) New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux.

The Tree of Life: A Book Depicting the Life of Charles Darwin, Naturalist, Geologist, and Thinker (2003) New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux.

Books Cited;
illustrated by Peter Sís

Shannon, George (1984) *Bean Boy*. New York: Greenwillow Books.

Fleischman, Sid (1986) *The Whipping Boy*. New York: Greenwillow Books.

Mitali Perkins (www.mitaliperkins.com), born in Kolkata, India, has proven – in several novels - her ability to tell engaging, memorable tales. The plot of *Secret Keeper* details the strictures and mores, especially as they relate to women and girls, in 1974 Kolkata, when her father loses his job and leaves India to look for work in America, Asha, along with her older sister Reet and their mother, must live with her father's brother. By tradition, the uncle is in full charge of all their lives, at least until the father sends for them. The suspense builds amid surprising developments. Western readers are likely to gasp at the life-changing decision Asha, the young protagonist, feels she must make for her family's welfare. Strongly delineated characters react and interact against a background rich in detail about life, especially for women, in that time and place. An author's note about the reality on which the fiction is based, together with a glossary of Bengala words, enrich an already engrossing reading experience.

Glenna Sloan

Mitali Perkins

Secret Keeper

New York: Random House, 2009
225 pp. ISBN: 9780385733403
(fiction, 12+)

Published in Australia as *The Line Formation*, this welcome addition to sports fiction depicts culture clash when a teen from rural Australia comes to west Texas as an exchange student. A Rugby League player at home, Ozzie by chance ends up trying out for the football team. He soon discovers that in this Texas town, football is not just a sport, but a way of life. Flynn's realistic depiction of a football-crazed town makes for a thoroughly enjoyable read. Seeing Texas and the football culture through the eyes of an Aussie teen narrator provides a fresh perspective for American readers. While at its core this is a bildungsroman, the battles that Ozzie engages with are on the sports field. When Ozzie introduces some Rugby League moves, like lateral ball movement, his team, which has had a series of losing seasons, actually starts to win and he is accepted. But Ozzie finds that he is changing and recognizes that there is an underlying danger that the allure of America will strip away his cultural identity and sense of self.

Ernest Bond

Pat Flynn

Out of His League

Walker Books for Young Readers 2008
(first published by U. of Queensland Press, 2006)
300 pp. ISBN 978-0802797766
(fiction,12+)

My Life with Censorship

by PETER SÍS

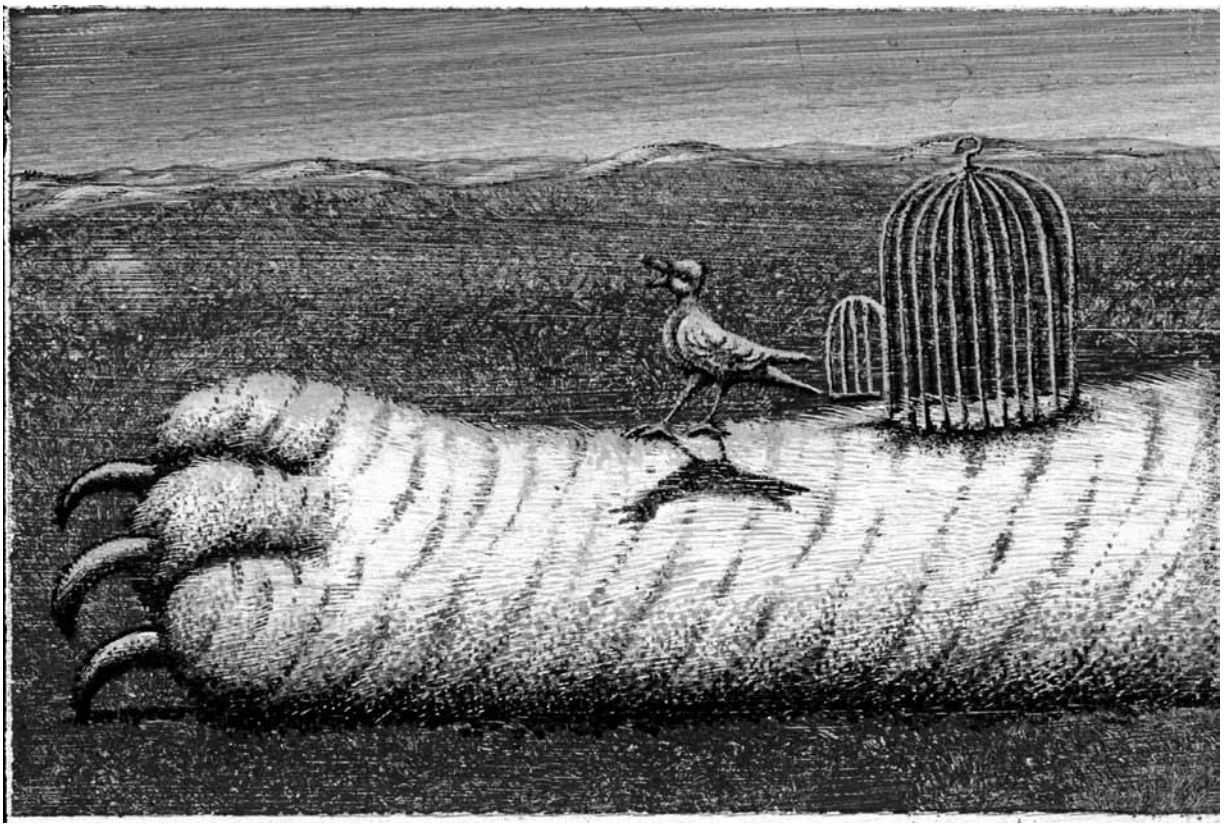
Peter Sís is an award-winning author and illustrator born in the Czech Republic and now a longtime U.S. resident.

Author and illustrator Peter Sís writes about his own experiences growing up under Communism and how censorship influenced his work and mindset; indeed how it continues to ripple through his life and his work.

I was born into censorship. I was born into the Communist totalitarian system, but I did not know it as a child. As Orlando Figes writes in his book, *The Whisperers* (about private life in Stalin's Russia), "The Communist morality left no room for the Western notion of the conscience as a private dialogue with the self." We were brought up and brainwashed in a split between the public and the private. We believed what we were told at school as I tried to recall in my book, *The Wall*. Over time, we started to realize that we were hearing different things in private and in public. I am still wondering how we were able to navigate between those two.

We learned to think and operate on different levels. It seems that the early years of Communism in the 1950s, for a creative person, were more of a black-and-white affair (or should I say red-and-white) with the official censors censoring anything subversive. This became more difficult after the Prague spring of 1968, and throughout the moral decay in the following years, when self-censorship was applied. So, while in the early years the government censor would suggest what should be cut out from the film, picture, book, or speech, after the Russian invasion, the artist, the person, was responsible for his/her own creation. This was almost an impossible situation because any form of art or action could have a slightly different meaning at any moment in life and be interpreted differently. This was a school of hard knocks, especially after leaving the relative security of school where the teachers were the responsible parties. Once again, thinking on different levels kicked in – private/public, political/subversive. I am stuck with it forever and can only enjoy my children not being burdened with it. Our early education was

Over time, we started to realize that we were hearing different things in private and in public. I am still wondering how we were able to navigate between those two.



Reflections on a Revolution

based on the Communist principles. Membership in "Young Pioneers" and "Youth League" served this very well. We were told that the party and the country were more important than what we might be told at home.

When the Beatles' music and pop culture seeped through the gaps of the wall (or Iron Curtain around the Soviet Empire), it created a conflict in our "multi-leveled" minds. We too wanted to celebrate truth, love, and non-conformism— an impossible situation. I loved music, started a rock band, and became a D.J. (disc jockey) with a radio show (writing about western music). Fortunately, this was just at the right time, before the eastern pro-Soviet Communist system was trying hard to re-establish its power. Soon enough, however, I found myself in the police headquarters, questioned about what I was singing, playing, or writing. My radio show was closed down; my articles were discontinued.

In a way, that was the end of censorship and its dire consequences— like prison, banishment, loss of work and place in life… Censorship which made people lie or not tell the truth. Which brainwashed children…

Thus, I moved to visual art. After all, I was painting drum skins and rock posters anyway. The record covers were a natural evolution (only there were only two record companies and not that many records being issued). My first professional assignment, a record sleeve for singer Karel Cernoch entitled "Letiste" (The Airport) was a telling story. When I brought in a painting of different characters from different songs dancing on a field (influenced by "Yellow Submarine"), it was rejected by the art director right away as looking "too western, too decadent." So, I tried again, this time painting a green field, with a country airport and a windsock in the wind. "Did you check which side the wind is supposed to blow from?" asked the art director. I laughed. I thought it was a joke. Not so! "It is politically and ideologically very important," said the art director. But he was not sure himself what the proper direction should be - left? right? It could mean some sort of subversive melody blowing towards Moscow, if I got it wrong. The first department he called was the Ministry of Culture, and when he did not get his answer he called the Ministry of the Interior. "They have to check," he said and we waited in silence for twenty minutes or so. Then the phone rang. He listened and said, "Your wind is blowing in the right direction, which is left to right….right." Even I who grew up in the Communist country was stunned. A few more questions of a similar vein were asked about my covers, posters, and other forms of graphic art.

So I welcomed the opportunity to move to the world of animated films with its famous Czechoslovak tradition. Films have the dimension of time, which can be good (things go away) or bad (get another meaning), as far as censorship goes. My first professional animated film, *Island for 6,000 Alarm Clocks*, is a charming fairy tale by Milos Macourek. It is about an alarm clock that is so upset about being hit by humans when he's trying to wake them up, that he walks away, joined by about 5,999 other alarm clocks with a similar experience. They leave for an island where they can ring as long as they please. The message seemed wrong to the officials. The seven-minute-long film was not officially censored, but it was "put on the shelf," as we called it at the time. Still, I did get a chance to do another short animated film based on my own idea called *The Heads*. It was criticized because of its egotism and individualism, almost its cosmopolitanism. But it was not censored, so it could be shown at the West Berlin Film Festival where it won the Golden Bear award; and,

indirectly, it opened the door to America for me.

