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# Bookbird

A JOURNAL OF INTERNATIONAL CHILDREN'S LITERATURE



INTERNATIONAL BOARD ON BOOKS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

IBBY

XAN LÓPEZ DOMÍNGUEZ

The evolution of children's and young adults' literature in Spain • The construction of identity in picture books in Spanish • Panorama of a new century; Children's literature in Catalan • The trajectory of Basque literature for children and young people • The lineage of the blue hen; Galician literature for children in the turn of the century • "In *The Lost Child (El Niño Perdido)* I have tried to speak of the war, avoiding the rhetoric of violence;" An interview with Josep Antoni Tàssies • Children's literature and reading in Spain: A snapshot • Twenty years of the IBBY-Asahi Reading Promotion Award • Poem in 5 languages

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

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**Cover image:** Xan López Domínguez created this art for the poster for the 2010 IBBY World Congress in Santiago de Compostela, Spain.

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A JOURNAL OF INTERNATIONAL CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

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LEARN ABOUT THE WORLD

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The quoted lines for each section of the table of contents are from the poem "To You" by Langston Hughes. "To You" from THE COLLECTED POEMS OF LANGSTON HUGHES by Langston Hughes, edited by Arnold Rampersad with David Roessel, Associate Editor, copyright 1994 by the Estate of Langston Hughes. Used by permission of Alfred A. Knopf, a division of Random House, Inc.

## *Bookbird* guest editors



**PEP MOLIST** is a librarian, children's book author, literary critic, and managing co-director (with Joan Portell) of the magazine *Faristol*, the only Catalan magazine specializing in children's and young adults' literature ([www.clijcat.cat/faristol/](http://www.clijcat.cat/faristol/)).



**JOAN PORTELL** is an educator, writer, literary critic, and managing co-director of *Faristol* (with Pep Molist), and an avid advocate for the promotion of reading.



Dear *Bookbird* Readers,

# ¡Hola!

This special issue celebrates children's literature in Spain in preparation for the IBBY Congress to be held in Spain in Santiago de Compostela in September 2010. Our guest editors for this special Congress issue are Pep Molist and Joan Portell from ClijCAT, *the Catalan Council for Children's and Young Adults' Books*. Molist and Portell did an extraordinary job of collecting articles from Spanish scholars representing various historic regions of Spain. All of the articles in this issue are written in English; however, Molist and Portell arranged to have them available in Castellano as well as in the native language of the writers where applicable (Basque, Galician, or Catalan). You will find these articles, written in the languages of Spain, posted on the IBBY website and on the Congress website.

There are many people to thank in producing this issue. First and foremost, we thank Pep Molist and Joan Portell for going above and beyond in their efforts to honor the "minorities" of Spain. We also appreciate the contributions of each of the article authors, illustrators, poets, and translators. Thanks also to Reina Duarte (Vice President of the Executive Board (EC) of IBBY and Vice President of the Catalan Branch of IBBY Spain), who was very supportive throughout the process in helping us coordinate these efforts. Thank you to Glenna Sloan, Department Editor of *Postcards Around the World*, and Alicia Muñoz Álvarez (IBBY Spain) for working together to review

children's books of Spain and presenting reviews in both English and in Spanish. Incidentally. The "Postcard" reviews in Spanish will be posted online along with the articles written in the languages of Spain. We also thank the EC for making this new online venture possible, supporting our efforts to reach out to *Bookbird* readers in other languages besides English.

Lastly, we thank Dr. Joan Glazer, President of Bookbird, Inc., for her encouragement and support in making this congress issue of *Bookbird* available to a wider audience and for all her dedication and service to *Bookbird*. Clearly, she embodies the inclusive spirit of *Bookbird*.

Catherine Kurkjian and Sylvia Vardell  
Editors, *Bookbird*

Dear *Bookbird* Readers,  
**"The Strength of Minorities" (*La fuerza de las minorías*)** and their situation is the motto and general theme of the **32nd IBBY International Congress**, which will be held in Santiago de Compostela, from 8th to 12th September 2010. As guest editors of this Congress issue we are delighted to provide a sampling of articles that mirror the theme of the IBBY congress. We provide an overview of children's and young adults' literature that is being developed and has been created during the first decade of the 21st century.

Although from the outside it is customary to associate each country with a single language, in this case there are actually four official languages in Spain. In addition to Castellano, there is also Galician, Basque, and Catalan: languages of communication for the three historical nations of Galicia, the Basque Country, and Catalonia. Each of these languages is thriving, has a significant number of people who use it habitually in daily life, and has a rich, diverse, and changing literature.

In this issue, various specialists, at the state level as well as in each of the official languages and nationalities, take the pulse of children's and young adults' literature that has been generated during the last ten years in each of the four

languages. Additionally, this issue delves into the trajectory of Josep Antoni Tàssies, one of the country's most outstanding illustrators and the first Spanish author to receive the Grand Prix of the Biennial of Illustration Bratislava.

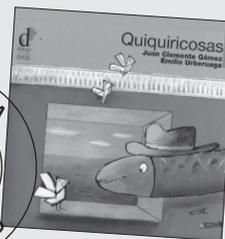
IBBY has concerned itself with the situations of minorities for many years. This question takes shape in the 32nd IBBY International Congress in Santiago de Compostela and is mirrored in this special issue of *Bookbird*. It focuses on children's literature of Spain in all of the richness that exists in a country where there is a majority language, three other official ones, and other minority ones which, unfortunately, have neither an official status nor a children's and young adults' literature sufficiently diverse to satisfy the needs of their readers.

In keeping with the theme of the Congress **"The Strength of Minorities" (*La fuerza de las minorías*)**, we are excited to announce that these articles are posted on both the IBBY and Congress websites in Castellano as well as in the language of their respective authors (Catalan, Galician, and Basque). The goal of this issue is to celebrate the cultural, linguistic, and literary heritage of children's literature in Spain and to provide a status check as to where things stand at the time of this Congress.

Pep Molist and Joan Portell  
Guest Editors

*Quiquiricosas / Thingummies* features ten poems by Juan Clemente Gómez, well-known novelist and teacher, integrated in a lovely picture book with marvelous double-page illustrations. The author draws his inspiration from the rich Castilian oral tradition and from English nonsense verse; he uses patterns from folk nursery rhymes and street games, as well as every poetical figure that can inject musicality into a text for children. The work of top-rated illustrator Emilio Urberuaga is published in over nine countries and regularly appears on the White Ravens list. This time, using a mixed-media technique, he achieves clean luminous brilliant colors that fill all the available space, making the real life and nonsensical or surrealistic characters come to life and emphasizing the fantastic and humorous atmosphere created by the poems. Here is an ideal book for children to hear read aloud in the voices of their loved ones. They will thus discover, even before they can read, the beauty of poetic images and the sonorous power of a sequence of words and rhymes, while they simultaneously enjoy Emilio Urberuaga's eloquent panoramic illustrations.

M<sup>a</sup> José Gómez-Navarro



Juan Clemente Gómez  
*Quiquiricosas / Thingummies*  
 Illus. Emilio Urberuaga  
 Valencia, Spain: Diálogo, 2008.  
 38 pp. ISBN: 978-84-96976-08-5  
 (picture book, poetry, 3+)

Alonso and Vicente have produced a picture book of great artistic beauty. The authors evoke similarities between the shapes and textures of fruit and parts of the human body. They have also created a simple yet daring storyline: a young girl describes the walk a spider takes along the child's body, at the same time initiating a friendship between them. The writing and images radiate gentleness and sensitivity, and they succeed in blending seemingly contrary concepts such as beauty and ugliness. The combination of photography and drawings that illustrate this story help the reader understand the literary and descriptive aspects of the book. The authors, Fran Alonso and Manuel González Vicente, have participated together in several diverse publishing projects. Their pursuits, both literary and graphical, have been cultivated primarily in Galicia. Alonso has won the Blanco Amor Award for writing and Vicente has presented expositions and created monographic works, particularly those related to the Way of St. James.

Alicia Muñoz Álvarez



Fran Alonso  
*La araña y yo / The Spider and I*  
 Illus. Manuel G. Vicente  
 Sevilla, Spain: Kalandraka Ediciones  
 Andalucía, 2009.  
 40 pp. ISBN: 978-84-96388-45-1  
 (picture book, 3+)

# The Evolution of Children's and Young Adults' Literature in Spain

by TERESA COLOMER



Teresa Colomer is a professor at Autonomous University of Barcelona (UAB) and director of the research group GRETEL ([www.gretel.cat](http://www.gretel.cat)) which looks at the relationship between reading, current children's and young adults' literature, and literary education in compulsory schooling.

She is the author of more than 200 publications for which she has received various national and international awards.



*The author takes us on a guided tour of the history of children's and young adult literature in Spain that spans from the Middle Ages to the present. This historical journey provides insight into how political events shaped the growth of literary traditions across the four official languages of Spain.*

L iterature for children in Spain has been subject to an unequal and sometimes sporadic development: while Catalan and Castilian have written literature that has been uninterrupted since the Middle Ages until the present day, Basque and Galician followed a more irregular path with rules for writing being set only at the end of the 20th century. It has been an uneven process, given that the oral Basque language was standardized for the first time despite a certain written tradition, while there is an updated Galician written language that had a literary tradition at various stages in its evolution.

Perhaps it is curious to note that the first European book on children's education appeared in Catalan: the *Doctrina Pueril* ('Child's Doctrine'), dedicated by Ramon Llull to his son in 1282. Undoubtedly, the book cannot be classified as children's reading, whereas other fragments by the same author, such as *El llibre de les bèsties* ('The Book of Beasts'), join the collection of literary works accessible to children written throughout the following centuries until the 19th century, when a body of work began to be produced specifically aimed at the

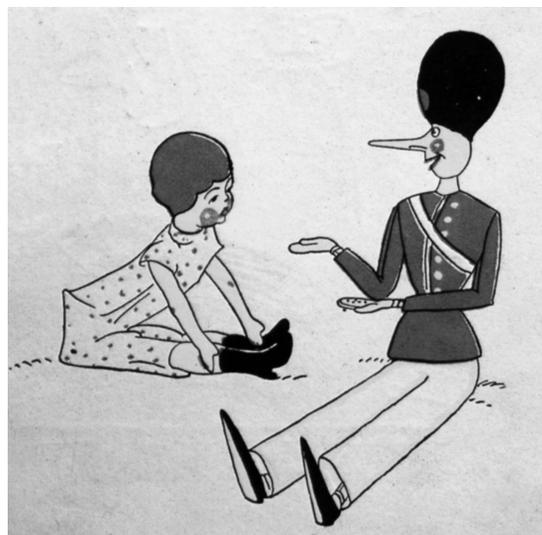
young population, a population then immersed in a slow process of compulsory education in Castilian that was not consolidated until the 20th century.

There are several examples of children's books in Spanish for children in this growing body of work, including: educational works aimed at children with an inkling of literary interest, fables and alphabet-based readers for school reading, the publication of the first *aleluyas* (comics or illustrated albums) and other popular forms, the transfer of compiled works from the oral tradition targeted at children, works by authors of adult literature such as the occasional tale or play (for example, those by Fernan Caballero), the beginning of translations of children's literature from other languages, such as Perrault's tales introduced by Coll i Vehí in 1862, the foundation of the first educational and entertainment magazines for children, from the precursory *Gaceta de los Niños* ('Children's Gazette') in 1798 to growing initiatives by newspapers and magazines creating imitations of the contemporary French children's press.

*In 1884, Saturnino Calleja began the publication of children's stories in Madrid with the objective of making schoolbooks and tales more accessible and attractive to children.*

### Constructing modernity in the 20th century

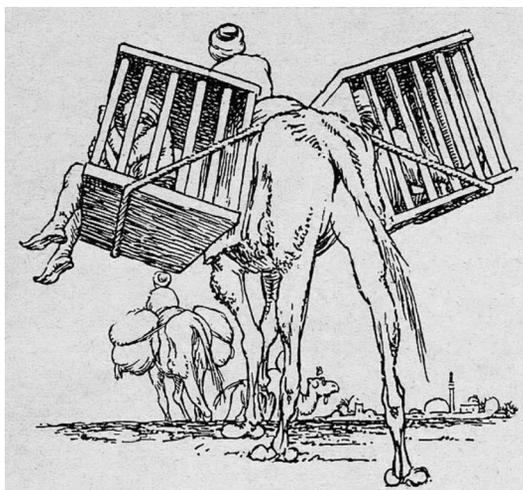
Towards the end of the 19th century, a more enterprising publishing market began to develop in Spain. In 1884, Saturnino Calleja began the publication of children's stories in Madrid with the objective of making schoolbooks and tales more accessible and attractive to children. Through the collections of his publishing house, the tales of Andersen, Perrault, and the brothers Grimm as well as the Italian *Giannetto* by Parravicini, known as *Juanito* in Castilian, were disseminated. Also from Italy came the imaginative adventures of the puppet Pinocchio, published in 1917 by Salvador Bartolozzi, who also served as director of the Guñol Comedy Theatre and the first author that



Bartolozzi, Salvador.  
*A Pinocho hace justicia.*

can truly be considered as having written children's literature. From this public success came the popular expression "*tienes más cuento que Calleja*" ("you have more tales than Calleja"). The pioneering work of Calleja is similar to that of Newbery in the birth of English children's literature in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, or equal to other editors in Spain such as the Basque Isaac López of Mendizábal. Also in the Basque Country the foundational work of the illustrator Zabalo Ballarin "Txiki" stands out, as well as the creation of the magazine *Teles eta Miko* in 1918 for the beginning of the comic strip.

However, it was in Barcelona, with the foundation of a children's publisher in 1852, that the publishing industry for children's books saw the greatest development in the first third of the century. Production occurred in Catalan as well as Castilian, with significant exportation to Latin America. The creation of a publishing infrastructure and additional technical advances, such as the importation of offset printing machinery to Spain in 1916, allowed for new types of books produced more cheaply and with illustrations and helped respond to the demand generated by schooling. One example of this innovation was the Catalan magazine *Patufet*. Founded in 1904, it was obliged to stop publication in 1938, and reached an average circulation of 60,000 copies, a phenomenal audience and continuity in a not very



Junceda, Joan.  
"Contes ÀrÀbics," *Revista Virolet*, 1927

literate society schooled only in Catalan during transitory political periods. Josep Maria Folch i Torres contributed to it tirelessly, the most prolific and popular author of Catalan children's literature in the first half of the century, with works such as *Les aventures extraordinÀries d'en Massagran* ('The Extraordinary Adventures of Massagran,' 1910), illustrated by Joan Junceda, another of the regular contributors to the magazine.

But the most influential factor for the development of quality children's literature was the modernization of educational ideas that was promoted in Spain particularly by the *Instituci3n Libre de Ensenyanza* (Free Institution for Teaching), an organization inspired by Krausist ideas and created in Madrid in 1876. Their educational criteria shaped the changing educational currents at the turn of the century and led to the support of a literature capable of contributing to the comprehensive development of children with a rigorous aesthetic approach (Sotomayor, 1992).

This noteworthy modernization corresponded with the social-cultural project that emerged from industrialized Catalonia and found its echo in elite Catalan social groups. However, the studious Jaime GarcÍa Padrino (1992) pointed out that in Castilian children's literature, "*In the first thirty years of the 20th century, the promotion and dissemination of creations for children lacked a systematic, institutional or standardised labour*" (151). Gradually, however,

the specialist in Catalan children's literature, Teresa Rovira (2002), noted that

*...the actions of the political Catalanism... accomplish a task of production and, above all, dissemination of books for children... In the task of constructing a new culture and a new society, the education of children was considered basic. Concern for the pedagogy leads to a movement of renewal which creates the need for some books, not only scholarly but also recreational, to complement the work of the school.* (18)

Thus, as early as 1908, the Barcelona Council debated the establishment of children's sections in public libraries, and in 1918 the first three such sections in Spain were inaugurated in Catalonia. In 1915, the first School for Librarians was founded, the only one until our recent democracy and in 1921, they created mobile libraries to visit Barcelona's public schools, a system established in 1918 by the *Instituci3n*. In all these projects, ideas were imported from outside: the Montessori method was introduced early to municipal schools, French and North American examples were imitated in the type of library construction and activities used to encourage reading, and the *Escola Nova* ('New School') was created by the anarchist Ferrer i GuÀrdia.

***Thus, as early as 1908, the Barcelona Council debated the establishment of children's sections in public libraries, and in 1918 the first three such sections in Spain were inaugurated in Catalonia.***

As Teresa Duran (2002) points out, it was thus that the first third of the century boasted a significant number of Catalan authors and illustrators who knew how to internalize the external influence of works such as *Struwwelpeter* or *Nils Holgersson* and of authors such as Lewis Carroll, Wilhelm Busch, or Beatrix Potter. In particular, writers

dreamed of being civilized and pro-European, based on the multi-faceted work of the modernist Apelles Mestres, the idyllic nature of Lola Anglada (*Margarida*, 1928; *En Peret*, 1928), the moral farces (*Sis Joans*, 1928) and *Les aventures d'En Perot Marrasquí* (1917) by the poet Carles Riba, the character descriptions of the avant-garde poet Joan Salvat-Papasseit (*Els nens de la meva escala*, 1922), the translations by the writer Josep Carner of the best universal works, the modern illustrations of Joan Llaverias and many others, the appearance of the first detective novels in Spain (*Bolavà, detectiu* by Folch i Torres in 1912), children's adventures (*Lau or les aventures d'un aprenent de pilot* by Carles Soldevila in 1926), and popular literature (*Els ocells amics* by Josep Maria de Segarra in 1922) – all of which are classic references for Catalan children's literature.

*After the Spanish Civil War (1936 – 1939), there was a forty-year break from the previous advancements. The majority of the best authors and illustrators found themselves in exile, while the domestic production was inhibited by the prohibition of publishing in non-Castilian languages and by the censorship law, which was only removed after the re-establishment of democracy in 1977.*

For its part, the Spanish reformist tradition, through the principles of educational action of the *Institución Libre de Enseñanza*, aroused the expectation of social progress entrusted to the Spanish Republic during the 1930s. The thriving Castilian literature of the period, with the inspiration of the Generation 27 authors (such as Alberti or García Lorca) and their predilection for formal experimentation and folkloric roots, created an artistic foundation that greatly influenced

production of books for children. At the same time this was beginning to be supported institutionally. Awards, children's book fairs, mobile libraries, and the inauguration of more than three thousand school libraries all offered a new context for children's reading.

Several children's authors were outstanding in this movement, such as Manuel Abril, Maria Teresa León, Antoniorrobes, and Elena Fortún. They modernized the themes and forms of children's literature in Castilian. Antoniorrobes contributed works such as *8 cuentos de niñas y muñecas* ('8 Tales of Girls and Dolls,' 1930) and *Hermanos Monigotes* ('Paper Doll Brothers,' 1934). His avant-gardism and pedagogical concern for inculcating a new culture are similar in some respects to the later orientation of the Italian author and educator Gianni Rodari. Elena Fortún owes her fame principally to the creation of the characters Celia and her brother Cuchifritín, whose beginnings lie in a magazine supplement from 1929 and were developed into a series of books. Without a doubt, their exile after Franco's victory distanced both authors from the top positions they were entitled to in the evolution of children's literature in Spain.

#### **Regression under Franco's dictatorship**

After the Spanish Civil War (1936–1939), there was a forty-year break from the previous advancements. The majority of the best authors and illustrators found themselves in exile, while the domestic production was inhibited by the prohibition of publishing in non-Castilian languages and by the censorship law, which was only removed after the re-establishment of democracy in 1977. By decree, a model of "rigorously edifying and educational" children's works (Cendán, 1986) was founded, in which religious, historical, and folkloric themes dominated; these contributed in creating the image of a uniform, Catholic, and conservative Spain.

Some of the most notable works were affiliated with a religious theme, such as *Marcelino, pan y vino* ('Marcelino, bread and wine,' 1955) by José Maria Sánchez Silva or *Rastro de Dios* ('Sign of God,' 1960). Others were based in realistic family narratives – which were supposed to offer an idealized social image and an example of moral

conduct – coinciding with the portrait of lively female protagonists set in the middle class environment of Madrid. Elena Fortún published a new work of *Celia* from Argentina; Borita Casas created the series *Antoñita la fantástica* ('The Fantastic Antoñita') from Mexico; and Emilia Costarelo published the adventures of *Mari Pepa*, initially in Falangist magazines. The naturalness and humor of these works and others such as *Las Hadas de Villaviciosa de Odón* ('The Fairies of the Wicked Village of Odón,' 1955) or *Antón Retaco* (1956) by Maria Luisa Gefaell offered a breath of fresh air to children's literature in the post-war decades. Meanwhile, in illustration the smooth quality of Mercè Llimona, the decorativeness of Rafael de Panagos, or the mastery of light of Joan Ferrandiz stood out.

In 1942 the Reading Council "Santa Teresa" was founded, with a big influence on the organization of and selection of books for libraries; and in 1958 the Lazarillo prizes for illustration and works in Castilian had begun to be awarded. Such projects for the development and dissemination of children's books started to bear fruit by the 1970s.