I came to the U.S. to work on an animated film in Hollywood in 1982, and never left. In a way, that was the end of censorship and its dire consequences— like prison, banishment, loss of work and place in life… Censorship which made people lie or not tell the truth. Which brainwashed children… However, my experiences with being censored still came in handy as an editorial illustrator in New York. I had to cope with my pictures being rejected because of their shape or perceived misrepresentation. (I wrote about a book that was mistaken for a Bible in an article for *Horn Book* magazine.) In my early children's books, the faces I drew were considered too European. And I could not draw Japanese visitors with their cameras because it was considered stereotyping. Then came my first big book, *Follow the Dream*, published in 1991.

I was not used to this "free" discussion and I still have to remind myself that everyone has a point of view, even today.

But what I want to discuss here is not censorship per se, but my reaction to the criticism I have encountered in this huge, democratic country. I grew up with the myth of Columbus's voyage and his discovery of the "new world." I thought I had found a perfect explorer in him. Someone who was determined to find the way, just like me. I remember how surprised I was by the voices raised against Columbus and against the consequences of his "conquest." It sounded especially strong on the 500th anniversary of his voyage and it scared me. I was not used to this "free" discussion and I still have to remind myself that everyone has a point of view, even today. I remember how confused I was on the extensive book tour for *Follow the Dream* when an Italian Catholic organization supported me and bought a number of books. (I am still afraid to name names, but they are called the Knights of Columbus.)

The opposite was true for my book about Charles Darwin. Never could I have imagined that even though they may not be quite sure about evolution, people would want to avoid any book with the name of "Darwin" on it. Wouldn't you want to know about the life of someone who changed the world? Even if you don't agree?

But as you see, now that I know I can say that, and I will not lose my work because of it, that my kids won't be kicked out of school, and I won't be put on probation… it is wonderful and like the MacArthur Foundation said, "It makes me want to make people see what our potential is." I like doing that.

Behind the Wall under the Red Star

In this article, the author looks at how three books for children depict the experience of growing up under totalitarian governments.

"Tell me, what was it was like when you were young?" is the question children often ask their parents. Our lives change so quickly and so abruptly that adults are often startled to realize that the events of their own lives may now seem long ago to children. Somehow life has taken a turn and that which was real yesterday now seems strange and almost unbelievable.

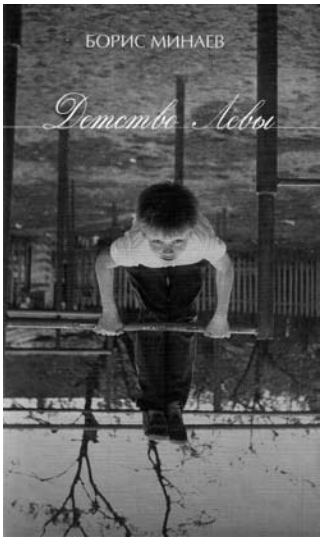
A number of books have been published recently by authors who are attempting to tell about their childhoods under communist regimes.

Because the end of the 20th century was marked by the collapse of the communist system in Western Europe, parents in many countries have asked themselves the same question: how can they explain to their children what has happened in the past, if they themselves find it difficult to grasp?

by OLGA MAEOTS

Olga Maeots is the head of the children's books department at the Library for Foreign Literature, Moscow, as well as a critic, translator, and curator of various projects on books for children.

A number of books have been published recently by authors who are attempting to tell about their childhoods under communist regimes. Most of them are just memoirs that are not written especially for children. But there are also books that have children as their target audience and that are worthy of consideration.



Three sample books

For example, *The Wall* (2007)[i] by Peter Sís, an artist born in Prague and living in New York, has been a success with readers and critics alike. The author has made an attempt to tell about his childhood and youth behind the Iron Curtain in the formerly communist Czechoslovakia. Sís explains that he wanted his own children, now teenagers, to learn how their coevals and their father, too, lived in those days. "Now when my American family goes to visit my Czech family in the colorful city of Prague, it is hard to convince them it was ever dark place full of fear, suspicion, and lies. I find it difficult to explain my childhood."

In Russia there are also writers who have tried to describe their childhoods growing up under socialism. The Russian books chosen for this article are *Detstvo Levy [Leva's Childhood]* by Boris Minaev (2001), a famous journalist,[ii] and *Prikljuchenija Jerika [Jerick's Adventures]* by Natalia Nousinova (2006),[iii] a film historian. Natalja Nousinova is also the daughter of a famous scriptwriter who made the film "Welcome or no admittance" in the 1960s, a satire on hypocrisy and conventionalism in children's upbringing.

Each book is an attempt to preserve memories about this bygone era. "Some things from that life are already difficult to understand: many words have disappeared from Russian, many signs of those times have vanished, people's psychology has changed," writes Natalia Nousinova in the foreword to her book. "How can one explain to contemporary schoolchildren who the *timurovtsy* or *old Bolsheviks* were? Nowadays children will either laugh or be surprised when they read about daily life during the communist era. 'Why did you allow that?' they will ask. In addition, they will hardly believe that people who 'made revolution' and 'built communism' were not necessarily all bad. They may be surprised to discover that people were often just naïve, and in any case, like all people in the world, they longed for equality and justice for everyone, but instead created a new injustice and even greater inequality." (6)

Nowadays children will either laugh or be surprised when they read about daily life during the communist era. 'Why did you allow that?' they will ask.

The inner world of the child who enters the adult world is Minayev's main interest.

The family context

The heroes in each of these books are brought up in happy and safe families based on love and mutual understanding. In Boris Minaev's book, the setting seems to be placed in the idyllic world of childhood, in the life of a loving family where all the neighbors knew each other and a child felt protected against the outside world, which could be hostile and dangerous. In an interview, he said, "It seems to me that the characters of this book […] don't feel themselves in a particular country, for example, in Russia or in the USSR; they don't think about what country they live in. They just live. And they don't notice what country it is, what is the season, what year, and that they live under socialism."[iv]

Natalya Nousinova writes about her family where love and respect united people of different ages, different life experiences, and different opinions.

The inner world of the child who enters the adult world is Minayev's main interest. Childhood is presented as a happy time followed by maturation, which can be a dangerous and cruel period that can break a young person. For Nousinova and Minaev's generation, the novel *The Catcher in the Rye* by J. D. Salinger was an important book that was near to their hearts as a metaphor for their own lives. For Minayev, the character of little Leva could be considered one of the children who play "in the rye," but at the same time the author (the grown-up Leva) is "a catcher," the one who tries to keep children safe.

Natalya Nousinova writes about her family where love and respect united people of different ages, different life experiences, and different opinions. One of Natasha's grandfathers was "an old Bolshevik," a devoted communist who carried optimism and belief in a bright future throughout his life. "He wished communism to come as soon as possible, so that all people would be equal and happy." (76)

The other grandfather, a famous philologist, was persecuted during Stalin's regime. Why? Grandmother tries to explain it to her granddaughters:

"He was a Jew.
Is one sent to prison for that?
And a professor.
And for that, too?
Don't be naughty! Here people can be arrested for everything!" (60)

Grandmother's love and care is the cornerstone of this family. She unites her relatives in spite of their different opinions, and she doesn't care for ideological tricks, but preserves and respects human values. "This book is a love story," writes the author. "Parental love of their children and grandchildren, children's love of their parents and grandparents, of brothers and sisters, of friends, of the dog they have so longed for, of the great world which they open for themselves and which they enter believing that they are welcomed. Love that surrounds them in the family - as a cocoon, a shell, an unassailable fortress - will throughout their lives protect them from wind, rain and enemy assaults." (7)

A happy childhood?

The child's life is composed of numerous short episodes that bring new discoveries. The first memories are happy ones. They are the most often retold – about family life, about friends. Natalya Nousinova and Boris Minaev have both attempted to preserve this tone. But Sís does not. Why?

Maybe one of the reasons is that Nousinova and Minaev both present their stories through the eyes of their child characters. Leva is 5-8 years old and Natasha is 7-10. They live in the carefree world of childhood. But in *The Wall*, the adult is telling about his own childhood. And the hero of the book is older; he is a teenager and this age is known for rebelliousness. Teenagers are less protected and more vulnerable.

At home and out of home – these are two different worlds. Adults are well aware of that, but children also begin to realize it fairly early. All three authors understood that. "After drawing whatever he wanted to at home, he drew what he was told at school," is how Peter Sís depicts the situation. In *Leva's Childhood*, school life remains off-camera; the excitement of the boy's life occurs in the family, in the house, among the friends in the yard.

At home and out of home – these are two different worlds. Adults are well aware of that, but children also begin to realize it fairly early.

Natasha's parents are fully aware that home upbringing and school education differ in principle. And that troubles them a lot. Once the girl came home from school shocked by her teacher's story: her neighbor turned out to be "a traitor of the Motherland," he listened to "the enemy's radio stations" and then went abroad and didn't come back. Natasha imitates her teacher's indignation.

"Mother and father exchanged glances in silence… 'You see, Natasha,' said my father, 'that is not so simple.' 'What is so complicated?' […] I couldn't understand how my parents could justify the bitterest enemy of our Motherland and our beloved teacher. 'Incredible! Now she brings it to our home!' My father said in astonishment. 'If only we had never sent her to school!'" (102).

Living with contradictions

But a totalitarian regime isn't based only on force and constraint. There is always an attempt to create positive images and give people a reason for self-deception. Children need to accept the world as a joyful and happy place. So Natasha sings "patriotic songs" at school and is glad about becoming an *oktyabrenok* [v] and about the ceremony in Red Square in front of Lenin's Mausoleum. Peter Sís had a similar kind of experience. Sincere patriotism is inherent to little Leva, too. But Boris Minaev deliberately avoids global views and restricts his narrative to the world of a particular person-– a little boy. "What made the essence of our time? Concerts, Olympic Games, football championships, cinema festivals. Summits, spaceflights… Not facts but *feelings* were important to me." (206)

From: Detstvo Levy

Leva lives in a well-to-do family: his father is a director of a factory, his mother is a delicate woman who does her best to overcome everyday problems. Leva considers the world to be mysterious and exciting. "Men in white nylon shirts and women in beautiful shoes surrounded me in

the street, new films' posters, stalls with sparkling drinks, beautiful hoisting cranes, grocery sellers, babies in the prams, and on holidays – policemen in white uniforms. The world around me developed dynamically and buzzed with joy." (206)

But alongside Leva's beautiful and safe world, there is another one that he is not aware of and doesn't want to notice. Leva's best friend, a terror of a boy brought up without a father, sees the world in a different way. He knows that in this country where "freedom and equality" supposedly reign, there are "separate houses for generals and for those who, as a result of their poverty, suffer from tuberculosis." (209)

Every Czech family had secrets that adults kept away from children, because "the children are encouraged to report on their families and fellow students. Parents learn to keep their opinions to themselves." But children gradually became aware of this double life.

Leva's idealism irritates his more experienced friends and they wish to show him the truth:

"Kolupaev opened the window. […]. Summer wind blew on the cheeks and eyes, we heard bird cries, the clouds turned to us and our street, Moscow had revealed its face.

'Here is the capital,' said Kolupayev. 'Beautiful when seen from above. But what is inside?'

The gloomy house behind us suddenly became quiet and stopped rattling with pans and humming with far away female voices; we were left in silence.

And I understood everything about our time." (211)

Peter Sís depicts a similar situation in *The Wall*. "He didn't question what he was being told. Then he found out there are things he wasn't told." Every Czech family had secrets that adults kept away from children, because "the children are encouraged to report on their families and fellow students. Parents learn to keep their opinions to themselves." But children gradually became aware of this double life.

"*April 1956: My father's cousin Lamin is in prison as an enemy of the state. My grandmother talks to my parents about it in German so my sister and I won't understand. But we understand some of it. He was on a national volleyball team that was going to a tournament in the West. And the players were all planning to stay there. The secret police found out. Lamin is twenty years old and will be in prison for the rest of his life."*

So the three books describe similar aspects of the times.

The political context

Many people in Western Europe considered the USSR to be an aggressive force that suppressed their freedom. But people in the Soviet Union also felt themselves *behind the wall*. The bitterest pages of Sís's book are devoted to the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in August 1968.

In the USSR, there were also people who considered this military operation not only as a horrible injustice against a foreign country, but as a private insult, a shame and restriction of their own freedom, too. We see it through Natasha's eyes: "When the tanks had been sent to little Czechoslovakia, because it wanted to live in its own way, Russian intellectuals were ashamed of our government. Many wished to go abroad forever, but the government prevented them, a few expressed their protest openly and they were called dissidents and sent to prison, but the majority of the honest people just tried to keep away from politics and from the communist party in order not to take part in these mean actions. Not to participate was also an act of protest." (117)

So politics meddled with private family life. The

occupation of Czechoslovakia influenced the life of the Nousinovs. "As we have learned later, because adults kept it in secret from us, so that we wouldn't tell that at school, our father and his co-author had signed one petition to the government protesting against persecution of dissidents and for that reason they lost their jobs, their plays were prohibited from the stage, and scripts from film production." So they had turned to safer ground and wrote a script for a children's film, a funny comedy that had nothing to do with politics. But the authorities met it with suspicion. There was an episode when children wanted to prove the strength of a turtle's shell and made a plan to put the turtle under the tracks of a tank. But the Ministry of Culture considered it to be a dangerous allusion to Czech occupation – "a big Soviet tank crashes a tiny harmless creature!" (117-118)

The life in a socialist state – *under the Red Star* - was based on ideological deceit, on the substitution of concepts, on the attempt to pervert the utopian belief in universal happiness. The official art supported this delusion, that's why the younger generation that learns about the past from ideologically corrected art of that era – literature, films, posters – is tempted to consider the past of their parents to be very attractive. It seemed carefree (there was no need for making their own decisions since everything was determined by the authorities), well-off (all are equal in poverty) and even more humane and optimistic (as everyone believed in a bright future). That's why books about Soviet childhood always are considered ambiguously, from approval to stubborn protest.

The official art supported this delusion, that's why the younger generation that learns about the past from ideologically corrected art of that era – literature, films, posters – is tempted to consider the past of their parents to be very attractive.

Boris Minaev makes an attempt to show "how we have been living," by first of all preserving romantic optimism and human kindness, which he hopes can oppose every regime and survive under any circumstances. His goal is to show how one can remain human in an inhuman reality. He is sure that "the most important things in life don't change"[vi] and that man should be man, even if the space of his freedom is restricted to the minimum.

Responses

Jerick's Adventures has prompted numerous discussions in Russia. Some readers considered the book to be "an honest and brave attempt to explain the past for children without a desire to throw stones in revenge."[vii] But others refuse to recognize themselves in this mirror. There are also those who proclaim indignantly that "one should never write in such a way about the land you live in." (82)

There are also those who proclaim indignantly that "one should never write in such a way about the land you live in."

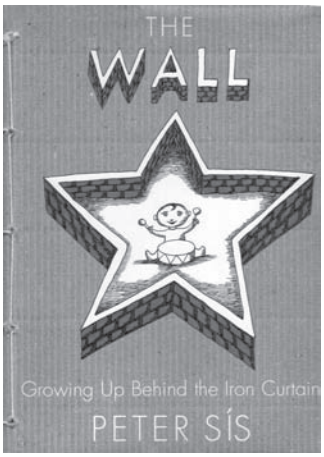
Some believe that not everyone longs for freedom, for the possibility of

making one's own decisions and being responsible for them. A safe and secure life according to precise directions may seem preferable for many. And here is the attractive side of a totalitarian regime – it delivers us from the difficult duty of freedom of choice. Nostalgia for a Soviet past is nostalgia for the times when everything was "plain and simple." Contemporary life is much more complicated and rational. The words of Václav Havel, former president of the Czech Republic could be considered as a warning against this dangerous oblivion: 'Peter Sís's book is most of all about the will to live one's life in freedom and should be required reading for all those who take their freedom for granted.'[viii]

Russian literature is often called a literature of great questions. In this case, one might ask: Who can tell all the truth? Whom should we blame?

Peter Sís 's book has been met with excitement in the USA. But he has confessed that in his motherland, in the Czech Republic, the response was not so unanimously enthusiastic, and many people were insulted and protested: "We had good times. We played. And secret policy was not so secret." Peter Sís said in an interview, "If I show it to my fellow countrymen, they all say they are really disgusted with the book. But it is a story to be told."[ix]

The Wall expresses his protest against any nostalgia for socialist times. Sís opposes the desire to whitewash the past and so deliberately depicts first of all the negative features, those he himself suffered in his youth. In his attempt to explain what was wrong, Sís thought of his book as a "bomb" that should blow up the Wall - the wall of incomprehension.



But *The Wall* is not the only Peter Sís book about his own childhood. In *Tibet* and in *The Three Golden Keys* he also returns to the past. But in those books the metaphorical imaginative structure dominates the politics. And the truth of art more distinctly reflects the truth of life. In the story told in *Tibet*, we also see the personal tragedy that occurs when a lack of freedom crushes the creative person. We can sense the defenselessness and vulnerability of a man under the pressure of the political system. The book tells about the destruction of the unique and mysterious culture of Tibet and about the oppression of a man under the dictatorship of the masses. But in this story, the main impulse is not denial, but love and a desire to understand, protect and preserve. In that way *Tibet* comes closer to the themes of *Leva's Childhood*.

So what is the conclusion? Russian literature is often called a literature of great questions. In this case, one might ask: Who can tell all the truth? Whom should we blame?

I have no answers. And I haven't found them in the books I have chosen for this article. But one point is clear: we need many different books about

the complicated past. It is too difficult, almost impossible, to touch on all the problems in one story. And we don't need a new textbook with simple explanations and ready answers. We need stories that will create a mosaic of the past, stories for consideration and reflection.

Notes

[i] Sís, Peter (2007). *The wall: Growing up behind the Iron Curtain*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

[ii] Minaev, Boris. (2001). *Detstvo Ljevy [Leva's Childhood]*. Moscow: Zakharov

[iii] Nousinova, Natalya. (2006) *Prikljucheniya Jerika. [Jerik's Adventures]*. Moscow: Samokat. Also available in translation: Noussinova, N. (2008). *Aventures de Djerik*. Paris: L'Ecole des Loisirs. And Noussinova, N. (2008). *Il diritto di amare un cane*. Milan: Editore Rizzoli CollanaOltre.

[iv] TV interview (2001) in Minayev, B. (2005). *Genij Dzjudo. [Judo's Genius]*. Moscow: Vremja. p.324.

[v] The organization for children from 7-10. Its main aim was to introduce communist ideas to the children at an early age.

[vi] TV interview (2001).

[vii] Novaya detskaya khudozhestvennaya literature v izdaniji, reklame, kritike i chteniji. (2006) [New children's literature in publishing, advertising, critique, and reading]). Sankt-Peterburg: LODB. pp.82-84.