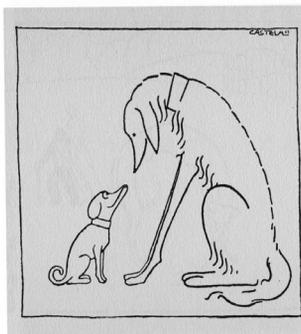
### Reborn (or born) in the realism of the 1970s

In the 1970s the economic growth and the relative opening up of politics gave a fresh start to production. With the lifting of the ban on publishing in other languages, Catalan children's literature was reborn in close contact with the movements for educational reform. In 1961 the magazine *Cavall Fort* appeared, and in 1963 the publisher La Galera was founded, exclusively dedicated to children's books. The will to connect to the former pro-European cultural focus gave rise to the translation of the "Père Castor" illustrated books, European comics or collections aimed at adolescent readers. Given that the editions appeared in Catalan and Castilian, this modernizing launch contributed to the renewal of children's books throughout Spain. Prominent in Castilian children's literature were innovative publishers such as Noguer, as well as authors of stature such as Angela C. Ionescu, Carmen Kurtz, Ana María Matute, the poets Gloria Fuertes and Celia Viñas, and the continued work of authors such as Montserrat del Amo. At the same time social criticism, civic education, and historical narrative were popular in Catalan storytelling by authors such as Joaquim Carbó, Sebastià Sorribas, Emili Teixidor, and Josep Vallverdú.

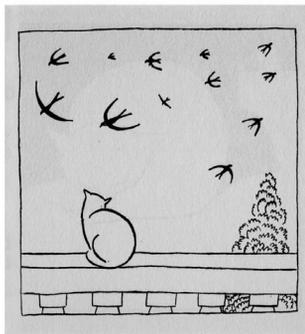
Galician children's literature launched its first initiatives in the 1970s with a work of social criticism, *Memorias dun neno labrego* ('Memories of a Yokel Boy') by Xosé Neiras

*With the lifting of the ban on publishing in other languages, Catalan children's literature was reborn in close contact with the movements for educational reform.*

*Galician children's literature launched its first initiatives in the 1970s with a work of social criticism, Memorias dun neno labrego ('Memories of a Yokel Boy') by Xosé Neiras Vila and the first publications by the publisher Galaxia.*



— Ti serás máis grande ca min; pero eu levo visto cada cousal...



O GATO: Volveu as escuras anduriñas; pero unha que comín o ano pasado, esa non volverá.

From: La Columna de prensa "Cousas de Vida," diari *Galicia* 1922-1924 by Alfonso Castelao

Vila and the first publications by the publisher Galaxia. In the 1960s and 1970s, although there were narrative, poetic, and theatrical works, the first children's magazine, and the first translation (*O principiño*, 'The Little Prince,' 1972), the genuine existence of a Galician literature – or a Basque literature – had to wait until the re-establishment of democracy in Spain. It was then that both literatures saw an active policy of the translation of classics, children's books used in schools, and new awards created and publishing houses founded. In the 1980s, and especially in the 1990s, this gave rise to a wealth of indigenous authors and illustrators.

*The combative progressiveness of these years favoring democratic relations and the rupture with taboo subjects, the surge of psychological narrative, and the enthusiastic affiliation with fantasy created new literary models.*

**Imagining in democracy**

With the emergence of democracy in 1977, children's and young adults' literature made definitive advances. Jumping eagerly over hurdles along the way, it aligned itself with international trends and the publishing market of post-industrial countries. The combative progressiveness of these years favoring democratic relations and the rupture with

taboo subjects, the surge of psychological narrative, and the enthusiastic affiliation with fantasy created new literary models. This came about through an intense policy of translation (with the publishers Altea, Espasa-Calpe, Alfaguara, etc.) as well as through the recovery of the folkloric tradition in the four languages of Spain, which were finally in better condition to develop a following after their introduction in schools.

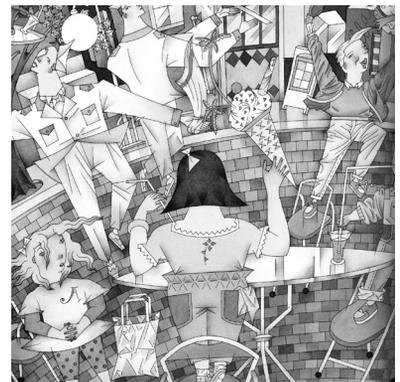
Several major authors adopted models of the fantasy genre in their writing in the 1990s, including the imaginative works of Joles Sennell (the pseudonym of Josep Albanell) and Mercè Canela, the contained stories of Fernando Alonso, the mysterious atmospheric tales of Joan Manuel Gisbert, the comical experimentalism of Miquel Obiols, the delicately worked literature of Gabriel Janer Manila, the irony of Bernardo Atxaga, the subtlety of Mariasun Landa, the symbolism of Carmen Martín Gaité, and the Merce Rodoreda-inspired works of Paco Martín and Empar de



Asun, Balzola.  
*Historia de Niño.*



Carme Solé Vendrell.  
*Raspall*



Calatayud, Miguel.  
*El libro de las M'Alicias.*

Lanuza. Although always scarce, poetry appeared in the works by Carlos Murciano, Miquel Desclot or Antonio García Teijeiro.

At the same time, professional vocation, technical investigation, and a diversity of styles characterized the first big wave of illustrators in the democracy. This included the personal poeticism of Asun Balzola and Carme Solé Vendrell, the color mastery of Miguel Angel Pacheco and Luis de Horna, the baroque balance of lines of Miguel Calatayud, the transparencies of Ulises Wensell, and the mysterious suggestions of Alfonso Ruano. Many other names could also be added to this list, such as José Ramón Sánchez, Juan Ramón Alonso, Anton Olariaga, Jesús Lucas, Jokin Mitxelena, and Xan López Domínguez. It should also be noted that illustration was instrumental in the regeneration of the comical genre with works by Montse Ginesta, Roser Capdevila, Joma, and Fernando Krahn.

Although they paid great attention to social issues, the realistic genres were more timid when it came to incorporating the features of social criticism and the distressing internal conflicts that abounded in translated works; probably because the changes in society were still just beginning in Spain and topics such as divorce or urban violence were not felt in the same way. For a long time, literature tiptoed around the trauma of the Civil War and the repression of Franco's regime, with the brilliant initial exception of the *Crónicas de Media Tarde* ('Mid-Afternoon Chronicles') by Juan Farias.

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The bulk of realistic description tended to base itself in generic children's works and historical adventures. Authors sought to renew the genre with regard to the old vision of "pomp and circumstance"

from Franco's time, advanced in the Catalan narratives of the 1960s with new works by Concha Lopez Narváez, José Maria Merino, Marta Osorio, Paco Climent, and Teresa Duran. Other new contributions included the detective-like narration of social themes with the creation of the character *Flanagan* by Andreu Martín and Jaume Ribera and the newly broached narration of adolescent growing pains, as in the works of Gemma Lienas and many other authors.

With these seminal foundations, children's and young adults' literature in Spain began its transition towards the current era. Now is the era where literary forms, educational values, the weight of image, the relation with audiovisual and digital fiction, the market conditions, and the dissemination of works are radically changing the production of children's and young adults' books.

## Notes

1. For the selection of the images for this article, the contribution of the illustrator Arnal Ballester has been invaluable.
2. Children's literature citations can be found at the Fundación Germán Sánchez Ruipérez at <http://www.fundaciongsr.es/catalogos/frames.htm>

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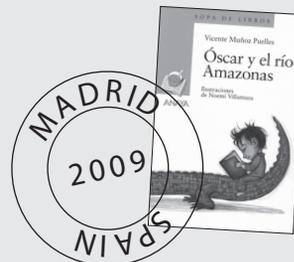
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Oscar is learning to read and to swim, and he finds both difficult. This is the story of how he overcomes his difficulties. Reading a book entitled *Along the Amazon* (which has a picture of a swimming boy pursued by an alligator on the cover), he feels that he has two lives: one as Oscar and another as Henry, the book's hero. This makes him realize that reading and swimming are comparable activities, requiring effort and offering gratification when mastered. This simple and imaginative story is set in the boy's limited world of family and school. The book is a bridge that links Oscar's two worries and helps him feel that the prize will be worth the effort. The boy's feelings are well-portrayed in the tender and forceful illustrations by the young artist Noemí Villamuza. Oscar first appeared in *Oscar and the Post Office Lion*, which won the National Prize for Literature in 1999.

M<sup>a</sup> José Gómez-Navarro



Vicente Muñoz Puelles  
***Oscar y el río Amazonas / Oscar and the Amazon River***  
 Illus. Noemí Villamuza  
 Madrid, Spain: Anaya, 2009.  
 64 pp. ISBN: 978-84-667-8447-4  
 (fiction, 6+)



# The Construction of Identity in Picture Books in Spanish

by NIEVES MARTÍN ROGERO  
AND LAURA VIÑAS VALLE



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Laura Viñas Valle is Assistant Doctor in the School of Education of Toledo (Universidad de Castilla - La Mancha), where she teaches English as well as courses on the use of picture books in the primary English classroom. She specializes in English children's literature and holds a Master's in Children's Literature from the University of Reading (England).

*Martín Rogero and Viñas Valle argue that the picture book is currently on the rise in Spain. This article presents us with a sampling and analysis of some these outstanding picture books written in Spanish in the last decade. Reviewed books reflect a global and multicultural world, as well as trends that are endemic to Spain across several categories.*

The picture book has flourished in Spain over the last decade and we argue that this is both in terms of the number of home-grown picture books published by Spanish publishing houses and in terms of the number of studies and congresses that have proliferated on the form. The expansion of the picture book is in part in response to the 1997 symposium “La Ilustración: Primera Lectura y Educación Artística”<sup>1</sup> (Illustration: First Reading and Art Education) organized by the Germán Sánchez Ruipérez Foundation<sup>2</sup>, which stressed the need to come up with effective strategies for reviving the picture book in the Spanish market, given the scarcity of collections and the overflow of foreign translations at that time.

Moreover, we witness the growth of the picture book with the foundation of new publishing houses such as Kalandraka (founded in 1998), Media Vaca (1998), Diálogo (2003), and OQO (2005), all determined to give a boost to the genre. The establishment of

several special awards promoting the publication of picture books has also contributed to the blossoming of the picture book in Spain in the last decade. This includes the City of Alicante International Picture Book Contest (created in 2001, in collaboration with the Anaya publishing house) and two awards established in recent years – the Biblioteca Insular International Prize (2005, in collaboration with the Edelvives publishing house) and the International Compostela Prize for Picture Books (2007 in collaboration with the Kalandraka publishing house), as well as the picture book category (2007) of the prestigious Lazarillo Prize<sup>3</sup>.

In addition, the work of Spanish illustrators has been promoted and exhibited in catalogues in prestigious international forums. In 2005, as the guest country at the Bologna Children's Book Fair, Spain contributed with an exhibition under the name of "Ilustrísimos; Panorama de la Ilustración Infantil y Juvenil en España" (Illustrious; A Panorama of Illustration for Children and Young Adults in Spain), which included a selection of seventy-three professionals and two catalogues available in book form and CD. Similar events have been promoted by organizations such as the OEPLI (Spanish Organization for Children's and Young Adult Books) which published *A Todo Color; 75 Ilustradores de Libros Para Niños y Jóvenes* (*In Full Colour. 75 Illustrators of Books For Children and Young Adults*) in collaboration with the Spanish Ministry of Culture in 2000. This was a catalogue to accompany the corresponding exhibition, in line with previous years.

*The art of illustration is receiving ever more attention from critics who specialize in children's literature. At the same time, its historical link with those books which have marked the literary education of children and young adults in the past suggests that illustrations are coming to bear the same weight as words in explaining the development and evolution of artistic publications in Spain.*

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This article will provide examples and an analysis of some outstanding picture books written in Spanish. It is difficult to speak of unifying schools or trends (cf. Boyer, 2004) as the most representative artists stand out precisely because of their uniqueness and their constant search for unexplored paths of expression. Hence, our aim is not to offer

an exhaustive overview of contemporary Spanish picture books, but to highlight in what way the topics that appear in these picture books respond to a globalized market or actually reveal cultural markers.

### **Picture books mirror a multicultural and globalized world**

From the narrative point of view, a large number of picture books in Spanish follow a wide thematic line in tune with picture books addressed to children in the Western market as well as interrelating with poetry

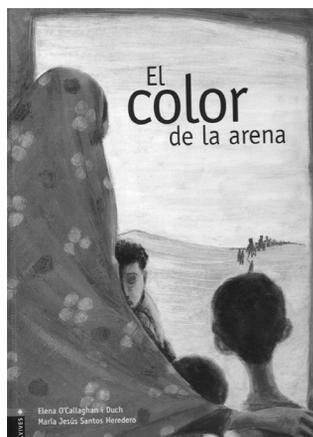
and fairy tale genres. For example, there are stories which exploit what one might call “children’s feelings,” i.e. “feelings” which the author or illustrator considers to be specific to children and which presumably help the child reader in the process of “identification” with the story. The subject matter of feelings has been widely exploited in English language classics such as *Where the Wild Things Are* (1963), *In the Night Kitchen* (1970), and *Outside Over There* (1981) which explore, according to the author and illustrator Maurice Sendak, “how children master various feelings – anger, boredom, fear, frustration, jealousy – and manage to come to grips with the realities of their lives” (Rowe Townsend, 1990: 304). In Spanish, there are picture books that explore children’s fears of the dark, but also those playful imaginary worlds where the younger ones find refuge. In *Mar de sábanas* (Sea of Sheets), winner of the Ciudad de Alicante Prize in 2003, written by Pablo Pérez and illustrated by Pablo Alaudell, a little boy who is afraid of the dark fantasizes about his bed being a sea of sheets where he goes into hiding; the dreamlike quality of the illustrations and the quiet colors embellish his imaginary adventures. Likewise, children’s desire for omnipotence may take shape in a world tailored to suit their own needs and wishes, as happens in *El Pequeño Rey general de infantería* (2009) (The Little General Infantry King), by Javier Sáez Castán, an amusing picture book where the colored nineteenth-century style illustrations outlined in ink show a child’s self-sufficiency turned into the king of an insect army.

In addition to this type of picture book which explores feelings supposedly exclusive to the world of children, we find many others that transmit values and/or knowledge of the world. This educational and socializing side (Colomer, 1999) found in a large number of Spanish picture books reflects the solid conviction that the picture book is an excellent vehicle for transmitting the knowledge and values that modern Western society considers to be an essential part of the education of future citizens.

This all leads to there being many picture books about solidarity, ecology, and friendship, among other subjects, available on the Spanish market. For example, *Nilo y Zanzíbar* (Nilo and Zanzíbar) (Biblioteca Insular Prize winner, 2006), written by Javier Sobrino and illustrated by Cristina Müller, tells the story of a friendship between a cat and a calf, a voyage of self-growth and discovery that ends with the happy reunion between the two friends after one of them gets lost. The illustrations accompanying the text, a mixture of sketchy drawings and collage, revamp this simple storyline. *El ladrón de sombreros* (The Hat Thief) (Biblioteca Insular Prize winner 2008), with text by Susana Sutherland de la Cruz and illustrations by Rafael Vivas, is another outstanding title

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O'Callaghan i Duch.  
*El color de la arena.*



Guerrero, P.; Urgeruaga, E.  
*Mi laberinto.*

*Through picture books written in Spanish, in this section we aim at exploring both the identity traits and the cultural aspects conveyed by picture books in the Spanish language.*

that goes beyond the purely ecological message. Heaps of hats, presumably stolen by a thief, fly away and turn into a cloud that lands on a burned and blackened African landscape where the hats find a new use as nests for homeless birds. The innovative artistic touch of this surreal plot rests both on the playful typographic design resembling calligrams and the pictures of simple lines combining different shots.

Likewise, in another picture book that touches upon the solidarity with the people of the Sahara, *El color de la arena* (2005) (The Color of the Sand), written by Elena O'Callaghan i Duch and illustrated by María Jesús Santos Heredero, the pictures of ethnic style go beyond the simple symmetric interaction with the text to involve the reader, who must learn to elucidate, through close-ups and symbolic drawings, the problems and idiosyncrasies of another culture.

Finally, we find other titles with an explicit literary purpose. In *Mi laberinto* (2003) (My Labyrinth), Emilio Urberuaga's naïve illustrations contribute to the song adaptation by the singer-songwriter Pablo Guerrero in an attempt to introduce children to poetry and connotative meaning. Furthermore, *La carta de la señora González* (2000) (The Letter of Mrs. Gonzalez), written by Sergio Lairla and illustrated by Ana G. Lartitegui, is a good example of metafiction in picture books, following other works in the Western market with a similar postmodernist slant (cfr. Silva-Díaz, 2003).<sup>4</sup>

### Endemic traits of the picture book

The concept of identity causes controversy and manifests itself in the discourse when one culture wishes to differentiate itself and revive its roots in contrast to another. Furthermore, it can be approached from a supranational stance – European citizenship for instance – or in terms of collective identities within a state, as in the case of Spain (Nicolás, 2006: 22-23). Through picture books written in Spanish, in this section we aim at exploring both the identity traits and the cultural aspects conveyed by picture books in the Spanish language.

The type of picture book that might present difficulties in translation and transfer –given the fact that they contain aspects both cultural and social, besides the simply linguistic, mainly consists of riddles, playground songs, and other examples of children's songs, legends, and popular tales. Sometimes allusions to endemic traits, such as gastronomy, appear in these picture books. Along this line, we find *Las canciones mágicas* (2005) (The Magic Songs), written by Juan Carlos Chandro and illustrated by Mikel Valverde, a picture book that tells of two magician children who do not have anything to eat for breakfast because their parents have not yet gotten up. They decide to use a magic formula that their mother has taught them and it enables them to make things appear which are mentioned in the children's songs. So when they sing the popular children's song "*Susanita tiene un ratón*" (Susanita Has Got a Mouse), chocolate, the Spanish nougat-like sweet called "turrón," and

anised balls appear on the table (as all these items appear in the song). And when they sing “El corro de la patata” (*The Potato Playground Song*), the “oranges and lemons” of the song together with the potato mentioned in the title appear alongside the delicacies already there.

There are also picture books based on oral tradition where the traditional structure of folk tales is respected scrupulously. *El tragaldabas* (2006) (*The Glutton*) with text by Pablo Albo and illustrations by Maurizio A.C. Quarello exemplifies this point. This is an adaptation of a folk tale of the same name from Castilla-León and collected by the folklorist Aurelio M. Espinosa<sup>5</sup>. In the picture book version, which includes quaint old-fashioned style illustrations, the number of characters that the monster swallows is reduced and he doesn't die in the end. Moreover, if in the Spanish version of Perrault's “Little Red Riding Hood” we learn that the heroine was carrying a pot of delicious honey and some soft cheese to her grandmother, the grandmother in the tale of *El tragaldabas*, on the one hand, follows the tradition by telling her grandchildren that down in the cellar there is bread and honey for them as a reward. Nevertheless, a few pages earlier the grandmother had broken with the conventional culinary ingredients found in tales when on opening the pantry she found that, except for milk, eggs, and flour, there was some of everything: “herrings in oil, ‘pepitoria’ (an egg, almond and saffron-based sauce) for chicken, picadillo (minced leftovers) for soups, and garlic and parsley.”

There is even a picture book dedicated exclusively to a typically Spanish food. In *Cuento para contar mientras se come un huevo frito* (2003) (*A Tale to Be Told Whilst Eating a Fried Egg*)<sup>6</sup>, written by Pep Bruno and illustrated by Mariona Cabassa, a series of characters take their turn to take an egg laid by Anselma the hen to the boy. The boy's father fries the egg and the characters, who have previously appeared in the story, return at the end and show an interest in the very tempting egg which they would like to try. The repetitive pattern, enhanced by the rhyme in the text, provides a very humorous note to which the illustrations contribute. The collage technique shows different perspectives and viewpoints that make the illustrations appear disjointed.

Endemic traits are also reflected in the rural world in which many of these tales take place. Indeed, this rural world is proudly portrayed in many illustrations. Country people and the images of villages and their inhabitants tend to be portrayed in very stereotypical ways. In fact, the research of M<sup>a</sup> Carmen Hidalgo Rodríguez about Spanish illustrations in the 1990s reveals the continuation of certain details of children's literature characters –as is the case with grandparents so as to be easily recognizable by young readers (2001:53).

A picture book which deserves careful reading in view of the abundance

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Albo, P.; Quarello, M.  
*El tragaldabas.*

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of linguistic and visual details regarding the rural world is *La cabra boba* (2006) (The Silly Nanny Goat), written and illustrated by Pep Bruno and Roger Olmos respectively. This picture book tells the story of Miguel who goes around the whole village in search of his goat. Following the traditional pattern of the structure of cumulative tales, the boy manages to get the animal down with various objects that the characters in the story have given him (a bunch of flowers, a book, and a handful of salt). The illustrations play with the visual stereotypes of the people in the village in such a way that the most representative features of each one are exaggerated and become caricatures. The reader's attention is caught by the goatherd's large moustache and brows, his toothless mouth, a leather bag typical of Spanish shepherds, and an enormous beret that looks more like a sun hat. Miguel's grandfather also displays all of the typical characteristics of a Spanish village grandfather. Like the goatherd he sports a beret, his hair is white, and he wears square-shaped glasses with very thick lenses. He also leans on a stick and has a hump which is so exaggerated that birds even perch on it. The caricature and the intended parody in these images is underlined by the use of photographs of village people in which part of the body – sometimes the head, other times the clothing – is drawn as the illustrator is interested in manipulating the photographs to achieve the desired parody.