[viii] http://www.peterSís.com/content/TheWallPR.pdf

[ix] http://www.bookexpocast.com/authors-studio/2007/07/02/the-wall-by-peter-Sís/

Eun-hee Choung

Minji's Salon

South Korea: Sang Publishing, 2007

First US edition: La Jolla, CA: Kane/Miller, 2008.

unpaged ISBN-13: 978-1-933605-67-8

(picture book, 4–8)

Peeking through the window of the salon where her mother is getting her hair styled inspires Minji to give her dog the same beauty treatment at home.

The situation is set up in a series of preliminary wordless pages that show Minji and her dog following Minji's mother to the salon. In the body of the text, the pages on the left show what is going on in the salon, while the pages on the right show Minji doing the equivalent at home—and creating a mess of both the dog and the house. The last scene shows Minji in her mother's high heels peering into the window of a women's dress shop and suggests that Minji's imagination is working on another big plan. The text is minimal, allowing the expressive illustrations to convey the mirroring of adult and child activities and to celebrate a child's imaginative play. Also available in Spanish: El Salon de Minji (2008).

Carolyn Angus

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.

Here are reviews of professional resource books on the status of French children's literature from alphabet books to nonfiction literature to film adaptations, on the life and work of Astrid Lindgren, on the representation of Black people in Dutch children's books, on the ways children understand the complex relationships between fiction and reality, on the role of cross-dressing in the depiction of gender, and on boy culture and reading.

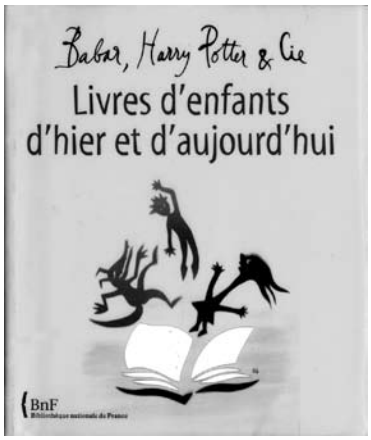
FRANCE

OLIVIER PIFFAULT (ED)

Babar, Harry Potter et Cie. Livres d'enfants d'hier et d'aujourd'hui

[Babar, Harry Potter and Co.; Yesterday's and today's children's books]

Paris: Bibliothèque Nationale de France 2008 580pp ISBN 9782717724226 €48



"Literature is a river," contends French children's book author Geneviève Brisac in her introductory remarks to this volume accompanying the exhibition, "Babar, Harry Potter and Co. Yesterday's and today's children's books," which traces the various currents and developments in children's literature. Inspired by the donation of the original illustrations of three "Babar" editions by the Brunhoff family in 2005, and the incorporation of the French National Centre for Children's Literature, La joie par les livres ("The joy of reading" founded in 1963), and its huge collection in January 2008, the Bibliothèque Nationale prepared and hosted this exhibition from October 2008 until April 2009. Intelligently using multimedia components and drawing on their own rich collections, loans from public institutions, such as the oldest French children's library Bibliothèque de l'heure joyeuse, and from private collections, the curators succeeded in creating a highly informative and entertaining experience for both young and old. The exhibition featured original editions from four centuries, manuscripts of children's book classics, numerous original illustrations, children's magazines, posters, and movies. The accompanying volume is more than a mere exhibition catalogue and well deserves to become a standard work on French children's literature. The thorough individual contributions not only examine the developments of French children's literature and its genres, ranging from ABC books and toy books to nonfiction literature and young adult novels. It also looks beyond the confines of traditional literary history to include children's literature and education, for example, or film adaptations of children's books. Finally, this sizable book – both in volume and scope – will enthrall readers thanks to its perspicuous structure, reader-friendly design, and generous amount of illustrative material.

Elena Kilian

GERMANY

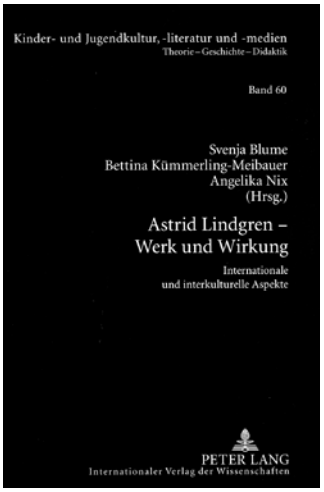
SVENJA BLUME / BETTINA KÜMMERLING-MEIBAUER / ANGELIKA NIX (EDS)

Astrid Lindgren – Werk und wirkung. Internationale und interkulturelle aspekte

[Astrid Lindgren – Her work and significance; International and intercultural aspects]

(Series: Kinder- und Jugendkultur, -literatur und -medien; 60)

Frankfurt am Main [et al]: Lang 2009 324pp ISBN 9783631570289€56.50



One would assume that everything has been said about one of the world's most famous children's book authors. But the editors of this volume of sixteen collected essays eloquently prove this assumption wrong. Following a brief review of Lindgren scholarship, the essays, grouped into four sections, open up new perspectives and offer striking insights into Lindgren's work. The first section, "Astrid Lindgren in Scandinavia – between Romanticism and Modernism," squarely situates Lindgren's writings within Scandinavian literary traditions while highlighting her own innovative contribution. Section two, "Astrid Lindgren abroad: Translation and international reception," explores the often gentrified translations of *Pippi Longstocking* and their reception in countries such as Croatia, the USA, or Estonia. This interest in cultural history is also prevalent in the third section, "Gazing beyond: Interrelations and social perception." These contributions offer comparative analyses of Lindgren's texts and their reception with the work and impact of other authors, such as the Dutch writer Annie M.G. Schmidt. The fourth section, "Astrid Lindgren and pedagogy," retraces some of the pedagogical debates partly sparked by Lindgren's work in 1950s and 1960s Germany and presents new didactic concepts developed for several of her texts. With this rich kaleidoscope of different thematic and methodological approaches, this volume not only documents the many interpretations of Lindgren's texts; it also invites scholars and fans alike to rediscover "our good old Astrid" time and again.

Ines Galling

NETHERLANDS

JEROEN KAPELLE AND DIRK J. TANG

Zwart. Sambo, Tien kleine negertjes, Pijpje Drop, Pompernikkel en anderen.

Het beeld van de zwarte mens in de Nederlandse illustratiekunst 1880-1980

[Black, Sambo, Ten Little Niggers [sic] Pijpje Drop [proper name], Pumpernickel [proper name], and others. The image of Blacks in Dutch illustration 1880-1980]

Harderwijk: d'Jonge Hond 2008 96pp ISBN 9789089100788 €17.95

The depiction of Black people has been an important part of Western children's literature. In nineteenth- and twentieth-century Netherlands, characters like "Sambo" or "Moortje" or the term "nigger" [sic] were very common to designate stereotypes of

Black people. This study about the iconography of Blacks in Dutch children's literature traces the development from ethnic caricatures and racial stereotypes to a more nuanced portrayal of Black people. The opening chapter discusses Black characters from North America and England, such as "Golliwog," a Black rag doll with wild hair and dressed in red pants and a blue coat, or the notorious, but popular song, *Tien kleine Negertjes (Ten Little Niggers)* [sic]. Germany's main contribution was "The story of the inky boys" from Heinrich Hoffmann's picture book *Struwwelpeter (Slovenly Peter)*, in which a Black boy, "Moriaantje" (Little Blackamoor) in the Dutch version, is being bullied by a group of white boys. Although they are punished for ostracizing him, the story leaves no doubt that being Black was considered a humiliating blemish. Against the backdrop of these widespread stereotypes, the authors sketch the specifically Dutch view of Black people in children's books published between 1880 and 1980, analyzing many examples. They argue that most authors and illustrators who perpetuated Black racial stereotypes did so less out of consciously held racist convictions than out of plain passive ignorance. Concentrating on "mission" books, which were strongly moral in their tone, the fifth chapter convincingly illustrates how children's books were also used as an educational medium for social indoctrination and reform. Without claiming to be an exhaustive study, this well-designed book is a source of intriguing information. Thanks to the numerous, well-chosen reproductions, it offers an illuminating and at times startling panorama of the Black archetypes prevalent in Dutch society from the second half of the nineteenth well into the twentieth century as reflected in the art of children's book illustration.

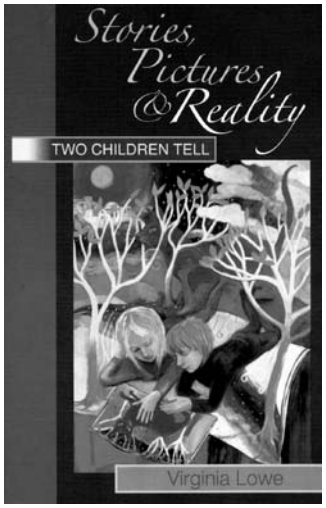
Toin Duijx

UNITED KINGDOM

VIRGINIA LOWE

Stories, pictures and reality. Two children tell

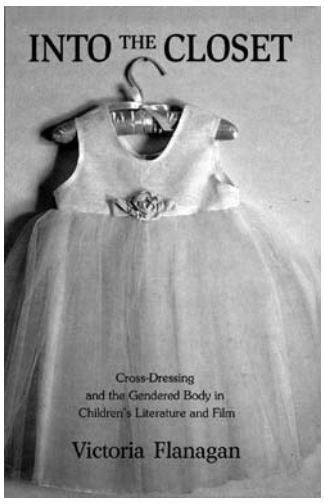
London [et al]: Routledge 2007 XVIIpp + 188pp
ISBN 0415397235 £24.99



Virginia Lowe's fascinating study of her own children's interactions with books from birth to eight years of age continues and extends the handful of existing book-length studies by other parents or grandparents. Lowe places herself in this tradition, while also communicating something new and fresh. For example, the children in the previous studies were all girls, whereas Lowe's is the first to consider the development of her son Ralph, as well as her daughter Rebecca. Lowe also has more data than any of the other studies; her journals total over 6000 pages, and continue until the children left home at eighteen. Further, and most importantly, Lowe's book is unified by one overarching subject: the ways children understand the complex relationships between fiction and reality. In the first three chapters, Lowe contextualizes her study by explaining its methodology, the family environment, and the children's book behavior as infants. Chapters four through eleven address various aspects of the fiction/reality distinction. Both words and illustrations are considered, as well as the gradual realization that both verbal texts and visual images are created by someone. The issue

of how the children "identified" with characters and actions in the stories is explored, and Lowe makes her own contribution to the psychological research about "theory of mind": children's growing awareness that other people think and have different perspectives and thoughts about the world. Through this detailed and intimate look at her son and daughter, the Australian scholar presents a compelling and well-documented case for appreciating the marvellous insights that young children bring to literature. She argues persuasively that her naturalistic methodology (in contrast to the clinical settings of many psychological studies of child development) results in understanding that many of children's cognitive and social abilities may occur much earlier than was previously thought.
Lawrence R. Sipe

Lawrence R. Sipe, associate professor in the Graduate School of Education, University of Pennsylvania, held a research fellowship at the International Youth Library from March until May 2009.