Likewise, we also find picture books of stories where endemic traits are focused on traditional festivities, traditional games, and characters from popular folklore. One example is *La noche* (2001) by Andrés Guerrero, where among the positive aspects which are listed and illustrated to help children overcome their fear of the dark, a little mouse called Pérez<sup>7</sup> appears along with the Three Kings. In this small-sized picture book of simple bright-colored illustrations placed against a black background, references to rhyming cumulative folktales and well-known poems in the Spanish-speaking world, such as *El lobito bueno* (The Good Little Wolf) by J.A. Goytisolo, are mentioned. Another example is *Batalla de naipes* (2005) (Battle of Cards), written by Juan Ignacio Pérez and illustrated by Josep Rodés. This is a playful visual and linguistic game based on the Spanish deck of cards. Here words and images cleverly interact to tell, in a humorous tone, of the absurd and endless battle led by King Sobruto Segundo (the king of clubs) and Don Afilado Primero el Cruel (the king of spades)<sup>8</sup> who, as the illustrations show, spend their days throwing knives and clubs at each other. The fight eventually stops with the wedding of their children, el Caballero del Alto Plumero and Doña Sota de la Espada<sup>9</sup> who have been meeting in secret risking their lives. The flat perspectives and highly saturated colors, in imitation of the pictures in the Spanish deck of cards, support and complement the visual plane and the textual word play. Thus, when the Knight and the Lady fall in love, this is only referred to in the text as “the ace that they kept up their sleeve,” whereas visually it becomes an ace of hearts gliding along several pages of the picture book.

Insofar as the revival of the great poets of the Spanish language, it is worth mentioning the collection *Poetas para todos* (Poets for Everyone) published by Versos y Trazos, as well as the new *Alba y Mayo Color* collection by Ediciones de La Torre, both in picture book format. These collections aim at introducing children to poets such as Federico García Lorca, Miguel Hernández, Antonio Machado, and Rafael Alberti, with a selection of poems suitable for them and accompanied by plenty of illustrations to help them interpret the words and enrich the text at the same time. Hence, for example, in *4 Poemas de Rafael Alberti y un ancla abandonada* (2008) (Four Poems by Rafael Alberti and an Abandoned Anchor), the illustrator José Aguilar conveys – in doublespread illustrations of seafaring subjects – the homesickness that Alberti feels for the sea of his birthplace. Painted in soft pastel colors, the pictures include mermaids, a Neptune king, swordfish, and other sea creatures that are not mentioned in the poems but that emphasize the longing for the sea that underlies his work. In a more risky and innovative title by Ediciones de La Torre, Miguel Calatayud offers in *Federico García Lorca para niños y niñas ... y otros seres curiosos* (2007) (Federico García Lorca for Boys and Girls... and Other Curious Beings) a very personal visual interpretation of Lorca's poems. The multiple perspectives, the lack of proportion, and the polyhedral shapes of cubist inspiration give the words a surreal touch, perhaps thus visually mirroring the multiple perspectives and interpretations that Lorca's evocative words and images can create.

Finally, picture book adaptations of classical works of Spanish literature and picture books that depict Spain's artistic heritage are also worthy of discussion. To give an example of the first instance, we have the singular *Pictogramas en la historia de Don Quijote de La Mancha* (Pictograms in the Story of Don Quixote of La Mancha), with text by Carlos Reviejo and illustrations by Javier Zabala, which received an honorable mention at the Bologna Ragazzi Awards in 2005. The book is an original adaptation of *Don Quixote* for children; a very short version which recounts the most popular adventures of the knight-errant in verse while replacing some words with drawings. The lines are accompanied by ink and watercolor illustrations against a yellowish background that imitates the parchment where Cervantes appears scribbling *Don Quijote* at the beginning of the picture book. Zabala's illustrations echo some of the most iconic images of this literary classic, such as the tilting at the windmills, Sancho's tossing in a blanket, and the ride on the wooden horse Clavileño. In the second case, we find picture books where the storyline helps to thread paintings together and to explain the unique features of artists such as Velázquez, Goya, and Sorolla. An example is *El sueño de Sorolla* (2006) (The Dream of Sorolla), within the collection 'El sueño de...' (The Dream of...) published by Brosquil. In this picture book, Sorolla wants to give a birthday present to his daughter María. The little girl runs along the beach of Valencia to ask her grandmother for ideas. María finds her sewing a sail (in allusion to the



García Lorca, F.; Calatayud, M.  
*Federico García Lorca para niños y niñas...  
y otros seres curiosos.*



Reviejo, C.; Zabala, J.  
*Pictogramas en la historia de Don  
Quijote de la Mancha.*

painting of the same name) and it is then that the little girl watches how “El sol que se filtra entre las plantas del jardín juega con la tela, poniendo sobre ella puntitos de luz que danzan entre los pliegues” (The sun that shines among the garden plants plays with the canvas, leaving little dots of light dancing among the folds). Writer and illustrator Marta Rivera reproduces the famous scenes of fishermen, boats, and children running or playing on the beach so characteristic of Sorolla, mixing tempera, crayons, photographs, and collage, in a particularly personal approach.



Rivera Ferner, M.  
*El Sueño de Sorolla.*

### Conclusions

The examples analyzed here reveal that picture books in Spanish are fully integrated within the usual traditions of the Western market. On the one hand, we find picture books that explore values that democratic societies value and subjects that are believed to be exclusive to the world of children. At the same time, these picture books seek to be innovative from a literary and artistic point of view. In any case, a major emphasis is on fostering ambivalence and the construction of meaning on the reader's part while putting together the words and images that reading a picture book requires.

Regarding the books that highlight specific endemic traits, these constitute a minority within the general panorama, perhaps because if cultural identity takes precedence, the books lose any universalism which would allow them to be sold on the international market. Oral tradition is a very productive source of stories, songs and structures for imitation or renewal due to the creativity and innovation of their images. And there is also the literary, artistic and historical heritage. In these picture books, besides the Spanish language being promoted beyond its borders, social and cultural aspects that very often find echo in the rest of the Spanish state are depicted, too. We could argue, on the one hand, that identity is linked to tradition, that which has been accepted as characteristic or classic given its endurance over time; but on the other hand, we could also argue that identity is an on-going construction based on the innovation and creation of works with a visual and artistic impact that will promote the talent and creativity of our authors beyond our frontiers.

### Notes

1. See the CLIJ journal special edition devoted to this symposium (no. 102, 1998).
2. The Germán Sánchez Ruy Pérez Foundation, founded in 1981 and based in Salamanca, is an international centre for children's and young adult books that specialises in promoting reading.
3. The first two prizes are awarded to picture books in Spanish (Castilian), while the last two include the other official languages in Spain: Catalan, Galician, and Basque; furthermore, the International Compostela Prize also accepts Portuguese as part of the languages spoken in the Iberian Peninsula. The Lazarillo Prize for the best children's book of the year was established in 1958 by the Spanish Organization for Children's and Young Adult Books and is the oldest prize awarded in Spanish children's literature.
4. There is criticism available on this picture book. *La carta de la señora González*. Escritura experimental en un libro álbum”, Marcela Carranza; Sergio

- Lairla, “La experiencia del proceso creativo en la construcción de dos álbumes metaficcionales”, in R. Taberero, J. D. Dueñas, J. L. Jiménez (2006) *Contar en Aragón. Palabra e imagen en el discurso literario infantil y juvenil*. Zaragoza: Pressas Universitarias, pp. 41-49.
5. Two different versions of the same story were published in Aurelio M. Espinosa, Jr. (1997) *Cuentos populares de Castilla y León*. Madrid: CSIC, T. II, pp. 435-438, 444-446.
  6. There are more folktales about the fried egg in the same compilation by Aurelio Espinosa Jr, although the plot is different. Cfr. T. I, “El huevo frito” y “Los huevos fritos”, pp. 430-432.
  7. *El ratoncito Pérez* or ‘Pérez the little mouse’ is the Spanish equivalent of the Tooth Fairy in English-speaking countries. The character was invented at the end of the nineteenth century by a Jesuit priest called Father Coloma for the boy king, Alfonso XIII. According to the tale, the little mouse goes around collecting children’s teeth from under their pillows when they lose one and leaves a small present in return (normally a coin).
  8. Literally, ‘Sobrutish the Second’ (king of clubs), and ‘Sir Sharp the First, the Cruel One (king of spades).
  9. Literally, the ‘Knight of the High Plume’ and ‘Lady Jack of the Spade’.

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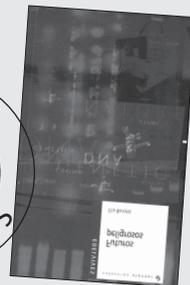
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Under a revealing title, this book gathers seven short stories of different genres: fantasy, science fiction, utopian literature, etc. Set in recognizable places for Spanish readers, and in a time very near the present, these stories speak about current subjects of a personal and social nature: the excess of violence and unscrupulous behavior towards the most disadvantaged, exaggerated protectionism and social control, the ideals of health, beauty, and eternal youth over other values, etc. These subjects are taken to disturbing extremes and the originality of their story lines is quite surprising. The author, Elia Barceló, is acknowledged as the most prestigious science fiction writer in Spain. Her books have been translated into several different languages and her short stories can be found in national and foreign publications. She received the Ignotus Prize for Fantasy from the Spanish Association of Fantasy and Science Fiction, the International Award for Short Science Fiction Novel at the Universidad Politécnica de Cataluña, and the Edebé Prize for Young Adult Literature.

Alicia Muñoz Álvarez



Elia Barceló  
***Futuros peligrosos / Dangerous Futures***  
 Zaragoza, Spain: Edelvives, 2008  
 166 pp. ISBN: 978-84-263-6700-6  
 (short stories, 14+)

This charming and original story is about a boy's jealous reaction to his brother's birth. Having decided that his mother no longer loves him, Oscar advertises her for sale on the Internet with the help of his envied and efficient friend Nora. But it is Nora's unhappiness, caused by the neglect of her father, a frivolous and popular TV broadcaster, that makes Oscar appreciate his parents' true love for him. Oscar's fresh and spontaneous voice conveys the absurdity of the adult world as seen by a child of eight. From the very first page, the reader is captivated by Oscar's emotions, adventures, and finally by the unexpected ending. All this is enhanced by the uneven, childish handwriting in which the text is printed and by Andrés Guerrero's dynamic and congenial illustrations. This young mother of three, a versatile author and literary critic, has received four awards for her adult novels and five important awards for her fiction for young adults. This, her first book for children, won the Barco de Vapor Prize in 2009.

M<sup>a</sup> José Gómez-Navarro



Care Santos  
***Se vende mamá / Mum for sale***  
 Illus. Andrés Guerrero  
 Madrid, Spain: editorial SM,  
 2009.  
 170 pp. ISBN: 978-84-6755-3528-0  
 (fiction, 8+)



# Panorama of a New Century: Children's Literature in Catalan

*Teresa Mañà takes the pulse of children's literature in Catalan and determines that it has a normal healthy heartbeat. Our readers will learn about what constitutes normalization and the status of the vital signs among major publishers, authors, and illustrators. In the process they will enjoy a sampling of the outstanding literature that has been produced in Catalan.*

Since the 1990s and into the first decade of the 21st century, the panorama of children's and young adults' literature in Catalan presents several positive characteristics similar to those of Castilian publications for young people. This includes abundant production, a wide range of authors (including names with a long career as well as the arrival of some new voices), a diversity of genres (with the exception of theatre which remains a small presence), an extensive and broad offering that is fed by the constant appearance of new collections for all ages, and – to top it off – a generally high level of quality. Despite its late incorporation into the market, due to the fact that until the 1970s publishing in Catalan was forbidden, Catalan children's and young adults' literature has consolidated itself and become professional with the passing of the years. In the view of the critic Josep M. Aloy in his 2007 assessment in honor of the 25th anniversary of the Catalan Council for Children's and Young Adults'

by TERESA MAÑÀ



Teresa Mañà is Professor in the Librarianship Faculty at the University of Barcelona. She regularly contributes to specialist publications in children's literature (*CLIJ*, *Faristol*, *Anuario SM*) and since 1996 has been in charge of the panorama of children's books in Catalan for the magazine *Serra d'Or*.

Books (ClijCAT), our literature stands up to any comparison with books published in other countries. The situation now is normal and normalized.

### Signs of normality: Publishers, authors, and illustrators

The good health of children's books in Catalan is apparent in the quantity of businesses that publish children's books as well as in the long list of authors and illustrators, many of whom are able to dedicate themselves professionally to writing only for children and young people. It should be remembered, however, that the publication of children's and young adults' books in Catalan coincides more and more with Castilian editions, given that books are published simultaneously or with little time delay in both languages.

*In the view of the critic Josep M. Aloy in his 2007 assessment in honor of the 25th anniversary of the Catalan Council for Children's and Young Adults' Books (ClijCAT), our literature stands up to any comparison with books published in other countries. The situation now is normal and normalized.*

With the new century there was a certain stirring in the publishing houses. On the one hand, mergers and buyouts have wiped out publishers who mark the history of Catalan children's books (for example, La Magrana was taken over by RBA, and all of those that currently fall under the umbrella Grup 62 are now owned by Planeta such as Destino, Empúries, Columna). Yet on the other hand, new initiatives and independent labels have arisen with a renewed purpose: the stories focused on nature published by Lynx, the art books by Serres, the small format books by Sb, the beautiful editions of Anglo-Saxon classics by the publisher Flamboyant, the original illustrated books by Thule, and the books by El Zorro Rojo add to more classic offerings such as the novels from Edicions del Pirata and Edicions del Roure de Can Roca.



Serra, Sebastià  
*3 contes de sant Jordi*

Continuing their activity of many years, one finds veteran publishers such as La Galera, which has been publishing for children for more than four decades, alongside the emblematic Juventud, which continues its journey that began in 1925, as well as the publications by Abadia de Montserrat, which is unique in only publishing books in Catalan. To this list must be added Catalan divisions of the big groups (Cruïlla of SM, Barcanova of Anaya, Baula of Luis Vives, Grup Promotor of Alfaguara), and those that publish textbooks while simultaneously maintaining a line of children's books (Edebé, Casals with the labels Combel and Bambú). Among those houses that publish in Catalan, the efforts of foreign labels should be mentioned, too: Ekaré, Fondo de Cultura Económica and other national ones, Kalandraka, OQO, Lóquez. Thanks to them our children can read classic titles by Maurice Sendak, Anthony Browne, and Chris van Allsburg in their own language.

Also deserving special mention are the Valencian publishers who, through tenacity and imagination, continue in a less popular linguistic medium. They strive to widen the range of offerings with new collections

and with a profusion of books with careful design and production, which makes possible the increasing renown of children's and young adults' books in Valencian outside the region. The two widest-reaching publishers are Tàndem and Bromera, but one must also recognize others such as Edicions del Bullent, Marfil, Brosquil, or Perifèric edicions, which have also happily taken root. By contrast, the production of publishers based in the Balearic Islands is minimal, and authors of this region usually publish through Barcelona's houses.

As far as creators go, the *Diccionari d'autors* ("Authors Dictionary"), produced by the CliJCAT, includes 262 authors and illustrators who have each published at least five works to date. If we look at each of these names, we can see that publishing production is largely centered around authors with many years' experience.

Continuing in the breach are those authors and illustrators who began and continued the genre during the years of recovery – such as Joaquim Carbó, Emili Teixidor, Josep Vallverdú, who have had their complete works published, as well as Sebastià Sorribas (deceased in 2007). In the 1970s and 1980s, Mercè Canela and Pep Albanell emerged in Catalonia, Janer Manila and Miquel Rayó in the Balearic Islands, and Enric Lluch and Maria Jesús Bolta in Valencia. To these must be added, in the 1990s, a good handful of creators who account for a large part of the titles published in the first decade of this century. Our young readers can enjoy the versatility of Joan de Déu Prats and Joan Armangué, the irony of Salvador Comellas, the love of nature that Pere Martí and Josep F. Delgado impart, the realism and daily life that suffuse the works of Jaume Cela and Pau Joan Hernández, or the delirious situations created by David Nello and Pasqual Alapont. In these years the abundant work in Catalan by Jordi Sierra I Fabra should also be remarked upon, as he is the most fertile of Spanish authors who works indiscriminately in both languages.

The generational relay race continues with new voices, such as that of Carles Sala (winner of three prizes last year alone), and with the contributions of other authors who have come to light in this millennium, especially Antoni García Llorca, with his distinctive command of language and creation of his own universes, Josep Samper's involving and disturbing scenes, Anna Manso's irreverent humor, the tenderness of Pep Molist's tales, and the unhinged adventures of the characters created by Francesc Gisbert and Teresa Broseta.

On the other hand, while authors from the world of adult literature, such as Lolita Bosch, have crossed over happily into that of children's and young adults' literature, other incursions from the professional media (weathermen, television presenters) merit less attention. Normalization can



Cristian Inaraja. *Tres contes de carnaval*

*Normalization can also be observed in the growing number of awards for original works in Catalan (20 given annually that the magazine CLIJ facilitates), largely for narratives, with notable participation by organizations from the Valencia region.*

also be observed in the growing number of awards for original works in Catalan (20 given annually that the magazine *CLIJ* facilitates), largely for narratives, with notable participation by organizations from the Valencia region. Among the most fruitful are the Hospital Sant Joan de Déu Awards, in which a text is submitted and then a jury decides whom to contract for the illustrations. This choice gives added value to titles published by La Galera / Cercle de Lectors which, when taken together, represent an excellent display of the ability of our illustrators. These include Francesc Infante (*El segrest de la primavera*, "The Kidnapping of Spring," 1999); Montse Ginesta (*Adormits*, "Sleepers," 2000); Judit Morales (*I doncs, Pinot*, "So, Pinot," 2001); Mabel Pierola (*Sóc molt Maria*, "I Am Very Maria," 2002);



Infante, Francesc. *El segrest de la primavera*.

Francesc Rovira (*Els patins del Sebastià*, "Sebastian's Skates," 2003); Jordi Vila (*Paper de diari*, "Newspaper Wrapping," 2004); Tha (*L'home del sac*, "The Bag Man," 2005); Gusti (*El nen gris*, "The Grey Boy," 2006); Emilio Urberuaga (*Dos fils*, "Two Sons," 2007), and the only illustrators who work outside Catalonia: Joma (*Per un botó*, "For a Button," 2008) and Arnal Ballester (*En Faiquè*, "Faique," 2009).

### A good offering for all audiences

The panorama of this decade has been characterized by an increase in titles in the two extreme age ranges of readers: for the very young and for young adults. For first-time readers or for those who cannot yet read, several collections have emerged demonstrating a total mastery of image. These titles deserve special note: *Espais* ("Spaces"), an initiative by La Galera, in which Cristina Losantos profiles in detail some enormous pop-up scenarios; the ingenious brief stories of *Ziu*, written and illustrated by Montse Ginesta; and the peculiar characters of the *Bum-Bums*, created by Luchini, published by Abadia de Montserrat, with the amusing plots of Imma Pla and Montse Ganges. Add to this an endless list of stamped books, fold-out and pop-up books, cloth, plastic, giant or tiny books, those accompanied by CDs or unlikely objects, etc. These books have become popular consumer items.



Ginesta, Montse.  
*Adormits*.

*The panorama of this decade has been characterized by an increase in titles in the two extreme age ranges of readers: for the very young and for young adults.*

For young adult readers, the realistic novel continues to dominate the panorama at the hand of authors who deal with topical issues like Dolors Garcia Cornellà and Gemma Pasqual, or tend towards themes of social consciousness like Angels Bogunyà in *Les Veus Protectores* ("The Protective Voices," 2004), or share feminist perspectives such as Gemma Lienas with *El Diari Lila de la Carlota* ("Carlota's Purple

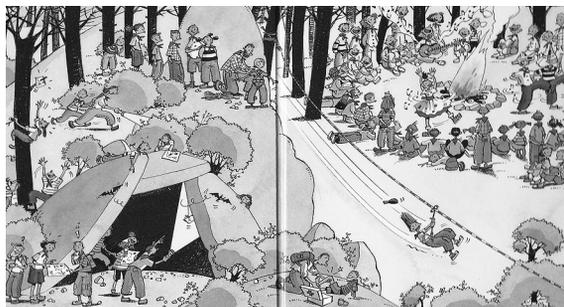
Diary," 2001), to name two outstanding works. Following these in the genre ranking are thrillers, although with differing treatments ranging from those close to horror novels to the more usual ones with young investigators or professionals who have to solve a mystery. This includes works by Xavier Vernetta, Xavier Bertran, and Andreu Martín – cultivators

of the noir genre.

There are very few authors who have followed the stellar success of fantasy books in the wake of Harry Potter; one exception is Maite Carranza, who has dared and triumphed with a trilogy about feminist witches with roots in this country (*La Guerra de les Bruixes*, "The War of the Witches," 2005 – 2007).

The recovery from the Civil War, together with the recent history of the 1960s and 1970s, has generated a considerable number of titles in this current decade, including: Jaume Cela (*El centaure*, "The Centaur," 2004, and *El temps que ens toca viure*, "The Time in Which We Live," 2007), Miquel Rayó (*El camí del far*, "The Lighthouse Path," 2000), J. F. Delgado (*Els llops de la lluna roja*, "The Wolves of the Red Moon," 2002), Gemma Pasqual (*L'últim vaixell*, "The Last Ship," 2004), Andreu Sotorra (*Els silencis de la boca de la mina*, "The Silences of the Mine's Mouth," 2007), and Jordi Sierra i Fabra (*Els focs de la memòria*, "The Fires of Memory," 2008). By contrast, science fiction and adventures are scarce if they are not in a historical context. Montserrat Galicia and Josep Lorman are the points of reference for these two genres.