UNITED STATES

VICTORIA FLANAGAN
Into the closet. Cross-dressing and the gendered body in children's literature and film
(Series: Children's literature and culture; 47)
New York [et al]: Routledge 2007 XVIIIpp + 278pp
ISBN 9780415980081 US$90.00

In this study based on her 2005 doctoral dissertation written at Macquarie University in Sydney, the author draws mainly on examples from the English-speaking world. The focus is on books and films from the period between 1990 and 2004, while a few film classics from the 1930s to 1970s provide historical context. Flanagan identifies three main categories of cross-dressing in these documents and convincingly analyzes their specific structural patterns and functions.

In the female-to-male version, female characters break out of their ascribed gender role in order to fight for their right of self-determination, to assume agency, and to be at least on par with boys. While traditional gender roles and concepts are critically questioned in this model, they are not wholly dismissed. The male-to-female version, in contrast, generally serves a mainly comical function. Male protagonists are mostly forced to wear "women's clothing" and hence look ridiculous and simply "inadequate." By portraying femininity as something deficient and undesirable, this derisive type of cross-dressing reinforces conservative gender models – boys are boys – and reinforces the male as the naturally superior gender. The third pattern, transgendered cross-dressing, can only be found in young adult fiction according to Flanagan, with the male-to-female version clearly dominating. In these cases, gender is understood as a mainly social category, which does not necessarily coincide with the (biological)

gender. This undermines and deconstructs the seemingly natural concepts of masculinity and femininity and thus helps overcome traditional gender models.

Overall, a larger corpus of texts and films would have been desirable, including more contributions from European countries other than Great Britain and especially from non-Western cultures. This thoughtful study nevertheless makes an important contribution to the field of gender studies by not only describing the various models, but by analyzing their different functions with much care and attention to detail.

Jochen Weber

UNITED STATES

ANNETTE WANNAMAKER

Boys in children's literature and popular culture. Masculinity, abjection, and the fictional child

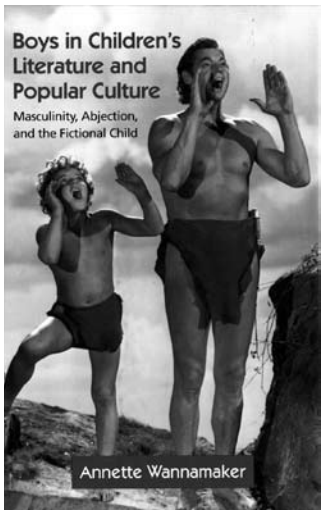
(Series: Children's literature and culture; 46)

New York [et al]: Routledge 2008 XIIIpp + 181pp

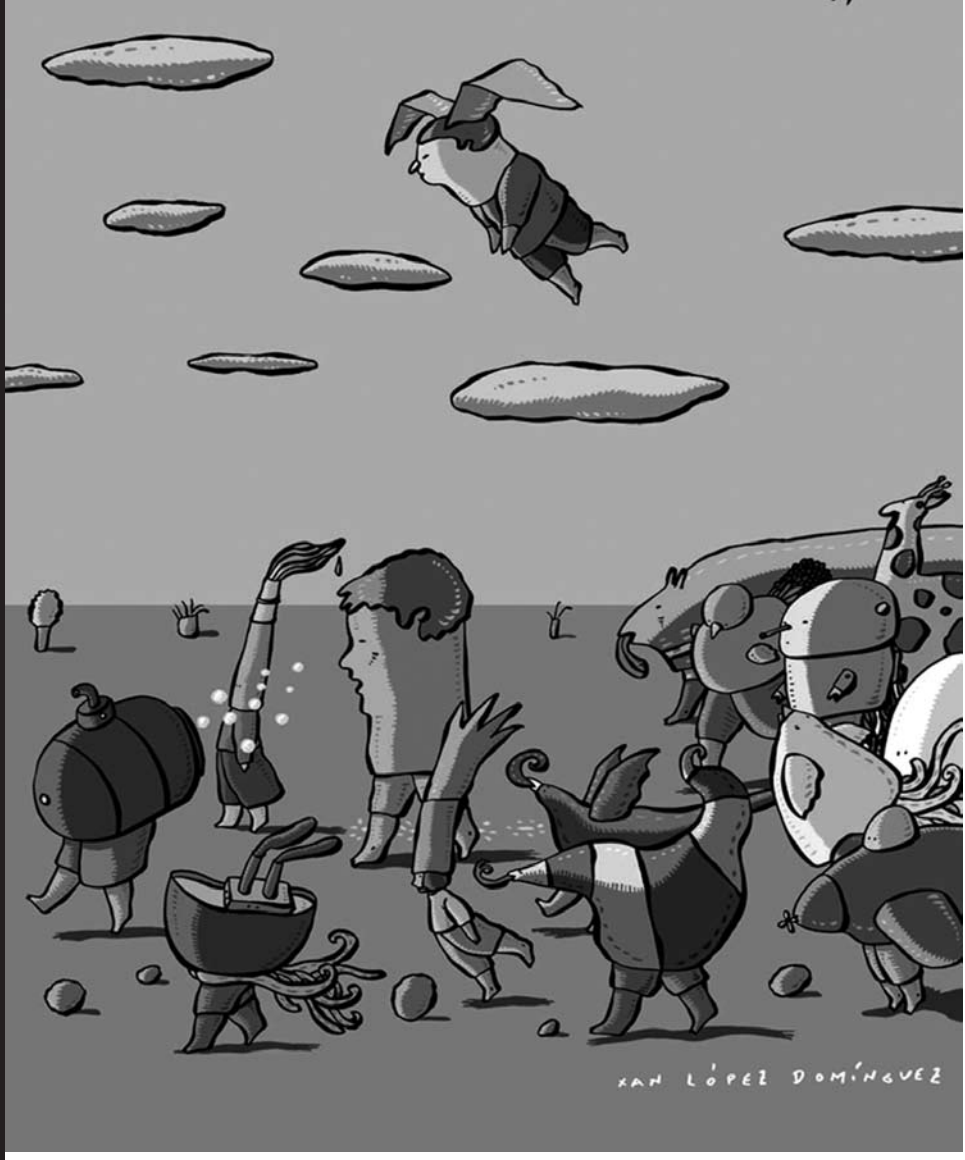
ISBN 9780415974691 US$90.00

For some time now, complaints have been raised in the USA and other countries that boys are not only reading less than girls, but in addition prefer books and other media considered mostly inappropriate by adults. In response to these pedagogic concerns, Annette Wannamaker, assistant professor of children's literature in the English Department at Eastern Michigan University, examines English-language children's books, films, TV programs, video games, manga, and anime from the last two decades to investigate what exactly attracts boys to these popular media and to consider which models of masculinity contemporary boy culture offers. In five chapters exploring Edgar Rice Burroughs's *Tarzan*, Louis Sachar's *Holes*, the *Captain Underpants* series, manga, and the *Harry Potter* series, she documents the affirmative character of the works in close and careful readings of the texts: the male protagonists are generally white, heterosexual, and members of the middle-class. On the one hand, the popular media thus perpetuates conventional conceptions of boy- and manhood, oftentimes blatantly glorifying a hegemonic male "norm" that tolerates no deviation. On the other hand, however, Wannamaker convincingly argues that some male protagonists – especially in the Harry Potter series – escape gender stereotypes and instead display more nuanced and complex forms of masculinity. Indeed, Wannamaker's astutely structured and stimulating study makes a convincing case for not simply dismissing boy culture and reading as inappropriate. On the contrary, she argues that boys rather need encouragement to grow into independent, discerning readers who fully understand that hegemonic models of masculinity are but literary and social constructs.

Jochen Weber



Focus IBBY



The nominees for the Hans Christian Andersen awards have been announced and the jury has been selected. Details are set for the next IBBY Congress in Santiago de Compostela 2010 and a regional IBBY conference for the Americas in the Chicago area in October. The latest list of Outstanding Books for Young People with Disabilities is now available. Check out the latest on the national IBBY sections in Ireland, Zimbabwe and India. Finally, read more about the 2009 recipient of the Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award.

Compiled and edited by
ELIZABETH PAGE

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

Hans Christian Andersen Awards 2010

The IBBY National Sections from 33 countries have selected the following 29 authors and 27 illustrators as candidates for the 2010 Hans Christian Andersen Awards. The Awards are given every two years to an author and an illustrator whose complete works have made an important and lasting contribution to children's literature.