In the field of illustrated books, the giving of the National Illustration Award to Arnal Ballester and Miquel Calatayud, in 2008 and 2009, respectively, has meant the recognition, not only of the quality and professionalism of both illustrators, but also of this specialization. Despite the continued dominance of foreign titles in publishing, a notable effort is being made to give space to the production of books from Catalan in which illustrations play a principal role. From the harvest of the last few years, highlights include the works of Montse Gisbert (*El segle més nou del món*, "The Newest Century in the World," 2001), *Blancaneu* ("Snow White," 2002), a beautiful collection of illustrated books from the now defunct publisher Aura, and *L'Odissea* ("The Odyssey," 2008) by Pep Montserrat. Other notable titles include *Gegantassos i nanets* ("Giants and Dwarves," 2003) by Mabel Pierola, *I ara que ve? Costumari per a nens i nenes* ("What's Coming Now? Routines for Boys and Girls," 2005) by Cristina Losantos, *Vull una corona* ("I Want a Crown," 2005) *Alicia i els país de les meravelles* ("Alice in Wonderland," 2007) by Ignasi Blanch, *Tres contes de carnaval* ("Three Carnival Tales," 2007) by Cristian Inaraja, and more recently *Vet aquí un pèl* ("Once Upon A Time There Was a Hair," 2008) by Marta Balaguer, *La llegenda de sant Jordi* ("The Legend of Saint George," 2008) by Roger Olmos, *El nen perdut* ("The Lost



Losantos, Cristina. *Els campaments*.

*Despite the continued dominance of foreign titles in publishing, a notable effort is being made to give space to the production of books from Catalan in which illustrations play a principal role.*



Blanch, Ignasi. *Alicia i el país de les meravelles*.



Cormand, Bernat. *El dibuixant d'ossos*.

Boy,” 2009) by Tàssies, and finally *Dimitri* (2009) by Rebeca Luciani. In paperback form and more modest editions, there are several examples of books illustrating personal themes such as those offered by Luís Farré in his *Endrapallibres* (“The Book Devourer,” 2001), Gabriela Rubio in *La bruixa Tibúrcia* (“Tibúrcia the Witch,” 2002), Sebastià Serra with *La nit de sant Joan* (“Saint John’s Night,” 2002), and Bernat Cormand in *El dibuixant d'ossos* (“The Bear Artist,” 2008). Let us close this connection with the memory of Enric Solbes, who suddenly passed away in 2009, the creator of elegant illustrations that defined the publisher Bromera.

The awareness of diversity that should be present has also arrived in children’s books in Catalan. More editions of texts prepared for “easy reading” stages are appearing aimed at groups with reading difficulties, such as the collections of traditional tales, *Contes d’Arreu* (“Tales from Around the World”) and from the genre of biography, *Tant de Gust* (“With Great Pleasure,” Abadia de Montserrat), and the collection of children’s classics, *Kalafat* (Castellnou). For their part, the publisher El Cep i la Nansa has launched books that combine writing with sign language in their collection, *Ginjoler*. Linguistic multiculturalism is reflected in the collection *Minaret* (La Galera), which presents texts written in three languages: Catalan, Castilian, and Arabic or Chinese.

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Even before the awarding of the 2002 National Children’s Literature Prize to the poet Miquel Desclot, poetry had already made a timid appearance, but in the last ten years it has grown considerably. To the works of the doyenne Joana Raspall (b. 1913) add the creations from the fertile mind of Lola Casas, with more than twenty titles since 2001, together with other original poetry contributions ranging from the singularity of Josep Sala-Valldaura to the sensibility of Marc Granell to the genius of Llorenç Jiménez. Piggy-backing on these successes, publishers have created collections especially for this genre such as the collection *La Lluerna* (“The Skylight,” Abadia de Montserrat), whose poems and songs have a central theme, and the collection *Vull llegir! Poesia* (“I Want to Read Poetry!,” Cruïlla), featuring a single poem aimed at first-time readers, in which each page has a verse and an illustration.

By contrast, the dramatic genre remains at the tail end of fiction books. The few titles for children’s and young adults’ theatre being published at the moment, following the suspension of the two collections from La Galera, *Tramoia y Tramoietà*, can be found in the Majorcan publisher El Gall’s catalog and in the *El Micalet* theatre collection from the publisher Bromera.

In this assessment and review, we have not considered the increasingly numerous titles which are half-way between fiction and information and deal with themes that interest adults (such as adoption, diversity, ecology, civics), an excessively educational and utilitarian trend which is growing

in books for very young children. They are works that often forget the recreational function of reading in favor of transmitting the message and which are generally not very attractive to readers.

### **Children's and young adults' literature with a future**

The strength and vitality of children's and young adults' literature in Catalan is also evident in other fields beyond publishing. One proof of its normality is the growth in the last few years of research in this area, attributable to the university status of this material. The study and analysis of children's and young adults' literature has been promoted in several universities with excellent results. This includes works generated by the Xarxa Temàtica ("Themed Network") of Catalan children's and young adults' literature made up of researchers from universities in the Catalan area whose work appeared in two publications between 1999 and 2006: *La literatura infantil i juvenil catalana: un segle de canvis* ("Catalan Children's and Young Adults' Literature: A Century of Changes," 2002), an assessment of the development of this material from various angles, and *El patrimoni de la imaginació: Llibres d'ahir per a lectors d'avui* ("The Heritage of the Imagination: Books of Yesterday for Readers of Today," 2005), an analysis of the most representative titles from the history of Catalan children's and young adults' literature. Another interesting contribution to mention is the study commissioned by ClijCAT regarding the situation of children's and young adults' books in Catalan (2002), which merits an update.

Likewise, in the past few years, four congresses on Catalan children's and young adults' literature have been held in La Seu d'Urgell (1997), Vilafranca (2001), Valencia (2004), and Mollerussa (2009). These have provided a space for meetings and debates among specialists and have resulted in the publication of works following each gathering. In the throes of the second Congress, two awards were conceived to recognize efforts in dissemination and research in the field of Catalan children's and young adults' literature. These bear the names of two of the field's proponents: the Aurora Díaz Plaja Award is for published articles and the first prize was awarded before the death of the celebrated librarian in 2003, and the Josep Vallverdú Award is given for unpublished studies.

The potential of the digital realm has also increased the presence of children's and young adults' literature as well as the possibility of becoming more informed online through catalogs, reference works, publishing bulletins, digital magazines, etc. There are innumerable blogs on all themes and genres for those wishing to read about, discuss, or review that which is published and those who publish. Particularly notable on the Internet are the digital magazine *Cornabou*, managed by the journalist and critic Andreu Sotorra, and the magazine *Faristol*, in both print and online formats, a ClijCAT publication, which is

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celebrating its 25th anniversary in 2010.

Catalan children's and young adults' literature has begun the 21st century with force and dynamism thanks to a rich variety and potent group of publishers, authors, and illustrators who have been able to attract different generations of readers. It can thus be concluded that the publication of children's books in Catalan is abundant in titles, varied in genres and themes, formally correct, and, as a whole, comparable to publication in other countries.

The panorama of Catalan literature for young people is satisfactory, but in this new century

we would certainly like to improve the results in several ways. Future directions will include obtaining wider international renown for our authors and illustrators, increasing production of translations from non-Anglo-Saxon languages and cultures, re-publishing "our" classics to guarantee that Catalan-speaking children know and are able to enjoy certain classics currently out of print, and, of course, achieving greater recognition and depending less on schools alone for support of literature. These are some of the good wishes we have for our field of children's and young adults' literature, as well as for all children's and young adults' literature everywhere.

## Notes

1. Children's literature citations can be found at the Fundació Germán Sánchez Ruipérez at <http://www.fundaciongsr.es/catalogos/frames.htm>

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# The Trajectory of Basque Literature for Children and Young People

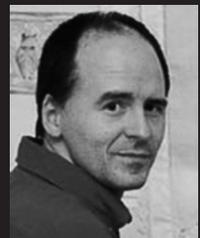


*The author provides a brief history of Basque children's literature from its roots in the oral tradition to modern examples of critical realism and poetry for young people.*

In the world of literary history, the field of Basque literature made a somewhat tardy appearance. The first known instance of literature written in Basque dates back to 1545, and the first piece of literature for children was published at the beginning of the 19th century. The small number of Basque speakers (currently in a region of 750,000), the fact that until recently Basque culture was linked to rural contexts, and a lack of interest on the part of the majority of the nobility and the bourgeoisie meant that Basque literature was linked to religious themes until practically the 20th century.

This situation resulted in a large amount of oral literature being adapted into print with compilations of stories, sayings, riddles, games, etc., showcasing Basque literary vitality. We cannot comprehend today's Basque literature for children and young people

by Xabier Etxaniz Erle



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*It was precisely this traditionally oral literature and the wonderful tales expressed therein that prompted Bizenta Mogel (1782-1854) to publish the first children's book in Basque, *Ipui onac* (Great Stories) (1804), a translation of Aesop's fables.*



Zubizarreta, Patxi.  
*Zazpigarrena eta azkena.*

without acknowledging its debt to oral literature, since this influence is quite clear in many examples of work by authors such as Bernardo Atxaga, Patxi Zubizarreta, A. Lertxundi, etc. It was precisely this traditionally oral literature and the wonderful tales expressed therein that prompted Bizenta Mogel (1782-1854) to publish the first children's book in Basque, *Ipui onac* (Great Stories) (1804), a translation of Aesop's fables.

Although as a general rule, children's books have been relatively late arrivals – and were didactic works in their initial stages – the case of Basque literature entailed “a kind of natural time lag, with the result that many Basque works appear to have been written earlier than they actually were,” according to K. Mitxelena (1988:23). Thus, whereas the fable had its European heyday in the 17th century, it was at the beginning of the 19th century when the famous maxim of *prodesse delectare* or educating by amusement commenced in Basque (A. Iturriaga, L. Goyhette or J. B. Archu, among others).

Very few works for children and young people were published in Basque during this period. The arrival at the end of the 19th century of late romanticism, focusing on rural areas, and popular folklore together with nationalist ideas meant that the early 20th century witnessed the emergence, along with the Basque educational movement, of an incipient range of literature for children and young people far removed in terms of their topics and techniques from the universal works of the period, or even prior to this period.

### First steps

The early years of the 20th century saw the emergence of the first bilingual schools in the Basque Country and the beginnings of a number of publications for children. Just as a publishing house was created in Spain by Saturnino Calleja, a Basque publisher, López de Mendizabal, produced a string of children's readers and textbooks for children in Basque. A number of popular stories were also published, as well as the first children's play in the Basque language and some religious books.

As was the case in other parts of the world during the 19th century, books that had been published for adults were adopted by children and young people. This included, among others, *Abarrak* (The Rest) (Kirikiño, 1918) and *Pernando Amezketarra; Bere ateraldi eta gertaerak* (Pernando Amezketarral; His Ideas and Adventures) (G. Mujika, 1927), books set in the rural world with clear tinges of humor.

Popular literature was also taken over by children. Compilations of stories by Barbier (1931) or Mayi Ariztia (1934), and the fables published in 1926 by Oxobi (considered by some to be the best Basque-language fabulist) brought traditionally oral literature to small children. As in the case of publications of popular stories, these works featured some finely

honed language and illustrations for the period. *Dar-Dar-Dar* (Trembling) (1929) and *Txomin Arlote* (1929) are clear examples of this phenomenon. These popular stories were carefully presented for publication with modern illustrations by "Txiki" (John Zabalo), the forerunner of modern illustration in Basque books for children and the best-known Basque illustrator during the first half of the 20th century.

Following the creation and adoption stages of literature for children and young people, came translation from other languages over an extremely diverse range, from the Brothers Grimm (1929), to Schmid (1929) and works by Oscar Wilde (1927), Croce (1932) and many others. This large volume of publications ought to have signalled the beginnings of a construction of fully-fledged Basque literature for children. However, the Civil War that broke out in Spain in 1936 and the subsequent repression, drastically put an end to this process.

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### Repression and literary vacuum

After the Civil War (1936-1939), the repression of Franco's regime curtailed the beginnings of Basque literature for children. The death or exile of the vast majority of writers, brutal repression, and a ban on the use of any language other than Spanish brought a halt to the development of Basque literature, among other things. Works continued to be published, however, in the French Basque Country, and, most especially, in the communities formed by Basque exiles.

This critical situation was not specific to the Basque Country only and occurred with all forms of literature in the Spanish state. The first major changes in literature for children and young people in the postwar era emerged in the early 1950s (and coincided with the "intellectual liberation" mentioned by García Padrino (1992: 513). J. Etxaide published *Alos-Torrea* (1950), a historic children's book, though the major change emerged in "Kuliska Ssorta," a wide-ranging anthology in terms of style and themes, where literature for children and literature "adopted" by children found their own space.

The Royal Basque Language Academy, Euskaltzaindia, likewise availed itself of writing competitions and its own publications to help maintain minimum levels of literary production and to fill some of the large gaps. In 1955, for instance, it published *Amabost egun Urgain'en* (A Fortnight in Urgain), the first detective novel written in Basque, demonstrating the influence of Poe, Chekhov, Alarcón, Verne, Simenon, and Dickens. It was penned by Loidi and was enormously successful in the Basque Country (it was translated into Spanish in 1958); it was also the first Basque novel to be translated into Catalan (1961). As a countermeasure to a dearth of books in Basque, Euskaltzaindia continued to publish other works throughout the 1950s.

Gradually, thanks to the economic growth and political liberalization of the 1960s, the literary (and political) panorama moved forward in the Basque Country with a substantial increase in the general production of works, thereby changing the entire face of literature for children and young people.

### The beginnings of genuine literary production

Literature for children in both the Basque Country and the Spanish state experienced major changes in the early 1960s. IBBY was created in 1955 and the National Institute of Spanish Books (INLE) created the Committee for Children and Young People's Literature in 1957. There was greater freedom as the first "ikastolas" began to make their timid appearance in the Basque Country as schools where pupils were taught in Basque, which was tolerated although not legalized. For a number of years these schools would be the true driving force (and consumers) of the production of children's books.

*The major change to children's literature in Basque, however, was introduced by Marijane Minaberry, a writer from Banka (in the French Basque province of Basse-Navarre), and author of several books that signalled the commencement of literature for children and young people in the Basque country.*

The major change to children's literature in Basque, however, was introduced by Marijane Minaberry, a writer from Banka (in the French Basque province of Basse-Navarre), and author of several books that signalled the commencement of literature for children and young people in the Basque

Country. Minaberry's anthology of stories in *Itchulingo anderea ...* (The Woman from Itchulin ...) (1963) and the poems published two years later in *Xoria kantari* (The Song Bird) ushered in the beginnings of books for children with the emphasis on the pleasure of reading, as opposed to the predominant objective of education. Her most literary work, *Xoria kantari* (1965), contains 23 poems in which readers find a great deal of literary devices such as repetition, onomatopoeia, rhymes etc., making the simple poems ideal for younger readers.

These early steps, however, had no major repercussions until the end of the dictatorship. After the death of Franco in 1975, Basque society underwent many political and social changes, in particular. There was a dramatic increase in the number of pupils at Basque-language schools, the Autonomy Statute was approved in 1979, and three years later the Bilingualism Decree was introduced to regulate the teaching of Euskara at all schools. Meanwhile, on the literary front, three major Basque publishing houses (Hordago, Elkar, and Erein) emerged to structure the sector of literature for children and young people.

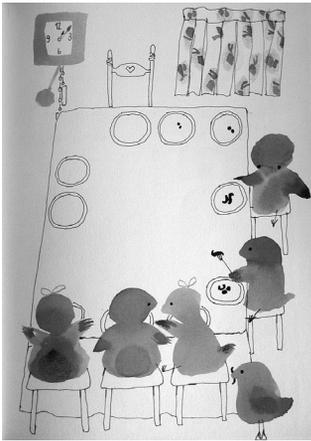


Cano, H.  
*Omar dendaria.*

### Modern children's literature

By 1980, Basque literature for children and young adults embarked upon a new phase of quantitative and also qualitative changes. There was an astounding increase in literary production. Whereas, prior to this time,

practically nothing had been published for them beyond a few dozen works, more than 300 works were published annually in the 1980s, and more than 400 in recent years – a highly significant change. But even this was surpassed by the progress made in terms of qualitative aspects. The need to create a modern, attractive, and interesting format as a means of conveying Basque literature to potential readers led to the publication, between 1981 and 1984, of three key works in Basque literature for children and young people: *Tristean kontsolatzeko makina* (The Sadness Consoler) (1981) by Anjel



Atxaga, Bernardo.  
*Txitoen istorioa.*

Lertxundi, *Chuck Aranberri dentista baten etxean* (Chuck Aranberri at the Dentist's) (1982) by Bernardo Atxaga, and *Txan fantasma* (Karmentxu and the Little Ghost) (1984) by Mariasun Landa. These three books marked the commencement of modern Basque literature for children

and young people. The Rodarian influence on Lertxundi, the influence of Christine Nöstlinger on Landa, and a melange of fantasy, reality, and humor in the books written by Atxaga, ushered in the publication of modern, up-to-date works.

Of course, in addition to modern literature, the publication continued of many classical and traditional books that reflected a rural environment identical to the society of a century ago. Many books were also published based on popular tales, anthologies of stories, anecdotes, or famous events both past and present etc.

### Narrative in modern Basque literature for children and young people

More books have been published in Basque in the last few years than appeared in all the years between the publication of the first book in Basque in 1545 to the end of Franco's dictatorship in 1975.

It could therefore be said that we may virtually obtain an overview of the situation from an analysis of literary production in the last 30 years. Thus, in addition to the abovementioned tradition of oral literature and its modern versions, readers can now find books containing fantasy realism, science fiction, adventure, mysteries, or humor. Some of these – such as *Kutsidazu bidea, Isabel* (Show Me the Way, Isabel) by Joxean Sagastizabal (1994), a genuine best-seller in Basque literature for children and young people – have been reproduced on television and in films, while many others of the same genres have been translated into other languages. Perhaps, though, the greatest change within Basque literature for young audiences emerged in social critiques and works that provide us with greater knowledge of ourselves, under the umbrella of critical realism. The use of traditional

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features or new narrative techniques strengthen these works causing readers to reflect more deeply.

In 1982 Mariasun Landa was awarded the Lizardi Prize for a story about a little girl's relationship with a ghost that came about due to the inability of adults to understand her or show affection. Faced with an adult world, Karmentxu seeks refuge in animism and her imagination. *Txan fantasma* (1984) was one of the first examples of modern children's literature in Basque, with the issues presented and its narrative technique. This book led in turn to a large number of interesting works portraying society's intersection with the world of children and young people, such as *Dado iratxoa* (Dado the Elf) (1986) or *Matias Ploff'en erabakiak* (Matias Ploff's Decisions) (1992),

depicting the problem of obesity, the precedence of values, etc. There can be no doubt that Mariasun Landa is the foremost exponent of critical realism within Basque literature for children and young people. She demonstrates this in several of her books including *Julietta, Romeo eta saguak* (Juliet, Romeo and the Mice) (1994), *Alex* (1990), *Nire eskua zurean* (My Hand in Yours) (1995), a story of initiation to love, maternal dependence, and the feelings of teenagers, and *Krokodilo bat ohe azpian* (A Crocodile under the Bed) in 2003, which won the National Literature Prize for Children and Young People. This book narrates the imaginary relationship between the protagonist and the crocodile under his bed, and, again, the author induces us to reflect on our fears, our solitude, and the society in which we live.

Critical realism gained considerable ground in Basque literature during the latter half of the 1980s, assisted by translations of authors such as U. Wölfel, F. Hetmann, M. Gripe, C. Nöstlinger, P.



Añorga, A.  
*Arrain gorria.*

Härtling, T. Haugen, etc. Works in Basque now cover practically the entire gamut of social topics, all of which are discussed in quality works produced in recent years: the problem of militarization or the use of violence (*Joxeme gerradarara matel* Joxeme Goes to War, 1992), ecology (*Desafioa*/The Challenge, 1988, or *Joxepi dendaria*/Joxepi the Shopkeeper, 1984), the family (*Jaun agurgarria*/Dear Sir, 1993, or *Pirritx eta Porrotx arrantzaz*/Pirritx and Porrotx Go Fishing, 2004), poverty (*Kittano*, 1988), emigration (*Bi letter jaso nituen oso denbora gutxian*/Two Letters All at Once, 1984, or *Eztia eta ozpina*/Honey and Vinegar, 1994), immigration (*Eddy Merckxen gurpila*/Eddy Merckx's Wheel, 1994, or *Semaforoko ipuina*/Traffic Light Tale, 2004), unemployment (*Harriak*/Throwing Stones, 1989), love (1948

*ko udal*/The Summer of 1948, 1994, or *Kixmi elurpean*/Kixmi in the Snow, 2005), and freedom (*Asto bat hypodromoan*/A Donkey at the Races, 1984; *Potx*, 1992; *Tristuraren teoria*/The Sadness Theory, 1993; *Behi euskaldun baten memoriak*/Memoirs of a Basque Cow, 1991, etc.)

This wide selection of themes and styles in children's books was born of the need to provide a response to a variety of literary tastes and to fill the gap of a non-existent range of topics. The authors themselves reflect variety – in addition to Mariasun Landa, mentioned above (one of the best known authors of Basque literature for children and young people on the international stage, nominated for



Arratibel J. and  
Zubizarreta, Patxi.  
*Etsai zaharra eta mendiko lehoia.*



Atxaga, Bernardo.  
*Xola eta basurdeak.*

the Andersen Prize), we could cite the work of writers such as Bernardo Atxaga, who has evolved from the surrealism of his beginnings and rural tales (*Bi letter jaso nituen oso denbora gutxian*, 1984, for example), to the humor and irony of his more recent work - *Xola eta Angelito* (Xola and Angelito), 2004, for example. We must also mention Patxi Zubizarreta, who has produced works of enormous sensitivity and has succeeded in combining literary tradition with the present age, as in *Atxiki sekretua* (Keep the Secret), 2004 – a modern novel that portrays the reality of a girl who learns of witch stories and



Arratibel J. and  
Zubizarreta, Patxi.  
*Txomin ipurdi.*

customs from her elderly neighbor – or in writing books with a substantial poetic content such as *Usoa, hegan etorritako neskatoa* (Usoa, the Girl Who Flew to Us) (1999), a short emotional tale about the drama of abandonment, adoption and love.

### Other literary genres

The vast majority of modern novels fall into the narrative genre, which accounts for most of the production of literature for children – just over 95% of the total, in fact. Plays in Basque for children and young people, as is the case in adult literature in recent decades, do not account for even 1% of the work produced. Xabier Diaz Esarte, Aizpea Goenaga, Alaitz Olaizola, and Enkarni Genua are the best-known playwrights working in a minority genre with a considerable female presence. In terms of poetry, this literary genre experienced a full turnaround in 1992 when Juan Kruz Igerabide published *Begi-niniaren poemak* (Poems for the Pupil of the Eye) (subsequently produced in a bilingual edition by Hiperión as *Poemas para la pupila*, 1995). This collection of

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rhymes.*

poems was a genuine milestone in Basque literature for children and young people, a literary form with a long tradition in Basque. Igerabide continued to publish a wide range of poetry books obviously influenced by Japanese poems, but also by erudite Spanish poetry, oral European poetry, and Anglo-Saxon limericks and nursery rhymes.

The work of other authors, such as J. Ormazabal, *Hitzak jostailu* (The Word Toy) (1994) or *Irri eta barre* (Smiles and Laughter) (2002) features poems and plays on words and definitions, as in the

poetry anthology for first-time readers *Denboraren kanta-kontuak* (Singing Tales of Time) (1995) by Yolanda Arrieta, highlighting the work of one of our best-known illustrators, Asun Balzola. Another example of a literary playground with references to games and traditions is *Ilbete dilindan* (Full Moon Hanging) (2002) by Jon Suarez. We may also observe clear influences of the oral tradition in *Pupuan trapua* (A Rag for a Sore Place) (2004) by Xabier Olaso, winner of the Basque literature prize for children and young people.

The quality of each of these aforementioned books and the work of translators and authors such as Antton Olariaga and Jon Zabaleta, and of illustrators such as Asun Balzola, J. Mitxelena, E. Odriozola, E. Eibar, M. Valverde and A. Villate, with their winning stamp of style, all have been essential factors in the provision of excellent reading material for the smallest children. They demonstrate the scope of this sector and giving us every reason to be optimistic as to the quality of Basque literature for children and young people in the future.

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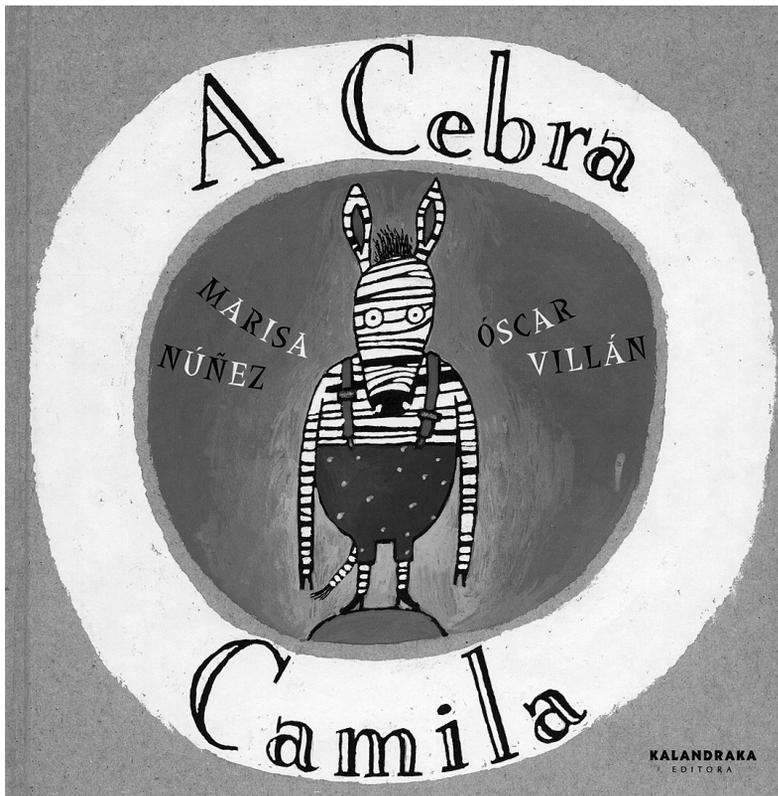
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This novel, recipient of the National Prize for Literature in 2009, narrates the everyday life of two childhood friends living in the outskirts of Medellín (Colombia) as they wander the streets trying to help their humble and unhappy families survive. Camilo wants to be the boss of the area's most infamous gang. Andrés knows that he'll never end up a thief, but he feels he can't leave his friend alone. While in the library, they discover that books help you understand that another life is possible. They see firsthand that the torrential rains turn the crusted dirt in Medellín's squalid alleyways into fertile and revitalizing soil. Similarly, in the stories they read, they also see that others have changed their lives for the better. The book's author, Alfredo Gómez Cerdá, received the Cervantes Chico Award for Children and Young Adult Literature for his life's work.

Alicia Muñoz Álvarez



Alfredo Gómez Cerdá  
*Barro de Medellín /*  
*Medellin's Mud*  
 Madrid, Spain: Edelvives, 2009.  
 146 pp. ISBN: 978-84-263-6849-2  
 (fiction, 10+)



# The Lineage of The Blue Hen

## Galician Literature for Children at the Turn of the Century

*This overview of Galician children's literature highlights the powerful and sometimes subversive role that books for the young play in dealing with issues of freedom, language, love, war, and violence, whether told fancifully or realistically.*

Realism or fairy tale? Everyday problems or stories set in Galicia's magical edges? The tension in children's literature between these two book types is resolved in Galicia through the integration of both genres. Distinguishing realism from fantasy is to negotiate slippery ground; on the one hand, there are works cast as fantasy or science fiction – such as *Ariadna*, by Miranda – which are set in another world although they deal with problems from ours. On the other hand, as the critic Martínez Bonati points out, it is no less fantastic to account for some character's thoughts than it is to bring in dragons.

Indeed, Galician children's literature in this decade belongs to the lineage of *The Blue Hen*, Carlos Casares' book that, together with *Sardines Through the Sea*, by Xohana Torres, launched the field in 1968. Is *The Blue Hen* fantasy or realism? We may consider the existence of a blue hen with five red feathers, laying colored eggs a fantasy, but the mayor and authorities see danger in its existence; however, when

by MARILAR ALEIXANDRE



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the policemen come to seize the hen, they find all the town's hens dyed blue with five red feathers. In the context of the anti-Franco resistance in 1968, this revealed a clear connection with social issues, with the defense of minorities and of dissidents. This merging of real life conflicts with

*This merging of real life conflicts with elements of fantasy is one of the major traits of Galician books for children and young adults discussed here.*

elements of fantasy is one of the major traits of Galician books for children and young adults discussed here. A second is the acceptance of this literature as a part of the literary system, of Literature with a capital L, and the difficulties, in some cases, of demarcating children's books from literature for adults. The third is the freedom that authors enjoy when writing for young people, the lack of concern with political correctness, and the publishers' support of creative freedom.

### Darkness-shades and “reparantes” through Galician streets

Galician oral tradition has a wealth of fairy tales, set down with dexterity by the team of Antonio Reigosa, Xosé Miranda and Ramiro Cuba, in the series “Buligan horse,” for example. From these sources emerged Álvaro Cunqueiro, an outstanding Galician writer in the 20th century. In *Merlin and Family* (not belonging to children's literature), Cunqueiro wove motifs from Arthurian legends and worldwide tales with Galician biting wit, creating immortal stories. Who would not wish, on a dark night, to have a red darkness-shade, an umbrella creating a circle of light in order to drive away darkness? How much would we pay for a removable road, connecting remote territories, which could take us to our distant lover?

Fantasy creeps easily into the daily life of characters in Galician literature. An excellent example is *Ramón Lamote*, which won author Paco Martín the first National award for Galician children's literature in 1985. In *Ramón Lamote*, beings such as “reparantes,” “entomodelfos,” and “marmolubios” live alongside neighbors who are proud of themselves and mayors who boast of having read a whole book once when they were

*Nevertheless, we make these creatures ours by recreating them in the context of our physical and emotional landscapes.*

young. Here, bureaucrats are intent on making life difficult for everyone, particularly if they are speakers of Chairego (an invented language; a metaphor for Galician), a language at risk. The “reparante” (which wakes only once in 696 years) does not live in a fairy castle but in the streets of a contemporary town, not unlike the Galician city of Lugo, encircled by its Roman wall.

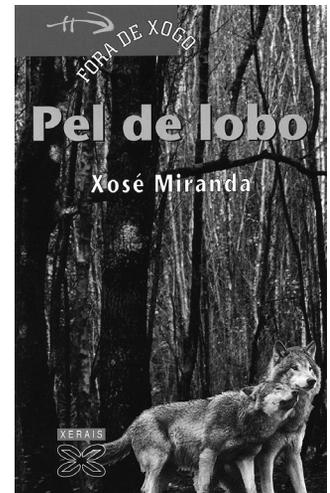
### Updated myths: She-werewolves, giant octopuses

Traditional oral myths continue to be updated in the first decade of this current century. Werewolves, kraken, even Pedro Chosco (literally One-eyed Peter, a character who lulls children to sleep much like the Sandman, Wee Willie Winkie, Ole Lukøje, or Dormette) are not unique characters specific only to Galician folklore. Nevertheless, we make these creatures ours by recreating them in the context of our physical and emotional landscapes. The landscape of the Lugo's mountains, where Miranda places

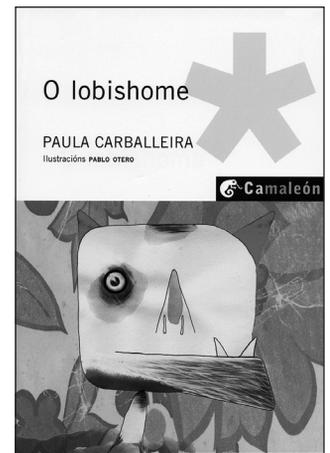
*Wolf Skin*, winner of the Merlin award in 2002, seems the natural frame for men turning into wolves under the full moon. Set at the beginning of the 20th century, the story is told by Xosé, the young man entrusted by his father with killing a fire-eyed wolf in a snowdrift. Doubts about whether it is an animal or a werewolf scaring the town shift when Xosé suspects that his opponent may be a she-werewolf. Does he seek to hunt her or to make love to her? Which one of the two sisters, Ana or Aurora, is shape-shifting into a wolf at night? Which one of the two loves will Xosé choose? Would the she-wolf be ready to live with him, or would she prefer to lead a wild life? Miranda draws a parallel between wolves and women's yearning for freedom and equality, personified in Ana. For Ana, who defends the vote for women and the abolition of taxes for peasants, wolves embody freedom; they are freer than some humans.

*The Werewolf* is a theatre piece published in 2007 by Paula Carballeira, who is the most well-known author of theatre for children as well as being a storyteller and actress. Carballeira has won countless awards, including the Manuel María for *Good night*, featuring Pedro Chosco. *The Werewolf* is enlivened by her sparkling dialogue. As in Miranda's novel, the werewolf and the night creatures, vampires, bats, black cats, and elves are the "goodies," whereas the hunters are the "baddies" who end up scurrying away in order to avoid becoming the vampires' dinner. *The Werewolf* brings in imagery associated with the werewolf myth: a full moon, a "cruceiro" (stone cross in a crossroad) where the worlds from here and there meet, and guns charged with silver bullets. The night creatures and the werewolf, named Chusqui (a puppy name, pointing out that it is not so fearful), use the night as an accomplice for hiding them, and the hunters are forced to flee without seizing the werewolf. Chusqui is a domestic werewolf that we could almost take home. The book has disturbing artwork by Pablo Otero, which in some ways seems to contradict the tale. If in *Wolf Skin* the she-wolf embodies freedom and life in the wild, then in *The Werewolf* we learn to play ball along with werewolves.

Galicia does not have as many legends about giant squids as it has about werewolves, but it would not be because of the nature of the Galician coast, perhaps the roughest in the world. According to the narrator of *A Giant Octopus*, the last book that Carlos Casares published before his death, on foggy nights near Cape Udra facing the open sea, an octopus may capsize a boat with a swing of its arms and may brand its victims with a black mark full of circular spots, the octopus' embrace. *A Giant Octopus* pays tribute to the power of creating fables, to storytelling close to the fireside. We will never know whether it was an octopus that took Nicolás, or whether it was the Agüeiros tailor, disguised as a squid. Perhaps it was all the product of old Delfina's imagination, she who persuaded the narrator that he saw what he did not, that the octopus was as huge as ten cows and Nicolás was whistling to the tune of Veiga's Alborada (dawn song). Delfina may have had the power to convince the widow that Nicolás was not drowned, but that he had gone to the party and would return. *A Giant Octopus*,



Miranda, Xosé. *Pel de lobo*.

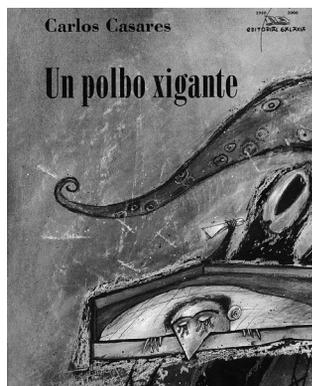


Carballeira, Paula. *O lobishome*.

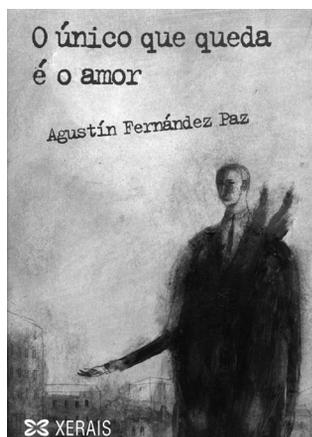


Casalderrey, Fina.  
*Ola, estúpido monstro peludo!*

*A Giant Octopus, beautifully illustrated by Enjamio, is a celebration of fright stories told with the purpose of driving away fear, with the goal of helping a widow to go on after her husband's disappearance, as sometimes happens on the Galician seaside. It is a story about the relationships between real life and dreams, about imagination and literature.*



Casares, Carlos.  
*Un polbo xigante.*



Fernández Paz, Agustín.  
*O único que queda é o amor.*

beautifully illustrated by Enjamio, is a celebration of fright stories told with the purpose of driving away fear, with the goal of helping a widow to go on after her husband's disappearance, as sometimes happens on the Galician seaside. It is a story about the relationships between real life and dreams, about imagination and literature.

### Real life and its conflicts:

#### Love and lovelessness and violence

Real life and its conflicts are the stuff used to build most Galician works intended for young readers nowadays. Love is a powerful force driving both life and literature, and there are countless books that deal with it, but few manage to do so in such a heartrending way as *Only Love Is Lasting*, a collection of short stories that won Agustín Fernández Paz the National award in 2008. There is love in every page of this book; these stories express every form of love, or rather lovelessness, unfulfilled love, love cut short by death, or love never attained. Books are the gift of lovers, for love is so strong as to pull them from the dead, either to deliver a poetry collection, or to keep watch under the windows of the loved one. They may be poems snatched from others, aimed, without achieving it, to deliver messages from the man in love to the woman visiting the bookshop who does not look for one who silently loves her. This secret lover is one of the characters that turns out to be invisible, transparent even when we pass them by every day. The romantic memories of a first love, of a first kiss, sometimes linked to a poem, contrast with the routine of worn-out relationships. These subjects are not often found in literature for young adults. Undoubtedly *Only Love Is Lasting*, illustrated by Pablo Auladell, is an instance of the difficulties of establishing rigid borders between literature for the young and for adults.

Lovelessness in its most extreme form - domestic violence against women - is the difficult material into which *Hello, Dull Hairy Monster*, by Fina Caslderrey, intended for 10-year-olds, sinks its teeth. This is not the first time that this author, loved both by critics and the public, has dealt with domestic violence. She also tackled it in *Xela Shifted to a Vampire* and in *The Lagoon of the Mute Girls*, but *Hairy Monster* skilfully combines the hard issue at its core with the poetic license of being narrated in the first person by Muriel, from the mother's belly. The physical and verbal violence of the father is conveyed in such images as toads falling from his mouth as he insults Muriel's mother, or when he invades the house, depicted by the cherries falling from the print on her dress. It may seem difficult to handle this with affection and humor, but Caslderrey achieves it with, for instance, funny insults showered on Muriel's mother, or with Muriel's father's insistence on eating nonsense dishes. This book, illustrated by Irene Fra, is an example of how realism is stressed in the beginning of the century.

Galician children's literature does not avoid conflict in its depiction of armed violence and war either. There are novels for young adults dealing with the effects of the echoes of the Spanish Civil War many years afterward, as in *The Barefoot Shadow*, by An Alfaya, and *Shadow Corridors*, by Agustín Fernández Paz, both of which are narrated by young girls dealing with family secrets that have been untold for decades.

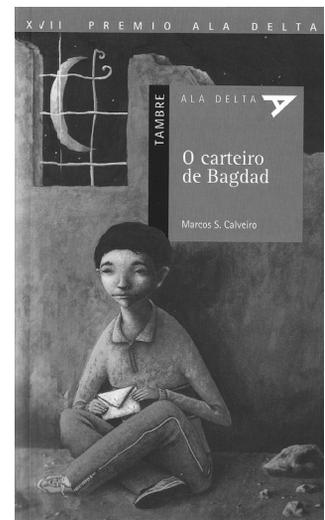
The consequences of the Iraq war on Abdulwahid's family are presented in *Baghdad's Postman*, which received the Ala Delta award in 2007 and was selected for the White Ravens list. This was one of the books that established Marcos Calveiro as a new and original voice in Galician literature (together with his book, *Rhinoceros and Chimaeras*, which followed the life of carnival "freaks"). The anguish and fear about Ibrahim, the title's postman, who does not return home after delivering the mail, the tension between Sunnis and Shiites, the protection of an old parchment after the looting of Baghdad's library, the search for the addressee of a letter in the midst of the chaos caused by the war, and the Gilgamesh myth – all these threads are skilfully interwoven in the story. The friendship between Abdulwahid, a Sunni, and Ahmed, a Shiite, is handled without false sentimentalism. These novels about wars past or present show how Galician books for children avoid explicit messages, urging the reader to draw his or her own conclusions. The interest in misfortune and conflict that is the starting point in these stories frames my own work, as in *Coal Street*, about the violence in the Basque country, or *Medusa's Head*, which won the Fundacion Caixa Galicia award in 2008, and was selected for the White Ravens list, about the symbolic and social rape that follows physical rape.

Love, lovelessness, violence, and war are part of the daily life of many children, and it may be pointed out that in Galician literature these topics are not only addressed in books for young adults, but also in books for children, as shown by *Hello*, *Dull Hairy Monster*, *Baghdad Postman*, or *Call Me Simbad*, by Francisco Castro, which tackles the thorny issue of caring for a grandfather with Alzheimer's disease.

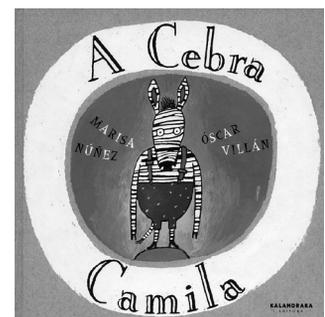
### Picture books, theatre, poetry: Camilla the Zebra and Mr. Clin

In Galicia there are also publishers who specialize in producing lavish picture books. An outstanding author of texts for this genre is Marisa Núñez. From her collaboration with Óscar Villán was born one of the most beautiful Galician picture books, *Camilla the Zebra*, a moving and comical story about a little zebra that, because she shed her diapers, was stripped of her stripes by the wind "from the country when the wind turns." Luckily Camilla finds one creature after another – a snake, a snail, a spider, and a cicada – all of which help her to recover her stripes. The expressions on the zebra's face, from anxiety to happiness, bear witness to Villán's skill that won him the National Illustration award for *The White Rabbit*.

*These novels about wars past or present show how Galician books for children avoid explicit messages, urging the reader to draw his or her own conclusions.*



Calveiro, Marcos.  
*O carteiro de Bagdad.*



Núñez, Marisa.  
*A cebra Camila.*

Poetry receives more attention in Galician literature than is usual and is represented by authors of such high quality as Gloria Sánchez, author of *Mr. Clin's Glass House*. Mr. Clin builds a transparent house in order to view stars by night

*Sánchez's poetry in its subtlety and in the way in which the topics are handled is the opposite of the fussiness that is sometimes associated with children's poems.*

and birds during the day, but he does not anticipate the gossip of neighbors, who isolate him until grief changes him to glass and he breaks. Sánchez's poetry in its subtlety and in the way in which the topics are handled is the opposite of the fussiness that is sometimes associated with children's poems. Poetry for adolescents is much scarcer, but in 2006, the poet Fran Alonso edited an anthology, *Get Poetry-zed*, an anthology that claimed that "poetry does not bite," and includes poetry from Rosalía Castro, founding mother of Galician literature, to poets born in the 1980s, such as Antía Otero and Daniel Salgado.

### Galician literature for children belongs to literature

Are the short stories in *Only Love Is Lasting* addressed only to the young? Or is it just a literary work? And what about *Walls*, also by Fernández

Paz, about segregation? We could ask the same question about *The Book of Imaginary Travels*, by Xabier P. Docampo, a poetic transcription of travel notebooks to imaginary places, illustrated by Xosé Cobas. And if we have doubts about these books, published in special series, the same question arises with others, such as *A Giant Octopus* or *Wolf Skin*. As we review these stellar examples, we can conclude that it is the high literary quality of these and other Galician books for children that makes them all part of the whole body of Galician literature, apart from segregated labels. Many novels for the young get reviewed in major journals, and some general awards are won by children's works. It may be noticed that in a "minority" language such as Galician (although spoken by almost all the Galician population), many writers, critics, publishers, and others, believe that children's books play a major role in the recovery of Galician as a culture language.