- **Argentina**: *Author:* Liliana Bodoc; *Illustrator:* Luis Scafati
- **Austria**: *Author:* Heinz Janisch; *Illustrator:* Linda Wolfsgruber
- **Belgium**: *Author:* Pierre Coran; *Illustrator:* Carll Cneut
- **Brazil**: *Author:* Bartolomeu Campos de Queirós; *Illustrator:* Roger Mello
- **Canada**: *Author:* Brian Doyle; *Illustrator:* Marie-Louise Gay
- **China**: *Author:* Liu Xianping
- **Croatia**: *Illustrator:* Svjetlan Junakóvić
- **Cyprus**: *Author:* Maria Pyliotou
- **Czech Republic**: *Author:* Pavel Šrut; *Illustrator:* Jiří Šalamoun
- **Denmark**: *Author:* Louis Jensen; *Illustrator:* Lilian Brøgger
- **Finland**: *Author:* Hannu Mäkelä; *Illustrator:* Salla Savolainen
- **France**: *Author:* Jean-Claude Mourlevat; *Illustrator:* Grégoire Solotareff
- **Germany**: *Author:* Peter Härtling; *Illustrator:* Jutta Bauer
- **Greece**: *Author:* Loty Petrovits-Andrutsopulou; *Illustrator:* Diatsenta Parissi
- **Iran**: *Author:* Ahmad Reza Ahmadi
- **Ireland**: *Author:* Eoin Colfer; *Illustrator:* P.J. Lynch
- **Japan**: *Author:* Shuntaro Tanikawa; *Illustrator:* Akiko Hayashi
- **Lithuania**: *Illustrator:* Kęstutis Kasparavičius
- **Mexico**: *Author:* Alberto Blanco; *Illustrator:* Fabricio Vanden Broeck
- **Mongolia**: *Author:* Dashdondog Jamba
- **Netherlands**: *Author:* Peter van Gestel; *Illustrator:* Harrie Geelen
- **Norway**: *Author:* Bjørn Sortland; *Illustrator:* Thore Hansen
- **Russia**: *Illustrator:* Nickolay Popov
- **Serbia**: *Author:* Zoran Božović
- **Slovak Republic**: *Author:* Ján Uličiansky; *Illustrator:* Peter Uchnár
- **Slovenia**: *Author:* Tone Pavček; *Illustrator:* Ančka Gošnik Godec
- **Spain**: *Author:* Jordi Sierra i Fabra; *Illustrator:* Xan López Domínguez
- **Sweden**: *Author:* Lennart Hellsing; *Illustrator:* Anna-Clara Tidholm
- **Switzerland**: *Illustrator:* Etienne Delessert
- **Turkey**: *Author:* Muzaffer İzgü; *Illustrator:* Can Göknil
- **Uganda**: *Author:* Evangeline Ledi Barongo
- **United Kingdom**: *Author:* David Almond; *Illustrator:* Michael Foreman
- **USA**: *Author:* Walter Dean Myers; *Illustrator:* Eric Carle

The 2010 Jury was elected by the IBBY Executive Committee at its meeting in Bologna in March 2009 from nominations made by the IBBY National Sections. Jury President Zohreh Ghaeni (Tehran, Iran) will guide the process and preside at the jury meeting. Former IBBY Vice President Elda Nogueira (Rio de Janeiro, Brazil) and IBBY Executive Director Liz Page are *ex officio* members of the Jury.

The ten members of the Hans Christian Andersen Award Jury 2010 are as follows:

- **Ernie Bond** Professor of Children's and Young Adult Literature at Salisbury University, Maryland, USA.
- **Karen Coeman** Master of Art in History and publisher in Mexico City, Mexico.
- **Nadia El Kholy** Professor and Chair of the Department of English Language and Literature, faculty of Arts at Cairo University, Egypt.
- **María Jesús Gil** professional consultant for publishing houses, Madrid, Spain.
- **Jan Hansson** Director of the Swedish Institute for Children's Books, Stockholm, Sweden.
- **Annemie Leysen** a lecturer, reviewer, critic and publicist from Heverlee, Belgium.
- **Darja Mazi-Leskovar** Associate Professor at the FERI, Media Communication Institute, University of Maribor, Slovenia.
- **Alicia Salvi** a professor of language and literature and an expert on children's literature at the University of Buenos Aires, Argentina.
- **Helene Schär** former director of the Baobab Children's Book Fund and editor of the Baobab series, Basel, Switzerland.
- **Regina Zilberman** is a children's literature specialist and former director of the *Instituto Estadual do Livro*, Porto Alegre, Brazil.

The jury meeting will take place in Basel 13 and 14 March 2010 and the shortlist will be announced immediately. The winners will be announced at the IBBY Press Conference at the Bologna Children's Book Fair on Monday, 22 March 2010 and the presentation of the medals will be on 11 September at the IBBY Congress in Santiago de Compostela, Spain.

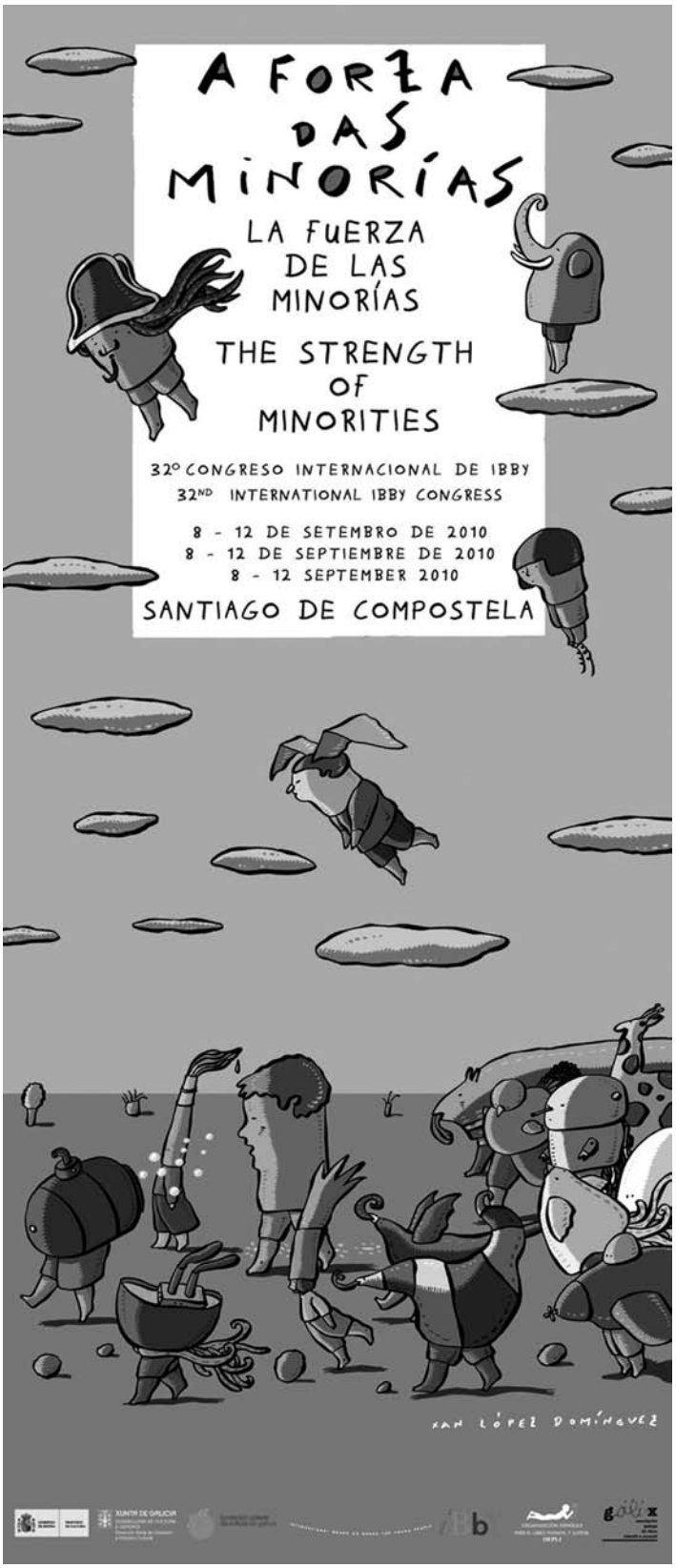
Next IBBY Congress: Santiago de Compostela 2010

The 2010 IBBY Congress will take pace in Santiago de Compostela in Galicia Spain 8 – 12 September. The main theme of the Congress is the Strength of Minorities and will focus on the different kind of minorities in children's literature. We all belong to minorities in one way or the other whether it is by language, culture, economics, religion, climate or even physical or mental difficulties. Around the world there are regimes that disregard the fundamental rights of children, while others are forced to emigrate and have to start again in a

foreign language and culture, some even become stateless.

These sub-themes and much more will be covered during the congress in the plenary lectures, the seminar sessions and the roundtable discussions. The full programme and description of the event is posted on the website at: www.ibbycompostela2010.org Registration is now open.

The call for papers opened in May 2009 with a deadline of 31 October 2009. The Congress Committee will study all the summaries submitted and announce the selected speakers in January 2010.



Eighth IBBY Regional Conference Set for Chicago area

The 8th IBBY Regional Conference held in the US provides a unique opportunity for teachers, librarians, and other readers to experience the world of international children´s and young adult literature. The conference theme, "Children´s Books: Where Worlds Meet," captures the spirit of what will happen over the course of three days as people from all corners of the United States, as well as a range of countries from around the world come together to read, discuss, share, and revel in books that take us to worlds real and imaginary; offer insights into other people and ways of life; and promote international understanding through children´s books.

The number of conferees is deliberately kept small (250-300 people) to enable interaction, lively sharing of perspectives, and collaboration. Guest speakers join in the conference for the entire time. Time

and opportunities are provided for examining the variety of book exhibits that are present; for hearing from plenary, breakout, and poster session speakers; and for engaging in formal and informal discussions about books.