It may be that given this consideration, there is greater creative freedom enjoyed by these writers. Our publishers are not worried about political correctness, nor do they censor blood, sex, underwear, or profanities that in other publishing contexts might cause small conflicts.

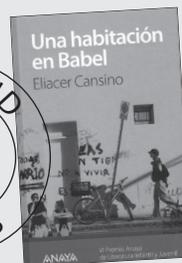
To summarize, we are blue hens that unfold with insolent red feathers, "reparantes" befriending speakers of languages in danger, she-werewolves who want to live free, and giant octopuses that squeeze sailors; we cry because of disappointment in love, and we are distressed by wars. And forever and ever we take shelter in books.

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Discovering that “The Others,” immigrants, are people no different than ourselves is the subject of this novel which won the VI Anaya Prize for Children’s and YA Literature. Babel is an enormous building that towers over the houses of a town near Seville with people of varying ancestry living inside. Similar to the Bible’s mythical tower, everyone seems destined to neither understand nor get to know one another. However, some wish to abandon their isolation and join their destinies with others, which is what Angel, a philosophy teacher, does by helping his sub-Saharan student. This book highlights the coming together of teenagers and adults, a book for reflecting upon the limits of our sense of duty and our commitment to the people who need our love and support. Eliacer Cansino has been a highly valued author in Spain since winning the Lazarillo Award in 1997 and being included in the IBBY Honor List in 1999.

Alicia Muñoz Álvarez



Eliacer Cansino  
**Una habitación en Babel / A Room in Babel**  
 Madrid, Spain: Anaya, 2009.  
 256 pp. ISBN: 978-84-667-8445-0  
 (fiction, 13+)

This book describes the struggle that the inhabitants of Nueva Granada (Colombia, Venezuela, Ecuador and Panama), led by Simón Bolívar, sustained between 1810 and 1819, in order to achieve their independence from Spain. The text develops alternately along two mutually complementary lines: a present-day conversation between a Colombian father and son about their Spanish ancestor Mateo, and a story in the past tense of Mateo's adventures as a conscript in the Royalist army. The book's appeal lies in that the thrilling adventures of this idealistic young man (who falls in love and marries an Indian girl, defies his superiors, is sentenced to death as a pacifist, and is rescued by his enemies) are interwoven with his descendants' interpretation of the historical facts from the perspective of our time. Jordi Sierra, a winner of many outstanding awards including the National Prize for Children's Literature, was the Spanish nominee for the 2010 Andersen Award.

M<sup>a</sup> José Gómez-Navarro



Jordi Sierra i Fabra  
**La nueva tierra / The New Land**  
 Madrid, Spain: Alfaguara, 2010.  
 328 pp. ISBN: 978-84-204-0530-8  
 (fiction, 14+)

“In *The Lost Child* (El Niño Perdido) I have tried to speak of the war, avoiding the rhetoric of violence;”

An Interview with Josep Antoni Tàssies

by ARANTXA BEA REYES



Arantxa Bea Reyes is a journalist, literary critic, former editor and a regular contributor to the magazine *Faristol*, which publishes reviews, interviews, and essays on children's and young adult literature.



*Journalist and literary critic Arantxa Bea Reyes interviews Josep Antoni Tàssies, winner of the Biennial of Illustration Bratislava Grand Prix Award, who discusses his journey in art, illustration, and literature for children.*

**J**osep Antoni Tàssies (Barbastro, 1963) is the first Spanish author to receive the Biennial of Illustration Bratislava Grand Prix Award since its foundation 42 years ago. He received the award for *El niño perdido* [The Lost Child] (Edicions SM), a book that portrays the ravages of war through the innocent, playful, and hopeful eyes of a young child. In his long career as an illustrator, Tàssies' artistic style has combined caricature, poster art, and graphic humor.

**AB: When did you decide to dedicate yourself professionally to illustration?**

**TÀSSIES:** I began as any child who draws, who likes doing it, and who continues drawing as the years pass. As a young adult I was torn between studying journalism or fine arts. If I had decided to study drawing, I was afraid I would end up with an excessively formal training. I thought I would continue drawing while I studied journalism and that's what I did. Afterwards, I was eager to start publishing and I wrote the occasional article, but I was instantly sidetracked by illustrating. By the spring of 1983 I was already published in the *Diari de Barcelona*, then later that summer in the magazine, *El món* – the first weekly in Catalan after Franco's death - and by that autumn I was illustrating for the Catalan newspaper, *El periòdic*.

**AB: Do you consider yourself to be self-taught as far as art is concerned?**

TÁSSIES: Basically, yes. A self-taught person who looks at things, of course, but has learnt by doing and trying many different ways of doing.

**AB: Was illustrating for the written press a way of presenting yourself to the publishing world before dedicating yourself to illustrating books?**

TÁSSIES: Press illustration seemed to me to be the perfect way to unite my two passions. On the one hand, spreading my message and communicating, and on the other, drawing.

**AB: Where are you most comfortable: in graphic humor or in caricature?**

TÁSSIES: They are different things. In fact I have only been doing graphic humor for a short time. I remember when I was very young seeing *La Cordoniz*, *El hermano lobo*, and other magazines from the end of Franco's regime. As a reader they have always interested me and in fact, when I was studying journalism with Salvador Alsus, I did a project about the first era of the magazine *El jueves*, which gave me not only a great mark, but also a contact to start publishing in the magazine *El món*, where Alsus was the sub-director. As a reader, graphic humor interested me, but I didn't involve myself as an author until 2001 when I started a personal project, intending to make a small contribution to the language of graphic humor. It was something ambitious and difficult, which I didn't publish until 2004 in the Catalan newspaper, *El periódico*, under the title *La mosca* [The Fly].

**AB: With your book *El niño perdido*, you won the 2008 Santa Maria Foundation's International Illustration Prize and the 2009 Biennial of Illustration Bratislava's Grand Prix, which for the first time in 42 years, was awarded to a Spanish author. Does this award represent a turning point in your career?**

TÁSSIES: It is an important award and I have accepted it with great happiness, gratitude, and enthusiasm. The truth is it has a special meaning for me. After the Santa Maria award, receiving the Bratislava award with this book gives recognition to a line of work which I started in 1991 and had to abandon for lack of support. I couldn't make an impact. They wouldn't publish me and it aroused controversy.

**AB: *El niño perdido* discusses the war and depicts harsh realities seen through a child's eyes. Do you think it is necessary to discuss issues like war and death with children?**

TÁSSIES: I think so, because our reality is the same. Obviously we have to protect the littlest ones with all of our love and all of our care. However, once this is clear, which I think is very important, I believe it is better not to hide the reality in which we live; neither the harshest parts nor aspects that may seem contradictory or can land us in contradictions. I don't think it is good to paint the world too sweetly because it would depict something to children that doesn't exist: an ideal



*I think it is important to teach what there is, with protection and care for the children, of course, but the world as it is.*

*I have tried to talk about war because I believe that only by starting with the idea that all wars are our wars, can peace be constructed.*

world. I think it is important to teach what there is, with protection and care for the children, of course, but the world as it is. In this specific case, war, which is what *El niño perdido* is about; our war and the wars that appear on television. I believe it is important that children have an idea beyond the rhetoric of violence, which I have avoided completely in the book; a violence which they can find in many films, games and toys. Avoiding this rhetoric of violence, I have tried to talk about war because I believe that only by starting with the idea that all wars are our wars, can peace be constructed.

**AB:** Is *El niño perdido* your most personal book?

TÁSSIES: I think it is my most mature book, but not the most personal. There are books, for instance, one from 1992, *Libre de bons amonestaments* [Book of Good Cautions] and *Un dia és un dia* [A Day Is a Day], which came second in the national awards for best published books in 1997, which are also very personal. And notice that these books are ones for which I am the illustrator only and not the author of the text. Another example is *Carabola* [Roundface]. And there are others with different styles which are also personal, such as *¡Hasta luego!* [See You Later!], a book I did with my father.

**AB:** Do you think there is a certain incompatibility between pedagogical intention and artistic creation? How does one achieve a point of equilibrium in creations for children?

TÁSSIES: There is the most radical position, which in some respects I share, and that is that art must be free and it is important to remember that. Having

*But all of this, without interpretation, without proper digestion, without an intention, without knowledge, is all a façade.*

said that, the rest depends on the author's intentions. If you think you are capable of developing an artistic language and you have a pedagogical intention, you can combine the two things. What doesn't normally work is imposing pedagogy onto the creation of work that is intended to be artistic. In reality, these works have been commissioned by educators. An educator is not an artist. Paradoxically, we are enjoying the marvelous technology that enables our work. It allows us to develop intellectually because we have tools that make languages more accessible. But all of this, without interpretation, without proper digestion, without an intention, without knowledge, is all a façade. We shouldn't allow ourselves to lose perspective.

**AB:** That is to say, on the one hand we have excessive pedagogy, an excessive moral intention in some works for children, and on the other, an excessive preoccupation with the format, with the visual part, which can lead to forgetting about the target reader?

TÁSSIES: If the commissioners of collections are educators and that is what dictates the criteria for the selection of works, we find that they are favoring the teacher over the writer, and this should never happen if a book is to be literature. I value pedagogical efforts and they interest me, but the contamination of pedagogy into strictly artistic ground seems to be harming more than helping. Good artists with good educators can

produce good books which are literary and visual art, but each of them must bring the best of themselves to the mix. You can't reach a consensus in a creative story. Readers will gain ideas and be enriched, but it will never be the result of a consensus by vote. The same thing happens regarding image. Everything dazzles us. We like everything. In art schools sometimes teaching can become too formal, especially considering that these are people who have had a fairly basic art school education. They probably make beautiful drawings, but I don't know how they think about children or what influences them. For that a more complete training and passion is needed.

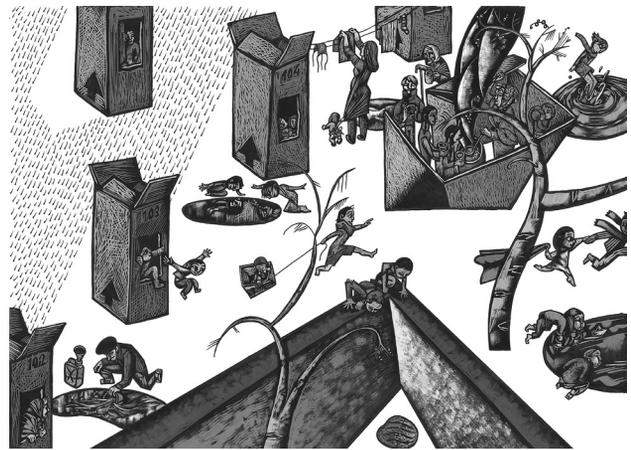
**AB: Is it different illustrating for children rather than adults?**

TÁSSIES: I think the basic difference is that when you do something for adults, you don't think about whether the reader will or won't understand the significance of an image. When you do things for children there have to be possible levels of meaning for children. For example, the other day a friend, who had read *El niño perdido* to her four-year-old daughter was amused when they came to the last image of the book. Her daughter pointed to the boxes of presents and asked "Mum, what is inside?" It reminded me of when I was drawing the packages, the wrapping paper with different colors here and bows and stripes there. With children, you have to try to have levels of meaning within their grasp.

**AB: I have the impression that you are very versatile, that you do very different things, with various aesthetics, not to mention other registers such as graphic humor. Do you think it is an advantage or do you sometimes miss not having a unique and defined style?**

TÁSSIES: All of my styles are mine. I have continued evolving in each of them, like the style I use for the writers' portraits I have been publishing for three years in the Catalan newspaper, *El periódico*, for which I received the 2007 Illustrators' Association's Junceda Award. As far as the style of *El niño perdido* goes, it is an evolution of what I was doing in 1983 when I began to publish in *El periódico* and the magazine *El món*. The book *Comemiedos* [Feareater], which is from 2000 – 2001, is related to the *Llibre de bons amonestaments* [Book of Good Cautions] from 1992. In the genesis of *El niño perdido's* style there were the years I spent painting like crazy. I had left publishing for a while, but when I came back I had two points of interest: synthesis – for which I used big markers in medium and small formats to force myself to eliminate details – and a purely artistic interest. This same experimentation also led to another interest, which was to create a synthetic drawing style with very broad lines and flat colors. I have done several books like that, *Volando al revés* [Flying Backwards], for example.

**AB: In children's books, can any style work? I am referring to the debate**



*Whoever says that nothing is invented has never invented.*

between figurative and abstract illustration.

TÁSSIÉS: I am of the opinion that both paths are valid for making books. It is a little like what I was saying about working with different artistic styles and the dangers they can bring. All of my mistakes are my own, but all the times I got it right belong to me too. I haven't taken them from anybody. Whoever says that nothing is invented has never invented. Those who have know that invention exists, and it doesn't come from nothingness. Creating is not the same as doing collage. Creating is a different story. It is putting yourself to the test – risking error and then realizing the mistakes and finding the right way. And in the middle of all of this, you are alone and making decisions.

*The real problem is a society that holds childhood in such low esteem.*

AB: Despite children's and young adult's literature representing a high percentage of the publishing production in Catalonia and Spain, it is often considered the little sister of literature; it has little presence in the media and rarely receives rigorous critical scrutiny. Why do you think this continues to be the case?

TÁSSIÉS: I believe that children themselves have little social presence and everything that surrounds them is marginalized and treated with a small voice. The real problem is a society that holds childhood in such low esteem.

AB: On the other hand, there are more and more magazines and specialty publications. Do you believe in the usefulness of literary criticism of children's and young adults' books?

TÁSSIÉS: Having literary criticism interests me, and I think it a good thing. I view critics as traveling companions. Whether I follow it a lot or a little is another story; after all, I am not a critic, I am an illustrator.

AB: Can you name any illustrator who has influenced you or who you like especially?

TÁSSIÉS: I love Alfonso Ruano's work and like the greater part of Carme Solé's work. There are aspects of both their professional attitudes which have been stimulating for me. I was also influenced by the boldness of Montserrat Ginesta of Montserrat Abbey Publications (Publicacions de l'Abadia de Montserrat) in the early 1990s.

AB: What is your opinion of the work of the latest winner of the National Illustration Award, Miguel Calatayud?

TÁSSIÉS: Calatayud is a master; he's very good. I basically like his drawing and his idea of decoration. He is exquisite and as an artist he is prodigious; it is as if he started from one point and ended up at the other, filling every space in between with marvels and details. Using geometrization, he builds things which are then believable. What strikes me is the way Calatayud creates tensions in his drawings while maintaining realism in his depictions.

*When you are very young, you are able to hear your own voice clearly, you feel that what you are saying comes from you.*

AB: Sometimes they say that some illustrators always do the same thing. What do you think?

TÁSSIÉS: The master Calatayud always does the same; we all always do the same. Regarding this repetition, I am tired of seeing negative reviews

of Pilarín Bayés and, although I wouldn't mention her as one of my great favorites, I don't understand why she is so unpopular among artists given that what she does is exceptional. She has the ability to represent a multitude of spaces, situations, etc., which is no small thing. She uses specific references connecting to the Catalan illustrating tradition of the 1960s and 1970s.

**AB: Could you tell us what you are working on at the moment?**

TÁSSIES: I am making an illustrated comic book about bullying which will be called *Noms Robats* [Stolen Names].

**AB: What would you recommend to someone who is beginning or wishes to devote themselves to illustration?**

## WORKS WRITTEN AND ILLUSTRATED BY JOSEP ANTONI TÁSSIES

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## WORKS ILLUSTRATED BY JOSEP ANTONI TÁSSIES

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TÁSSIES: To someone who draws and wishes to continue drawing, I would recommend drawing as much as possible and having faith in themselves. They should learn as much as they can but never forget themselves. When you are very young, you are able to hear your own voice clearly, you feel that what you are saying comes from you. Later on, most people learn that others have already said it and they are disappointed. But if one has a voice, one should make it heard; and sometimes it will sound brown, sometimes it will sound grey, sometimes it will sound as if you have heard it 50,000 times. A long time will pass and it will still sound that way; but the next day, a year later, a few months or days later, you will find your own voice and the satisfaction will be enormous.

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# Children's Literature and Reading in Spain: A Snapshot

BY PEP MOLIST AND JOAN PORTELL



Pep Molist is a librarian, children's book author, literary critic, and managing co-director (with Joan Portell) of the magazine *Faristol*, the only Catalan magazine specializing in children's and young adults' literature ([www.clijcat.cat/faristol/](http://www.clijcat.cat/faristol/)).



Joan Portell is an educator, writer, literary critic, and managing co-director of *Faristol* (with Pep Molist), and an avid advocate for the promotion of reading.



*Molist and Portell offer a “snapshot” of the state of reading, libraries, literature, and publishing in Spain, noting major trends, titles, publishers, and authors who are making a significant impact on the future of literature for young people in all the regions of Spain.*

**W**here are we coming from?

When someone wants to take a snapshot of what is happening regarding children's and young adults' literature in Spain, they typically compare the image with the legendary Nordic countries or with our neighbor France or further afield with England. If this exercise is carried out, the facts are not encouraging: Spain continues to trail behind with respect to reading habits and numbers of libraries per inhabitant in Europe, all of which creates a feeling of frustration. In the class dance at the end of term, the young complex-ridden adolescent who compares herself with the prettiest girl always thinks that she cannot attain beauty, buy the dress, or dance as the prom queen.

However, what is too often forgotten in this analysis is that for forty years Spain was under the thumb of a dictatorship, a political system which, without a doubt, acted as a very significant block at a national cultural level as well as attempting to systematically eliminate the Galician, Basque, and Catalan languages and cultures of Spain. This imposed a delay in developing children's literature that is comparable

to firing the starting gun for an obstacle race when the runner is still in the changing room.

That is why, when statistics on readers, libraries, reading levels, etc. are reviewed and subjected to comparison, Spain should be studied on its own merits and should be proud of how, in less than thirty years, it has grown from 1,200 libraries to nearly 5,000, with 100 million visitors a year, and that from having 1.5 million library cards in circulation in 1984, there are currently 16 million library card holders, which means an increase of more than 1000%. Nevertheless, there are always those who think that these figures are not as satisfactory as they should be. In part they are right. We continue in our struggle to see the glass half full.

If we turn to the figures representing visits based on age, we can see that going to the library is most habitual among those with the youngest profile. Specifically, 62.2% of young people (readers and non-readers) between the ages of 14 and 24 visited a library in 2008 (CONNECTA Report: Book Reading and Buying Habits in Spain 2008), while in the next older age group this figure drops substantially to 35.1%. These figures are even better in the group segment of children between the ages of 10 and 13; the percentage of these children who visited a library in 2008 reached 73.9%.

Where does this lead us? To the fact that the Spanish publishing industry is riding out the crisis and keeping itself afloat, in large part thanks to the publication of books for children and young adults, sales of which increased by 21%, with a turnover of 330 million Euros (Book Commerce Study 2007) in the period 2003 to 2007. That means that during this period sales percentages of books for young people increased by almost twice that of the sector average. This clear evolution in children's and young adults' literature accounts for 11% of the book market and 13.9% of its value.

Upon analyzing these figures, one realizes that literature for young people is a powerful engine in the publishing sector and that, having overcome a learning period in which it was at the tail end of Europe, the sector has now matured and learned how to connect with its public, offering works suitable to its tastes. For example, in addition to the bestseller phenomena of the imported Stiltons, Meyer, and company, there are home-grown sale successes, such as the trilogies by the authors Maite Carranza or Laura Gallego.

However, not everything in the garden is coming up roses. Here is a thorny example: comparing the figures in the studies of reading habits in children and young adults in Catalonia from 2004 and 2009 by the Catalan Council for Children's and Young Adults' Books ([www.clijcat.cat](http://www.clijcat.cat)), there

*...for forty years Spain was under the thumb of a dictatorship, a political system which, without a doubt, acted as a very significant block at a national cultural level as well as attempting to systematically eliminate the Galician, Basque, and Catalan languages and cultures of Spain.*



is a clear decline in reading habits among young people between the ages of 12 and 16. In response to the question, "How often do you read," in 2004, 86% of twelve-year-olds answered, "Every day or a few times a week;" this response fell to 83.4% in 2009. The percentage remained around 60% for young people age 14, yet these habits dropped off significantly in later adolescence with the result that, in 2004, 53.5% of sixteen-year-olds read every day or a few times a week, but only 44.1% in 2009. These figures, far from being encouraging, show us that the model of the "adult reader" is increasingly acquired at a younger age. And we should not blame this on so-called "New Technologies," which for these young people are not new in the slightest. The same study shows that the use of chatrooms, blogs, webs, and social networks of all kinds serve and encourage reading. Also it seems that, fortunately, reading is slowly becoming accepted as another form of leisure – on a par with pastimes such as cinema, music, or sports – distancing itself from the outdated image of the intellectual and antisocial snob. This is something which the publishers are gradually taking careful note of.

Nevertheless, the cultural delay which seemed prevalent but which has proven to be transient, still has great relevance in collections of young adults' classics. In our analysis of sixteen young readers' collections of universal classics published by Spanish publishers, there are only four in which a title by an author writing in Castilian appeared – the *Leyendas* by Gustavo Adolfo Bécquer. There are none featuring titles by classic authors in any other of the official languages in Spain. In other

*The same study shows that the use of chatrooms, blogs, webs, and social networks of all kinds serve and encourage reading.*

words, when a young reader wishes to read the basic canon of young adult's books, they must always first choose the reading of Anglo-Saxon classics (Stevenson, Twain, Dickens, etc.) to the detriment of their own cultures. And this leaves a damaging mark on the reading path of any adolescent.

Something similar may be said about younger children's literature in which there are very few intergenerational books that invite the reader to develop a feeling of belonging to a particular environment. This is not something that happens in Germany, with its Endes and company, or in France with its Petit Nicolás, or in England with Roald Dahl, or in Belgium with its *Tintin*. It seems, however, that little by little voices are being raised to establish the base of reading which shape a sense of a culture of our own. That is why it is very interesting to note the appearance of publishing labels such as Mars, El jinete azul or Kalandraka that have amongst their objectives the recovery of some of our classics and, likewise, are trying not to remove from their catalogs books in Castilian, Catalan, or Galician which have a right to be read by all generations.



### Where are we going?

However, the country's potential is such that we do no favors to our readers if we shield ourselves with vague excuses. We must look to the future with pride, initiative, and courage. We must enter the arena and win new readers. Below are highlighted some initiatives, authors, and publishing houses that give hope for an even brighter future.

For example, we can compare ourselves with publishing initiatives beyond our borders, such as the legendary *Harry Potter* which stands out as grabbing the interest of our country's authors. This trend of fantasy writing is one that we have been able to respond to, and we can bet on some sure winners. Notably, there are several very exportable

trilogies, such as Maite Carranza's *The War of the Witches* ("La Guerra de las Brujas", Edebé), Jordi Sierra I Fabra's *Daughters of the Storms* ("Las Hijas de las Tormentas", Edebé), and Laura Gallego's *Memoirs of Idhún* ("Memorias de Idhún", SM/Cruïlla); these works can fully equal the fantasies of Cornelia Funke and her *Inkheart* trilogy (Siruela), Christopher Paolini and the *Eragon* trilogy (en Roca) or Timothée de la Fombelle with *Toby Lobness* (Salamandra).

After decades of cultural darkness, the slow recovery of minority languages, the cessation of the banning of titles by the Church, and the disappearance of writers and illustrators with a blatant educational mission rather than a sound training in literature, the last few years have given us a high quality group of writers and illustrators with international potential. We only need to cite examples such as the Galician works of Agustín Fernández Paz, the Castilian novels of Carlos Ruiz Zafón, the Basque prose of Patxi Zubizarreta, or the Catalan books of Antoni Garcia Llorca or Pep Coll.

*After decades of cultural darkness, the slow recovery of minority languages, the cessation of the banning of titles by the Church, and the disappearance of writers and illustrators with a blatant educational mission rather than a sound training in literature, the last few years have given us a high quality group of writers and illustrators with international potential.*

Likewise, let us not forget that our illustrators have represented a real revolution at the international level, among whom we would like to highlight without wishing to be unduly biased, the bold illustrations of Tàssies (Grand Prix of last year's Biennial of Illustration Bratislava), the gentle forms of the drawings of Elena Odriozola from the

Basque Country, the uniqueness of the Asturian Pablo Amargo, the symbolic simplicity of Arnal Ballester, or the mathematical strokes of Miguel Calatayud (the latter two are winners of the last two annual National Illustration Awards).

It is not only prose and illustration that deserve congratulations. Poetry is also enjoying robust health, and there are many authors in the different languages in the Spanish state who are making genuine magic with words. We can enjoy the irony of the Catalan Miquel Desclot, the wordplay of Juan Kruz Igerabide, the beauty of Galician in the poetry of Antonio Garcia Teijeiro, or the Castilian in the works of Ana María Romero Yebra.

*Poetry is also enjoying robust health, and there are many authors in the different languages in the Spanish state who are making genuine magic with words.*

And how do we transmit all this to the reader? Well, with nothing less than the support of a few daring publishers without whom it would not be possible. We could name many, but for their history, uniqueness, and strength of their backlist catalog, we commend the audacity of Kalandraka, the quality of OQO, the will for universalism of Combel, the regeneration which La Galera has brought to Catalan children's literature, the historic journey of SM, the daring of Media Vaca, the beauty of the works by El zorro rojo, the uniqueness of Sd Edicions, the Sicilian cavalry style arrival of Takatuka, the good intentions of RqueR, and the vote for beauty of Bárbara Fiore.

### What lies behind all this?

There are four organizations divided into language territories and devoted to protecting and developing initiatives and searching for quality and seriousness in literature for children and young adults. These are: (1) the CliCAT - Catalan Council for Children's and Young Adults' Books (Consell Català del Llibre Infantil i Juvenil) in the Catalan

speaking regions, (2) Galzagorritz (the name of a Basque imp) in Basque speaking regions, (3) Gálax - Galician Association for Children's and Young Adults' Books (Asociación Galega do Libro Infantil e Xuvenil) as representatives of Galician authors, and (4) the General Book Council (Consejo General del Libro) for the remaining state regions. These form a group of associations that raise their joined voices in IBBY and express and develop their efforts in magazines such as *Faristol*.

In a similar vein, it is worth noting the large number of specialist magazines like *Faristol*, and also including *Babar*, *Behinola*, *Lazarillo* (by the Spanish Association of Friends of Children's and Young Adults' Books – Asociación Española de Amigos del Libro Infantil y Juvenil), the beautiful and bilingual English – Spanish *Bloc*, the Cantabrian *Peonza*, and the doyen CLIJ – Books of Children's and Young Adults' Literature (Cuadernos de Literatura Infantil y Juvenil). All of these are supported, in part, by their administrations, their increasingly frequent Reading Plans, as well as by private organizations such as the Germán Sánchez Ruipérez Foundation, the Bromera Foundation, or the Santa María Foundation.



To add further depth to the scene, there are many university courses aimed at training professionals in literature for children and young adults; notably, the Inter-university Official Professional Master's in School Libraries and Promotion of Reading run by Barcelona University and the Autonomous University of Barcelona, the Master's in Promotion

of Reading and Children's Literature organized by CEPLI (the Centre for the Study of Promotion of Reading and Children's Literature) at Castilla-La Mancha University, the Master's in School Libraries at Coruña University, and the Diploma in Culture, Reading and Literature for Children and Young Adults at Valencia University.

Yet there still remains a need to continue working towards a certain sense of normalization. Despite looking backwards and feeling proud of the work achieved so far, we need to plough on without pause in making improvements, for example in how school libraries should function. It is worth highlighting that in 20% of schools there is no central library in service, 40% of schools do not have a budget specifically for the library, and 71% of those in charge of the libraries have no formal training (*Marchesi y Miret 2005*).

*Also, there is little tradition of publishing houses exporting authors beyond our borders, and there is an excessive dependence on the buying of Anglo-Saxon titles by many of them.*

Cause for concern can also be found in Spanish teacher training courses in which there are fewer university modules dedicated to literature for children and young adults. Also, there is little tradition of publishing houses exporting authors beyond our borders, and there is an excessive dependence on the buying of Anglo-Saxon titles by many of them. It is also worth noting the systematic reduction of subsidies for culture and books by administrations during times of crisis when the real research and development of young people relies on their reading abilities.

The almost non-existent presence of literary criticism of works for children and young adults in the general media is another problematic aspect, not to mention the fact that the various platforms which offer electronic books almost systematically neglect children's and young adults' books. All of these factors lead to alarming results in the

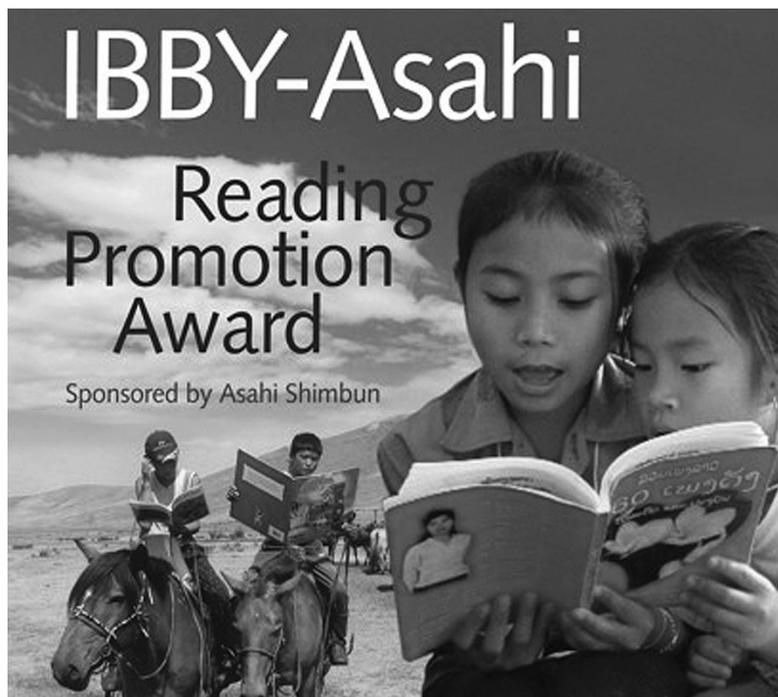


latest PIRLS report which found low marks in reading comprehension by Spanish pupils: 28% of the Spanish school population have a low level in reading comprehension. However, we cannot continue to lament our misfortunes, blame others, and take refuge under the diminishing shelter of our history. It is time to roll up our sleeves and get on with the task at hand.

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# Twenty years of the IBBY-Asahi Reading Promotion Award



*IBBY has been recognizing reading promotion projects for twenty years now with the support of renowned Japanese newspaper, Asahi Shimbun. Read about the award's history, process, criteria, jury, and recipients [here](#).*

by ELIZABETH PAGE



Elizabeth Page is  
IBBY's Executive Director

Everywhere in the world children have the right to become readers, giving them a chance to participate fully and actively in their lives and communities as they grow up. Bringing books and children together is the aim of IBBY, and the IBBY-Asahi Reading Promotion Award celebrates the dedication and initiatives of colleagues around the world who work steadfastly towards this goal.

During the 20th IBBY Congress in Tokyo in 1986 the Asahi Shimbun, one of the sponsors of the congress, presented a special prize in commemoration of the congress to those who contributed to the promotion of children's books and international cooperation. The prize went to Lucia Binder from Austria who had worked for many years with IBBY. Following this generous decision, IBBY and the Asahi Shimbun established an annual prize to celebrate bringing children and books together. In 1988, the first Rising Sun Prize was awarded to *Banco del Libro* in Venezuela. In 1989, the Portable Library Project in Thailand received the prize.

In 1989, the IBBY Executive Committee was asked to suggest an alternative name for the prize. There were some objections to

the original name because the name was allegedly connected with certain wartime associations in some Asian countries and in the USA. After long discussions in 1990 the “**IBBY-Asahi Reading Promotion Award**” was established. In the ensuing twenty years, 21 projects have been honored and received a cash prize in recognition of the work done.

How is each award recipient decided? Each jury is elected from serving members of the IBBY Executive Committee and the chair is elected from among these members. Over the years, there have been 11 juries led by the following jury presidents: Barbara Scharioth 1990 and 1991 (Germany), Chris Kloet 1992 and 1993 (UK), Britt Isaksson 1994, 1995, 1996, and 1997 (Sweden), Julinda Abu Nasr 1998 and 1999 (Lebanon), Manorama Jafa 2000 and 2001 (India), Loty Petrovits 2002 and 2003 (Greece), Xosé Antonio Neira Cruz 2004 (Spain), Jant van der Weg 2006 (Netherlands), Elda Nogueira 2008 (Brazil), and Hannelore Daubert 2010 (Germany).

Until 2003, the Awards were given annually and the award ceremony was held in Bologna as part of the IBBY Press conference. The jury met during the second Executive Committee meeting of each year and the winners were invited as special guests to the Bologna children's book fair the following year. As part of the IBBY Jubilee celebration in Basel in 2002, a special exhibition was put together to celebrate the Award and for the first time the winners received their award as part of an IBBY World Congress. After many negotiations with the sponsor the Asahi Shimbun, the rhythm of the awards was changed.

At the prize ceremony in Basel, Cecilia Bettoli gave one of IBBY's most evocative acceptance speeches: "We know that if we do not eat, we cannot think. But we also know that if we do not think, we have no future. Sometimes temptation is hard, but there is no option between bread and books, we need both." (*Congress Proceedings, IBBY, 2003*)

In 2004, a single winner was selected as usual, but instead of receiving the award in Bologna, the winning project was fêted at the 2004 Congress in Cape Town, South Africa. From then onwards



Surekha Panandiker received the 1991 award during the Bologna Children's Book Fair in April 1991 for the children's library projects of the Association of Writers and Illustrators for Children in India.



The portable library project of the Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World, in Lebanon, was the award winner in 1994. This project was based on the successful project that developed portable libraries for children in remote areas of Thailand and won the 1989 Rising Sun Prize. Britt Isaksson, the Jury President wrote: "The Award Jury emphasized that now especially, when so many children must grow up in peril for their lives, a project such as this one is of the utmost importance in bringing them a measure of happiness and joy." (*Bookbird 32/1*)



Cecilia Bettoli, representative of Por el derecho a leer, received the 2002 Award from the jury President Loty Petrovits and the President of the Asahi Shimbun, Shin-ici Hakoshima.

two winners were selected every two years and the presentation has been made at the IBBY biennial congress. The first double winners were selected at the September meeting of the Executive Committee in Bratislava in 2005, the winners were announced at the following Bologna Book Fair, and the awards were presented at a festive evening during the 2006 IBBY World Congress in Macau, China.

When giving the laudatio for the two winners – the mobile library in Mongolia and a national reading campaign in Poland – jury president Jant van der Weg said: "Dreams need words, need language, need the magic of language. Therefore, reading books is not old-fashioned, but it is the 'transporter' of magic: the magic of books,

of stories and poems, of language and pictures with high quality." But the magic of books doesn't just bring children and books together, as Anne Pellowski found out when she investigated the effects of the award on the winning projects. Jant van der Weg notes that Pellowski reported, "...it clearly shows that not only is the Award important for encouraging people all over the world to initiate such projects, but also that it gives them a legal standing and respect.

Her conclusion was that these Awards have had and will have long-lasting and far-reaching effects." (*Laudatio by Jant van der Weg at the IBBY Congress in Macau, 22 September 2006*)



The successful Children's Mobile Library project in Mongolia, which won the 2006 award.

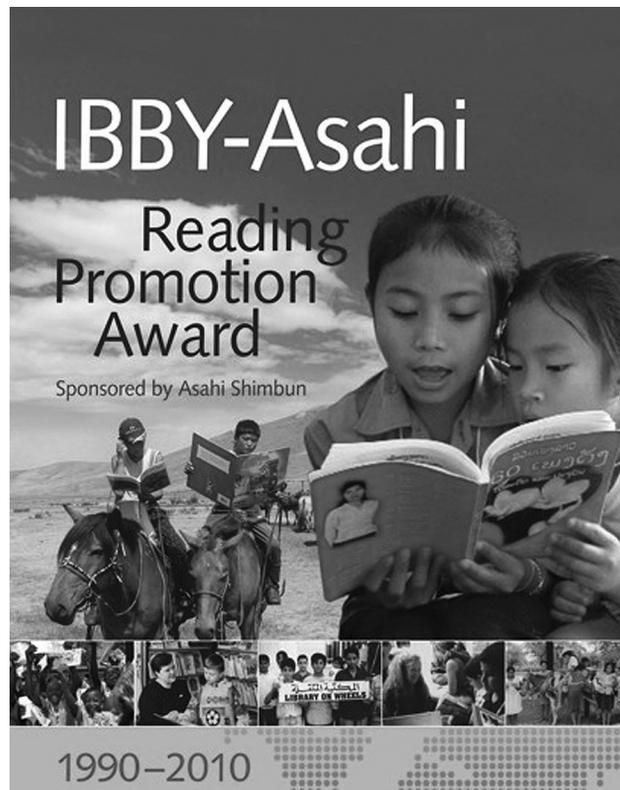
### IBBY-Asahi Reading Promotion Award Recipients

*Thanks to the generosity shown by the Asahi Shimbun, IBBY has been able to support the following winning projects around the world:*

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1990 Home Libraries Movement, Zimbabwe   | 2000 <i>Tambogrande Siembra Lectura</i> , Peru                                   |
| 1991 Children's Library Project of the Association of Writers and Illustrators for Children, India | 2001 Children's Reading Development Programme in the Pechenga District, Russia   |
| 1992 <i>Opération Lecture Publique</i> , Mali  | 2002 <i>Por el derecho a leer</i> - For the right to read, Argentina             |
| 1993 <i>Grupo de Animación a la Lectura / ESTEL</i> , Spain  | 2003 Sister Libraries, Bolivia   |
| 1994 Portable Library Project on the Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World, Lebanon      | 2004 First Words in Print, South Africa  |
| 1995 <i>Fundalectura</i> , Colombia  | 2006 Mongolian Children's Mobile Library, Mongolia                               |
| 1996 The Little Library, South Africa  | 2006 All of Poland Reads to Kids, Poland   |
| 1997 <i>Lis avec moi!</i> , France   | 2008 Action with Lao Children, Laos  |
| 1998 <i>Fureai Bunko</i> , Braille Collection of Children's Books, Japan                           | 2008 <i>Editions Bakame</i> , Rwanda   |
| 1999 Library on Wheels for Nonviolence and Peace, Palestine  | 2010 Osu Children's Library Fund, Ghana  |
|  | 2010 <i>Fundación Taller de Letras Jordi Sierra i Fabra</i> , Medellín, Colombia |

**These projects have been judged on the following criteria:**

- How well does the project support IBBY's mission statement?
- Is there existing or possible support for the project from other funding sources?
- Has the project been in existence for at least two years prior to its nomination? Is the project sustainable? Does it provide a framework for growth?
- What is the impact of the project? Does it reach its stated target audience?
- Is the project original and innovative?
- Can the project provide a model for others? Is it easily replicated? Are any printed materials available and are they of high literary quality?
- Can the results of the project be evaluated?



The 20th Jubilee celebration panel from Bologna 2010.

Over the years, a total of 108 projects have been nominated by the IBBY National Sections. All have been worthy of nomination and present many different ways of promoting reading and literacy around the world. Thousands of children have benefited from these projects!

IBBY wishes to express deepest appreciation to the Asahi Shimbun for their vision and continuing support of this award. So many of these projects have encouraged others to adapt them to their own circumstances. Their success is a tribute to the dedication, imagination, courage, and tenacity of the individuals who run them.

### **IBBY-Asahi Reading Promotion Award Jury Members 1990-2010**

1990 and 1991: Barbara Scharioth (Germany, chairperson)  
Carmen Garcia Moreno (Mexico), Torill Hansen (Norway), Ronald Jobe (Canada), Yuriko Momo (Japan).

1992 and 1993: Chris Kloet (UK, chairperson)  
Carmen Garcia Moreno (Mexico), Tayo Shima (Japan), Somboon Singkamanan (Thailand), Irina Tokmakova (Russia).

1994 and 1995: Britt Isaksson (Sweden, chairperson)  
Murti Bunanta (Indonesia), Juan de Isasa (Spain), Renate Raecke (Germany), Tayo Shima (Japan).

1996 and 1997: Britt Isaksson (Sweden, chairperson)  
Julinda Abu Nasr (Lebanon), Murti Bunanta (Indonesia), Juan de Isasa (Spain), Jacqueline Kergueno (France).

1998 and 1999: Julinda Abu Nasr (Lebanon, chairperson)  
Tom Eckerman (Finland), María Jesus Gil (Spain), Tayo Shima (Japan), Ján Uliciansky (Slovak Republic).

2000 and 2001: Manorama Jafa (India, chairperson)  
Silvia Castrillón (Colombia), Tom Eckerman (Finland), María Jesus Gil (Spain), Joan Glazer (USA).

2002 and 2003: Loty Petrovits (Greece, chairperson)  
Joan Glazer (USA), Xosé Antonio Neira Cruz (Spain), Gudlaug Richter (Iceland), Elizabeth Serra (Brazil), Nilima Sinha (India).

2004: Xosé Antonio Neira Cruz (Spain, chairperson)  
Nathalie Beau (France), Anne Pellowski (USA), Nilima Sinha (India), Elizabeth Serra (Brazil), Chieko Suemori (Japan).

2006: Jant van der Weg (Netherlands, chairperson)  
Elda Nogueira (Brazil), Mari José Olaziregi (Spain), Anne Pellowski (USA), Vagn Plenge (Denmark), Chieko Suemori (Japan).

2008: Elda Nogueira (Brazil, chairperson)  
Hannelore Daubert (Germany), Reina Duarte (Spain), Ann Lazim (UK), Ahmad Redza Khairuddin (Malaysia), Ira Saxena (India).

2010: Hannelore Daubert (Germany, chairperson)  
Anastasia Arkhipova (Russia), Nikki Gamble (UK), Jehan Helou (Palestine), Ahmad Redza Khairuddin (Malaysia), James Tumusiime (Uganda).