We are excited by the depth and range of talent who will be present at the conference to interact with participants. Authors, illustrators, translators, publishers, individuals internationally recognized for their work in book promotion, literary scholars, and others from Latin America, Africa, Europe, Asia, Australia, and various parts of North America will share their talents, wisdom, and passion about children´s literature in both formal presentations and informal conversations. Among those presenting are Shaun Tan (Australia), David Wiesner (USA), Ana Maria Machado (Brazil), Carmen Diana Dearden (Venezuela), Katherine Paterson (USA), Klaas Verplancke (Belgium), Patsy Aldana (Canada), Vladimir Radunsky (Russia), Arvind Kumar (India), Yohannes Gebregeorgis (Ethiopia), and Naomi Shihab Nye (USA).

On Friday, October 2nd, join us for an evening after-dinner event featuring local SCBWI Author/Illustrator Roundtable Discussions. Saturday, October 3rd features a full day of exciting keynote addresses, exhibits, breakout sessions, panel discussions, and the Briley Lecture address by Carmen Diana Dearden after dinner. Sunday, October 4th begins with the USBBY Annual Membership Meeting, information about the 2010 IBBY World Congress and continues with provocative keynote panels, gallery talks, book discussions, and an international video conference.

An impressive array of exhibits will be on display at the conference for you to peruse, among them, the International Youth Library´s "An Imaginary Library: Children's Books That Don't Exist (Yet...)," the 2008 IBBY Honour List, and the "Outstanding Books for Young People with Disabilities." Gallery talks related to each exhibit will take place at specified times every day, and you can browse for yourself whenever you like.

Registration is open now.

Rates for June 16 - September 1:
Registration fee:

$185 USBBY members
$260 non-members (includes USBBY membership and a subscription to the IBBY journal *Bookbird*).

Student registration fee:
Full-time undergraduate or graduate students can register at the following rates:

$85 Student (USBBY member)
$150 Student (non-member)

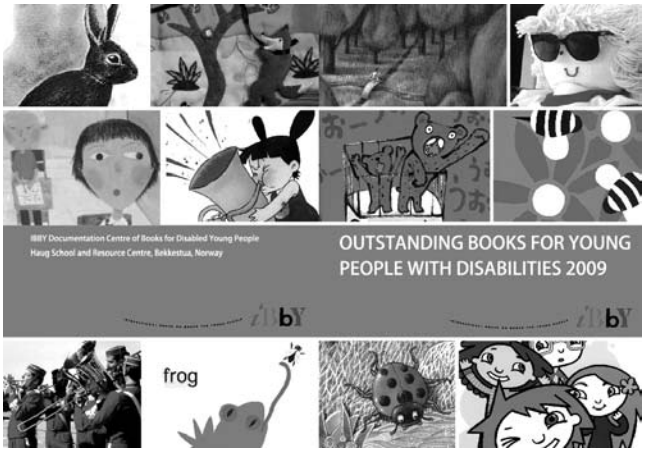
The Q Center is an attractive conference center/retreat in St. Charles, Illinois that offers state of the art 21st century meeting facilities in a peaceful, intimate setting that is conveniently located only about 45 minutes by shuttle from Chicago's O´Hare International Airport. The Q Center can arrange all of your ground transportation needs.

Q Center conference site

You can make these arrangements as part of the process of reserving your hotel room at the Q Center. At present, the airport transportation fee is $54 each way that can be shared by up to 3 people. A-1 Limo will try, when possible, to coordinate up to 3 people who are arriving within a fairly close time. Please be prepared to pay the driver in cash as you would a taxi. A variety of post-conference tours will also be made available.

Outstanding Books for Young People with Disabilities 2009

Many young people with disabilities cannot read or enjoy a regular book, or they cannot find a suitable book among the many publications available. Therefore, they need specially produced books or selected regular books of literary and artistic quality that meet their special needs regarding design, language, plot structure and pictures. However, it is neither possible nor desirable to make a blueprint of what is a suitable book, because young people with disabilities are, like all of us, individuals with very different needs and skills. Only a wide choice of books based on profound knowledge of the various special needs can, in the end, give young people with disabilities access to books.



As an instrument for communication and participation, literature has an important role to play in the development of our identity and quality of life. IBBY launched this project in 1997 in order to give young people with disabilities the opportunity to enjoy books as others enjoy them.

Since 2002, the IBBY Documentation Centre of Books for Disabled Young People has been based at the Haug School and Resource Centre (HSRC) under the leadership of Heidi Cortner Boiesen. Every two years the centre, with the cooperation of the IBBY Secretariat, invites the National Sections and selected publishers to submit suitable titles. From the books submitted Heidi Cortner Boiesen makes a selection that shows a cross-section of what is available. We hope this brief glimpse will stimulate more publishers to work in the field, as well as encourage parents, carers and teachers to share them with young people who would benefit from them.

The new selection of books for young people who either have some kind of disability themselves or have friends or siblings that are challenged, launched at the Bologna Book Fair in March 2009. The 2009 selection includes 50 titles from a record 21 countries.

The selection is kept together as a travelling exhibition that will tour

various destinations over the next two years. The worldwide interest in the books has grown enormously over the past few years, so much that two sets of books are now required to cover all the requests for exhibition time. Venues in Italy, Japan, USA, Slovakia, Iran and Spain have already booked exhibition time. They will also be prominently on show at the IBBY regional conference in St Charles, Chicago in October 2009 and Heidi will present them at the 32nd IBBY Congress in Santiago de Compostela a year later. The accompanying full-colour annotated catalogue can be ordered from the IBBY Secretariat in Basel.

Related Links
www.haugskole.com
www.ibbycompostela2010.org
www.usbby.org

Heidi Boiesen and Liz Page

Raising Awareness and Funds for IBBY Zimbabwe; The Twinning Experience

In 2008, as IBBY Ireland celebrated its 10th anniversary, one of the key objectives for the year was to enter into a twinning arrangement with an emerging IBBY national section. After much research and advice from IBBY headquarters, Ireland twinned with IBBY Zimbabwe in March 2008. Since then, a great deal has happened. This short account summarizes the achievements to date and focuses on a recent event designed to create awareness about the ongoing work in Zimbabwe and IBBY Ireland's role in this special relationship.

Keith Munyengeterwa, the President of IBBY Zimbabwe has been a vital contact point since the start of our partnership. His frequent emails, reports and most recently IBBY Zimbabwe's first newsletter, have given us great insight into the work that needs to be done. Rebuilding the networks of literature and literacy in Zimbabwe is no small challenge during the current political upheaval, so we are acutely aware of the obstacles facing this nascent organization. In the early stages, IBBY Ireland liaised with Keith, advising on the establishment and management of this kind of organization, sharing useful tips such as how to plan a workshop or prepare a constitution. One of the most important activities of the year was the facilitation of Keith's trip to the IBBY Congress in Copenhagen in September 2008. This was an invaluable opportunity for several members of IBBY Ireland to meet with Keith face to face and to discuss the practicalities of the twinning relationship. Fundamentally, Keith found out even more about the extent of the work of IBBY worldwide. He met delegates from other African IBBY organizations including Egypt, Rwanda and Uganda and arising out of contacts made with IBBY South Africa, he made an important visit to Cape Town in January 2009. There he saw firsthand projects such as the township reading clubs, the container libraries (converted, second-hand sea containers) and efforts to promote indigenous publishing.

In addition to covering Keith's travel expenses to Cape Town and also to the International Book Fair held annually in Harare in the summer, IBBY Ireland funded a workshop for teacher/school librarians in Bulawayo and financed a computer and printer for the use of IBBY Zimbabwe.

Zimbabwean event in Dublin

To implement the objectives of IBBY Zimbabwe, IBBY Ireland is clearly aware of the ongoing need for funds to carry out their planned projects. By way of practical assistance, a Zimbabwe awareness event took place in Pearse Street Library in the heart of Dublin on February 26th 2009. The aim was to highlight the excellent progress made to date and to make links with organizations in Dublin that would be supportive of such work. Several high profile Irish authors and illustrators were invited

to chat about their latest work. Specially selected Zimbabwean music was played against a backdrop of themed illustrations by artist Eliana Valentini. These were interspersed with images evoking the local colour of Zimbabwe's rich heritage and landscape. One of Eliana's striking images was used for the promotional posters and cards.

Valerie Coghlan, President of IBBY Ireland, welcomed the audience and spoke about the twinning arrangements and plans for the future and she then introduced Farai Jeyacheya from the Zimbabwe Community Network who, with his colleagues, had helped to promote and sponsor the event. Representatives from a diverse range of disciplines were in attendance - artists, writers, academics, colleagues from aid agencies such as Trócaire, Concern and Amnesty International, members of the Zimbabwean community in Ireland and indeed a number of Irish people who had worked in Zimbabwe previously and were keen to find out more about current developments. It was a full programme for the evening with a line up which included four well known Irish authors, Oisin McGann, Sarah Webb, Éilis Ní Dhuibhne and Conor Kostick and award-winning illustrator P.J. Lynch who had recently been selected as the IBBY Ireland nominee for the Hans Christian Andersen Award for 2010. The authors chatted about their recent publications and presented short readings to give a flavor of work in progress. Two lively raffles were held during the course of the evening with prizes (generously donated by a variety of sponsors) won by a large percentage of enthusiastic attendees! The gala prize of a 48cm LCD Colour TV, courtesy of the Zimbabwe Community Network, was won by a delighted Dervila Cooke who was presented with her prize by Farai Jeyacheya. Publisher Michael O'Brien of The O'Brien Press, a former President of IBBY Ireland, kindly offered one of his own paintings of a beach scene in Galway as a prize and it was won by Maeve McMahon.

Farai Jeyacheya of the Zimbabwe Community Network in Ireland with Valerie Coghlan, President of IBBY Ireland and Gillian Colton, webmaster and IBBY Ireland Committee member.

From IBBY Ireland's perspective, twinning with IBBY Zimbabwe has been a rewarding experience, providing insight into a very different environment for children and books. At a time when recessionary measures are being felt worldwide, there are many opportunities to see just how creative one can be with limited resources and it is refreshing to see how resourceful and inventive IBBY Zimbabwe has been in such a short period of time. The cultural event outlined above was important for us as it helped establish a link with the

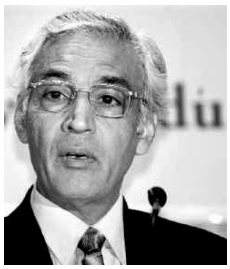
Keith Munyengeterwa visiting a reading club session organised by PRAESA in Cape Town, January 2009.

Zimbabwean community in Ireland, it raised the profile of IBBY Ireland with a number of organizations that were not aware of the work of IBBY worldwide and of course, we all had a most enjoyable evening. Thanks to the generosity of our speakers and sponsors, we raised much needed funds to help IBBY Zimbabwe achieve their goals. We wish them ongoing success and look forward to working closely with them in the months ahead.

Marian Keyes

Marian Keyes is Secretary of IBBY Ireland. She is currently researching a PhD in Children's Literature and her work is funded by IRCHSS (Irish Research Council for the Humanities and Social Sciences).

Association of Writers and Illustrators for Children (AWIC)/Indian BBY Activities



Delhi's Lt. Governor, Mr. Tejendra Khanna

The Association of Writers and Illustrators for Children (AWIC)/ Indian BBY began the year on a fruitful note with the closing ceremony of the AWIC Children's Library Project silver jubilee celebration. On 18th April 2009, 55 children, regular readers in AWIC children's libraries, were presented with the Reader of the Year Award and 4 AWIC librarians were awarded for their contributions. The event was organized with the help of the Russian Centre of Science and Culture. Maria Pavlova, Deputy Director of the Centre, made a presentation on Russian children's literature. AWIC started the silver jubilee year with its Gift a Book campaign under which it gifted 5000 books to children who had no access to story books. The Let us Read Together program, inaugurated by Mr. Tejendra Khanna, the Lt. Governor of Delhi, was another integral part of the yearlong events.

AWIC is also organizing a 3-day International Conference on Children's Libraries from 4-6 February 2010 at New Delhi, India. The theme of the conference is "Building a Book Culture" and its aim is to discuss the potential and scope of libraries in strengthening the book culture. The presence of IBBY-Asahi Reading Promotion Award winners will be the highlight of this pioneering conference. The early bird registration (US $300) has been extended through July 31, 2009. Thereafter, the fees will be US $350. For more information, contact AWIC at awicbooks@yahoo.com. Details and the registration form are also available at the website www.awic.in.

Devika Rangachari

The Tamer Institute Receives 2009 Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award

The 2009 Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award has been awarded to the Tamer Institute For Community Education, promoters of reading activities on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. The award jury noted, "With perseverance, audacity and resourcefulness, the Tamer Institute has, for two decades, stimulated Palestinian children's and young adults' love of reading – and their creativity. Under difficult circumstances, the Institute carries out reading promotion of an unusual breadth and versatility. In the spirit of Astrid Lindgren, the Tamer Institute acknowledges the power of words and the strength of books, stories and imagination as important keys to self-esteem, tolerance and the courage to face life."

The award will be formally presented by HRH Crown Princess Victoria on 2 June in the Stockholm Concert Hall in the presence of the Swedish Minister for Culture, Lena Adelsohn Liljeroth.

Tamer Institute

Renad Qubbaj, General Director, Tamer Institute for Community Education, received the award news at the Bologna Children's Book Fair in April.

This year's award is the seventh. The previous winners are Sonya Hartnett (2008), Banco del Libro (2007), Katherine Paterson (2006), Philip Pullman (2005), Ryôji Arai (2005), Lygia Bojunga (2004), Christine Nöstlinger (2003) and Maurice Sendak (2003).

The Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award (ALMA) is the world's largest prize for children's and young people's literature. The prize totals SEK 5 million (equivalent to approx. USD 578,000, 445,000 EUR) and is awarded annually to a single recipient or to several. Authors, illustrators, storytellers and those active in reading promotion may be rewarded. The prize aims to strengthen and increase interest in children's and young people's literature globally. The award is designed to strengthen children's rights at a global level. An expert jury names prize-winners who are nominated by institutions and organisations worldwide. The Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award is administered by the Swedish Arts Council.

Greg Mortenson & Susan L. Roth

Listen to the Wind

New York: Dial Books
(Penguin Young Readers Group), 2009
32 pp ISBN 10-0803730586;
ISBN-13 9780803730588
(picture book, 4-8)

Greg Mortenson is cofounder and Executive Director of the nonprofit Central Asia Institute (www.ikat.org) and founder of Pennies for Peace. Adapted for the youngest readers from his New York Times bestseller, Three Cups of Tea, Listen to the Wind relates how Mortensen's failed climb up the mountain K2 led the author to begin building schools in remote regions of Pakistan and Afghanistan. In simple text, accompanied by Susan Roth's remarkable collages and a collection of the author's photographs, the story tells how the people of Korphe in the mountains of Pakistan nursed Mortenson back to health after he stumbled, lost and ill, into their village. Shocked to learn that the village children had no school, he promised to build one. Listen to the Wind relates the remarkable story of how the school was built against all odds. Roth's strikingly original collages convey both the warmth of the people and the stark grandeur of their environment. In a book of unusual beauty, this inspiring true story evokes a sense of wonder. (See also Mortenson's Three Cups of Tea: One Man's Journey to Change the World … One Child at a Time, young reader's edition adapt. by Sarah Thompson for readers 8-12. Dial Books, 2009.)

Glenna Sloan

Constantin Adadja

The Three Monkeys: I Will Come Back Home

COTONO, BENIN: STAR EDITIONS, 2009
28 pp ISBN 978999-19-303-6-7
(graphic novel, 12+)

This comic is one of ten in "First Steps" published in the Republic of Benin. The project was carried out within the framework of the Comic International Festival of Benin in Porto-Novo from 23 to 28 February 2009; it was suggested by the Beninese Draftsmen of the Press and Comic Association, financed by the Beninese Decentralized Cultural Initiatives Program and the European Union. This young author tells in his graphic novel, the sad story of a child whose wicked father sent him to work in the stone quarries in Nigeria. The boy, along with two of his friends, decides to flee the suffering and they try to return to their country. Tragically, they die on the way in an accident with a gravel truck. The little boy dies carrying in his hand a letter that he wrote to his mother, telling her of his return home. The scenario includes some English words, and the actions and characters are expressively drawn. The subject is highly topical in Benin where strong protests are currently being carried out against trafficking in child labor.

Georges Bada

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 (1BBY).

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 question.

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 to: kurkjianc@comcast.net; kurkjianc@gmail.com *and* 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, appearing 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 favorite 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).

Chanted Word

Maori carving at Whakarewarewa, Rotorua, New Zealand
©iStockphoto.com/Tristan Tuftnell

We adzed our history
into the wood
lifted the pou
to hold the roof
that sheltered
the chanted word
of tikanga. Hei!

They torched our history
out of the wood
charred the pou
flattened the roof
to smother
the chanted word
of tikanga. Hei!

We reclaimed our history
recarved the wood
raised the pou
uplifted the roof
revived te reo
the chanted word
of tikanga. Hei!

by DOROTHY WHAREHOKA

Dorothy Wharehoka is a poet whose work has appeared in POETRY PUDDING; A DELICIOUS COLLECTION OF RHYME AND WIT, edited by Jenny Argante, illustrated by Debbie Tipuna (Reed Publishing, 2007; Auckland, NZ).

Traditions, myths, and history were carved or woven into the walls and rafters of meeting houses and celebrated along with chanting and waiata (songs) of the Maori culture of New Zealand. There was a time when it seemed the Te Reo language would die out due to conflict and a lack of understanding on the part of early European colonizers, but a resurgence from 1970 onwards has changed this situation. Now even the school curriculum contains wider use of tikanga— all aspects of Maori culture.

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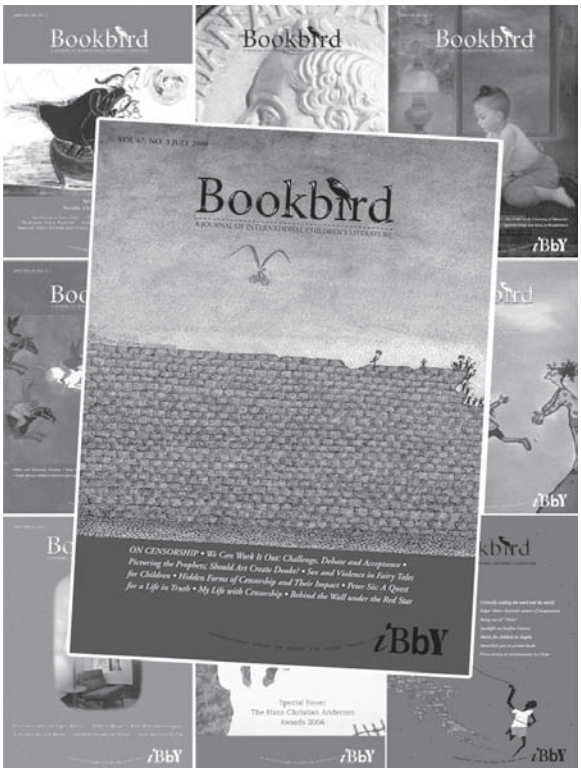

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