# Books on Books



*Five new professional reference books are reviewed here including a critical analysis of the role of illustrations in fairy tails, a two-book set featuring the CJ Picture Book Festival in Korea, fictional characters in classic works from Sweden, a study of Spanish writers in exile, and an examination of "young adult fantastic realism" in the U.S. and U.K.*

Edited and compiled by  
CHRISTIANE RAABE

Translations by NIKOLA VON MERVELDT



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

## GERMANY

REGINA FREYBERGER

*Märchenbilder – Bildermärchen. Illustrationen zu Grimms Märchen 1819 - 1945. Über einen vergessenen Bereich deutscher Kunst*

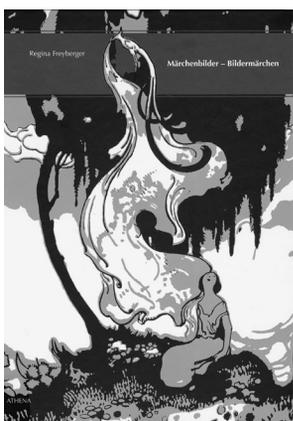
[Pictures of fairytales – fairytales in pictures. Illustrations of Grimms' fairytales 1819-1945. A forgotten domain of German Art]

(Series: Artificium; 31)

Oberhausen: Athena 2009 670pp

ISBN 9783898963503 72.00

The illustrated “Children’s and Household Tales” of the Brothers Grimm had a profound impact on the cultural and intellectual history of German-speaking Europe. Despite their defining role, however, they failed to attract the attention of art historians. Thanks to Regina Freyberger’s



convincing in-depth study based on her doctoral dissertation this gap is now closed. As the title suggests, Freyberger focuses not only on stylistic, but also on narratological aspects of fairytale illustrations. She describes the images as autonomous “texts” that transcend their

merely illustrative function to constitute meaning of their own or even to become art for art’s sake. Drawing on numerous examples by George Cruikshank, Ludwig Emil Grimm, Franz von Pocci, Otto Speckter, Ludwig Richter, Moritz von Schwind, Eugen Napoleon Neureuther, and many others, Freyberger analyzes the narrative structures and strategies of fairytale illustration. She demonstrates how different types of pictures such as monoscenic or synoptic frames, image cycles or arabesques can produce a variety of tones and atmospheres, resulting in horrid, idyllic, folkloristic, or childlike imagery. With

her “iconography of key scenes,” Freyberger demonstrates how specific motifs have established themselves as emblems of individual fairytales and how they continue to influence the reception of these tales to the present day. She also situates the “fairytales in pictures” within the context of the history of books and printing, taking into consideration publishers’ marketing strategies as well as larger socio-political trends. This large-format book with numerous reproductions both in black-and-white and in full color is lovingly designed down to the endpapers and constitutes in itself an engaging example of cogent book illustration. Thoroughly researched, the volume is completed by an index of proper names and titles as well as a bio-bibliographical catalogue of all relevant artists and works.

*Jutta Reusch*

## REPUBLIC OF KOREA

CJ CULTURE FOUNDATION (ED)

*1st CJ picture book festival. Exhibitions and awards*

Seoul: CJ Culture Foundation 2009 215p

ISBN 9788991126268

KRW [= South Korean Won] 20,000

CJ CULTURE FOUNDATION (ED)

*2nd CJ picture book festival. Exhibitions and awards*

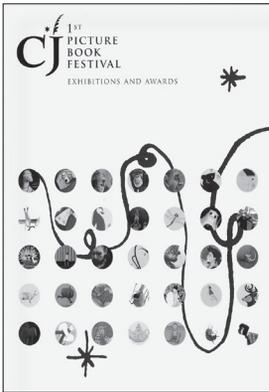
Seoul: CJ Culture Foundation 2009 211p

ISBN 9788991126282 KRW 20.000

English and Korean text

The CJ Picture Book Festival was launched in 2008 by the CJ Culture Foundation, an institution of the prosperous Korean CJ Corporation. It aims to support illustrated books that meet high artistic standards and speak across generations and nations. It does so in two ways: first, by setting up the CJ Book Awards, a contest recognizing original published and unpublished work, and, second,

by hosting the CJ Picture Book Festival with exhibitions featuring the books along with original illustrations by the finalists. Both events offer insight into the variety and quality of the international art of book illustration. The exhibitions show one



hundred recent picture books and illustrations by fifty illustrators selected by an all-Korean jury of authors, illustrators, and publishers from a total of more than 700 submissions from about 35 countries in each of the two categories. For the inauguration of the festival, an international

jury presents awards to five works each from the field of newly published original picture books and from the field of unpublished picture books. A second exhibition showcases the work of one renowned illustrator. A unique feature of the festival is that it commissions musicians, artists, and film directors to adapt the work of the guest of honor to their own medium, thus demonstrating how picture books can function as sources of inspiration for other forms of art.

The festival took place twice in Seoul with David Wiesner and Květa Pacovská as the two first guests of honor. The exhibitions are accompanied



by a voluminous, superbly designed and richly illustrated catalog showing the titles and pictures of all finalists. Every picture book featured in the exhibition and each finalist is presented with a brief bilingual (English/Korean) annotation and

several illustrations. The second part introduces the guest of honor and his or her work. The catalogs thus give an extensive overview of contemporary picture book production and illustration; they allow one to discern stylistic tendencies specific

to different nations as well as to identify global trends. Despite the (still) disproportionately high number of Korean finalists, the CJ festival catalogs offer a unique documentation of the state of the art of international children's book illustration and, with full-color illustrations throughout, guarantee aesthetic pleasure. The initiative of the CJ Culture Foundation is living proof that Korea enriches the art of picture illustration with valuable impetus and refreshing inspiration.

*Christiane Raabe*

## SPAIN

ANA PELEGRÍN, MARÍA VICTORIA SOTOMAYOR, AND ALBERTO URDIALES (EDS)

*Pequeña memoria recobrada. Libros infantiles del exilio del 39*

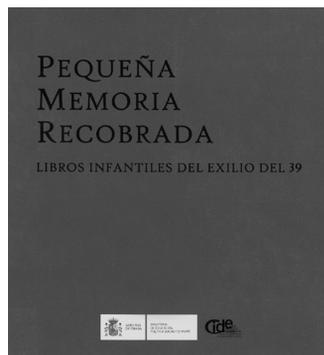
[Small recovered memory. Children's books of the exile 1939]

Madrid: Secretaría General Técnica 2008 310p. + 1 CD-ROM ISBN 9788436945928; ISBN 8436945921 €21.00

Between 1920 and 1936, Spain experienced a period of cultural blossoming, which was abruptly cut short by the Spanish Civil War and the defeat of the democratic republican forces in 1939. Many artists, including renowned children's book authors and illustrators, spent the following four decades in exile while the Franco dictatorship was in power. In their host countries – mainly Argentina, Mexico, and Cuba – well-known names such as Antoniorrobes, Salvador Bartolozzi, Lola Anglada, or Elena Fortún were able to continue to publish. There has been very little research on this Spanish children's literature in exile. It was the aim of this volume edited under the direction of Ana Pelegrin, author and scholar of children's literature who died in 2008, to close this gap at least in part.

The first section offers three informative survey articles on narrative literature (A. Pelegrín),

illustration (A. Urdiales), and children's theatre (M. V. Sotomayor, as well as contributions on individual authors including Anna Muriá (M. Desclot) and Xosé Neiras Vilas (B. A. Roig). There are also articles on specific aspects, such as the work of those writers who had remained in Spain



and were forced to live in inner exile (N. Martín Rogero). This rather eclectic, but overall very enlightening, first part is followed by a bibliography of 400 titles including reproductions of the book covers. The

main section of this bibliography chronicles the titles that were published in the three main host countries between 1939 and 1977. The preceding and following sections take stock of the titles published between 1920 and 1938 or after the end of the dictatorship, respectively. Fully aware of the difficult nature of this kind of research, the editors do not claim to present a comprehensive list of all the titles. Nevertheless, they have compiled an impressive bibliography, which one would love to see accompanied by annotations in the next updated edition to learn more about the individual titles.

All in all, the volume deserves to be honored as a pioneering study that lays the groundwork for future research on this important chapter of Spanish children's literature – a chapter which also had significant impact on some of the developments in Latin America and which also deserves further investigation.

*Jochen Weber*

SWEDEN

MARIA ANDERSSON AND ELINA DRUKER (EDS)

*Barnlitteraturanalyser*

[Analyses of children's literature]

Lund: Studentlitteratur 2008 213pp

ISBN 9789144040288 22,00

The title *Barnlitteraturanalyser* is well chosen because this edited volume offers an analysis of classics of twentieth-century Swedish children's literature such as *Alfons Åberg* (Engl. *Alfie Atkins*) or *Gittan*. The contributions present mainly close readings focusing on the conceptualization and function of the fictional characters. Texts by Astrid Lindgren, Zacharias



Topelius, or Elsa Beskow generally serve as references, opening up comparative and historical perspectives. While some articles describe individual children's book heroes, others take a more thematic approach and also include non-Swedish texts. For example, Boel Westin explores the motif of the dream in children's literature (including in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*); Maria Lassén-Seger traces feral children in picture books, and Maria Nikolajeva studies the fictional genre of the diary novel. All twelve contributions demonstrate that children's literature often breaks with stereotypical representations of children and childhood. If conventional formulas are being perpetuated, they claim, this generally betrays nostalgic or idealizing tendencies. It becomes apparent that contemporary representations of childhood continue, modify, and subvert literary traditions. The literary models are also shown to be reactions to non-literary, ideological conceptions of childhood. Most contributions reflect on this nexus between text and context, even if not always

explicitly so; prior knowledge of the mental and cultural context is generally assumed. This is compensated for by an explicit mention of this interpenetration of fact and fiction in the editors' introduction.

*Ines Galling*

UNITED STATES / UNITED KINGDOM

ALISON WALLER

*Constructing adolescence in fantastic realism*

(Series: Children's literature and culture; 55)

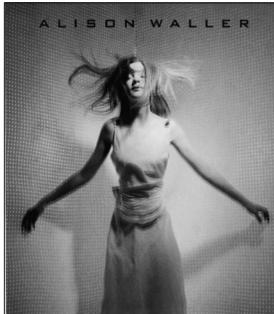
New York and London: Routledge 2009

XVp + 220pp

ISBN 9780415958325

US\$ 118 / £ 80.00

In this original doctoral thesis, Alison Waller, lecturer in Children's Literature at Roehampton University, analyzes the ways in which adolescence



CONSTRUCTING  
ADOLESCENCE IN  
FANTASTIC REALISM

is depicted in fantastic literature for teenagers in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and how it may offer readers “new and interesting ways of becoming and being adolescents” (p. xiii). As a consequence, the author is concerned with a two-fold subject: the study of adolescence as a phase in-between and

distinct from both childhood and adulthood as it is discussed in literary as well as cultural contexts on the one hand; and the close examination of a genre that she labels “young adult fantastic realism” on the other hand.

After providing the theoretical and methodological framework for her study in the introductory chapter, she goes on to offer an in-depth discussion and exploration of novels written for teenagers that are set in the real world but invaded by some kind of supernatural element that often disquiets the protagonists. Drawing on a large body of English language works by authors ranging from David Almond, Robert Cormier, and Peter Dickinson to Alan Garner, Margaret Mahy, Philip Pullman, and Paul Zindel as well as some lesser known writers, Waller discusses aspects such as developmentalism, transition, and liminality (Chapter 1), or individualism, parallel identities, and madness (Chapter 2). In chapter 3, she explores “social ‘empowerment’ and ‘agency’”, i.e. the formation of teenage identity within the context of parent/child relations and in superhero (for boys) and witch-contexts (for girls), while chapter 4 looks at the fantastic spaces including cyberspace and virtual reality.

In her conclusion, Waller brings together the various strands of her argument to further stress why young adult fantastic realism, despite its generally rather conservative tendencies, plays an important role in the presentation and also the formation of adolescence. The convincing argumentation and the wide range of primary and secondary sources discussed, make this study an interesting contribution to the study of a sub-genre that has not yet been analyzed in depth.

*Claudia Söffner*



*In this issue, we get updates on the newest recipients of the IBBY-Asahi Awards and Hans Christian Andersen Awards, as well as another installment of the history of IBBY, a reminder on the upcoming IBBY Congress, news about a new IBBY section, and a tribute to Australian author Patricia Wrightson.*

### IBBY-Asahi Reading Promotion Awards 2010

In the 20th anniversary year of the awards, the winning projects represent two groups that are making a definite impact on children in places where literacy and books do not always play a large role in their day-to-day lives. The 2010 awards will go to the Osu Children's Library Fund in Ghana and to the *Taller de las Letras Jordi Sierra i Fabra Foundation* that is working in the city of Medellin in Colombia.

The **Osu Children's Library Fund (OCLF)** is a Canada-based registered charity established in 1991 to encourage reading and literacy among children and adults in Ghana, West Africa. To accomplish this goal, the OCLF raised funds to build, furnish, and stock five large community libraries in impoverished areas of Ghana's capital Accra as well as a community library in Goi, a fishing village in the Greater Accra region. In addition, OCLF has helped to initiate and stock more than 150 smaller libraries in schools and villages in Ghana. The aim of the project is to instil in children at the earliest possible age the joy of reading and to enrich their self-esteem and broaden their horizons for the future. Not only are they teaching children reading and writing skills, but also adults and teens who have never had this opportunity are gaining these skills. This will empower them to build confidence

by ELIZABETH PAGE



Elizabeth Page is  
IBBY's Executive Director

and improve their job opportunities and thus their futures.

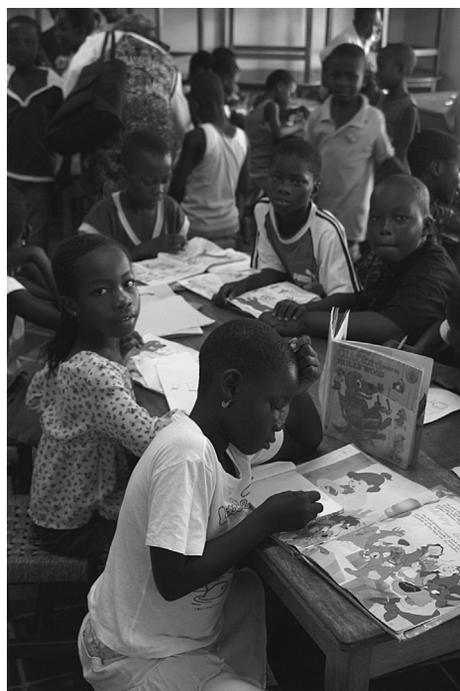
The *Taller de las Letras Jordi Sierra i Fabra Foundation* is a project that works in cooperation with the Medellín Town Hall. It runs activities from the reading program of the city in the four poorest and most vulnerable of the 16 municipalities of the city. In these areas – inhabited by over three million people, including a large number of displaced people as a result of political, economic and social violence – the level of poverty and violence is high. Thousands of people do not have enough resources to live with dignity.

Many activities take place in the streets of the neighborhoods, in parks, on the sidewalks, and other unconventional areas, activities such as workshops for promoting reading using travelling boxes, literature fairs, literature-related film events, chats and get-togethers with writers. All these bring reading closer to children and adults who lack the means to have access to books and to culture in general. The project has not only benefited more than 21,000 people, but has also generated the participation of many community organizations and cultural leaders from the communities involved, creating the foundation for future reading promotion and culture. The aim of the project is to contribute to a better quality of life in communities of Medellín through training workshops and the promotion of reading and literary events in order to educate sensitive, independent humans beings

The IBBY-Asahi Award jury comprised the following members from the IBBY Executive Committee: Hannelore Daubert (Germany) as jury president with members Anastasia Arkhipova (Russia), Nikki Gamble (Great Britain), Jehan Helou (Palestine), Ahmad Redza Khairuddin (Malaysia), and James Tumusiime (Uganda). The winners were announced at the IBBY press conference at the Bologna Children's Book Fair on Tuesday, 23 March 2010. The prize of USD 10,000 will be presented to each of the winning projects at the IBBY World Congress in Santiago de Compostela, Spain in September, 2010, by representatives of the Asahi Shimbun newspaper company. More about the history of the IBBY-Asahi Reading Promotion Awards can be found elsewhere in this issue.

### 2010 Hans Christian Andersen Awards

At the 2010 IBBY press conference at the Bologna Children's Book Fair, Andersen Jury President Zohreh Ghaeni announced that **David Almond** from the United Kingdom is the winner of the 2010 Hans Christian Andersen Author Award and **Jutta Bauer** from Germany is the winner of the 2010 Hans Christian Andersen Illustrator Award.



Reading at one of the community libraries in Accra, Ghana.



Reading together in Medellín, Colombia.



Jury President  
Zohreh Ghaeni at the  
IBBY press conference  
announcing the Andersen  
award finalists and winners.

The Andersen medals and diplomas will be presented to the winners at the international IBBY congress in Santiago de Compostela, Spain on Saturday, 11 September 2010. The award is considered the most prestigious in international children's literature and is given biennially by the International Board on Books for Young People to a living author and illustrator whose complete works are judged to have made lasting contributions to children's literature.

David Almond was selected from 28 authors for the award. The four author finalists were: **Ahmad Reza Ahmadi** from Iran, **Bartolomeu Campos de Queiros** from Brazil, **Lennart Hellsing** from Sweden, and **Louis Jensen** from Denmark. Jutta Bauer was selected from 27 illustrators nominated. The four illustrator finalists were **Carll Cneut** from Belgium, **Etienne Delessert** from Switzerland, **Svjetlan Junakovic** from Croatia, and **Roger Mello** from Brazil.

The other author candidates were Liliana Bodoc (Argentina), Heinz Janisch (Austria), Pierre Coran (Belgium), Brian Doyle (Canada), Liu Xianping (China), Maria Pylitou (Cyprus), Pavel Šrut (Czech Republic), Hannu Mäkelä (Finland), Jean-Claude Mourlevat (France), Peter Härtling (Germany), Loty Petrovits-Andrutsopulou (Greece), Eoin Colfer (Ireland), Shuntaro Tanikawa (Japan), Alberto Blanco (Mexico), Dashdondog Jamba (Mongolia), Peter van Gestel (Netherlands), Bjørn Sortland (Norway), Ján Uliiansky (Slovak Republic), Tone Pav ek (Slovenia), Jordi Sierra i Fabra (Spain), Muzaffer zgü (Turkey), Evangeline Ledi Barongo (Uganda), and Walter Dean Myers (USA).



Andersen award illustrator finalists with jury president. From l-r:  
Carll Cneut, Zohreh Ghaeni, Roger Mello, Alicia Salvi (juror 2010)  
and Beth Serra Secretary General of IBBY Brazil.

The other illustrator candidates were Luis Scafati (Argentina), Linda Wolfsgruber (Austria), Marie-Louise Gay (Canada), Ji í Šalamoun (Czech Republic), Lilian Brøgger (Denmark), Salla Savolainen (Finland), Grégoire Solotareff (France), Diatsenta Parissi (Greece), P. J. Lynch (Ireland), Akiko Hayashi (Japan), K stutis Kasparavi ius (Lithuania), Fabricio Vanden Broeck (Mexico), Harrie Geelen (Netherlands), Thore Hansen (Norway), Nickolay Popov (Russia), Peter Uchnár (Slovakia), An ka Gošnik Godec (Slovenia), Xan López Domínguez (Spain), Anna-Clara Tidholm (Sweden), Can Göknil (Turkey), Michael Foreman (United Kingdom), and Eric Carle (USA).

The ten members of the 2010 Jury, led by Jury President Zohreh Ghaeni from Iran, met in Basel, Switzerland on 13 and 14 March 2010. The Jury of children's literature experts comprised Ernest Bond (USA), Karen Coeman (Mexico), Nadia El Kholy (Egypt), María Jesús Gil (Spain), Jan Hansson (Sweden), Annemie Leysen (Belgium), Darja Mazi-Leskovar (Slovenia), Alicia Salvi (Argentina), Helene Schär

(Switzerland), and Regina Zilberman (Brazil). Elda Nogueira from Brazil represented IBBY and Liz Page served as Jury Secretary attending the meeting *ex officio*.

### IBBY Part II: The Early Years

With the founding of IBBY in 1953 and Otto Binder serving as the first President of IBBY, the organization settled into its two-year rhythm that we still know today. At the first meeting in Zurich in October 1953, the basic structure was starting to take form: sections need not be new organizations, they can be government offices, associations, groups, or private persons already involved with children's literature; funding would be sought inside each country with a set sum payable to the central organization; a review of international problems and events would be established—including the embryonic journal *Bookbird* and a medal to be designed to honor a writer for children, at this time for a single book: the *Hans Christian Andersen International Award for the Youth Book*. The idea for an international children's book day was also presented at that first meeting. The aim of the central organization was simply: *a relatively modest, inexpensive central organism ought to do for the coordination work*. (Otto Binder, 1953) This aim remains constant! The problems of fundraising and their sometimes elaborate solutions have also not changed over the past 57 years.

The first News Bulletin was published in 1958 in German and English and was edited by Richard Bamberger from Vienna and Fritz Brunner from Zurich. The bulletin included reports from Austria, England, Germany (FRG), Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, and Yugoslavia. A report was included from the USA, although it only became an official section in 1960. In addition to these countries, by the end of 1960 there were IBBY sections established in Italy, the Netherlands, Spain, Finland, Greece, and Canada.

Between 1955 and 1960 there were four more international congresses: in Vienna in 1955, Stockholm in 1956, Florence in 1958, and Luxembourg in 1960. The first Hans Christian Andersen medal was presented in Stockholm in 1956 to Jella Lepman in recognition of her work to further international understanding through children's books. The second medal was given at the same Congress to the British author Eleanor Farjeon for her book *The Little Bookroom*. It was only from 1960 onwards that the award was given for the complete works of an author, and in 1966 the medal for illustration was introduced.

In these early years IBBY received support from *Pro Juventute* in Zurich and the International Youth Library in Munich, but even with the annual dues from the member sections IBBY's international activities could only be supported by donations and by voluntary work. Although the organization was growing, the central organization remained modest and relied on the president's goodwill and available services. It was not until 1974 that IBBY established a permanent secretariat!

*Liz Page, with help from Leena Maissen*



**IBBY Congress 2010**

There is still time to register for the 32nd IBBY Congress in Santiago de Compostela! A full range of seminars, round table discussions, and plenary lectures are being prepared. The festive presentations of the IBBY-Asahi Reading Promotion Awards and the Hans Christian Andersen Awards will be among the highlights of the Congress. Go to [www.ibbycompostela2010.org](http://www.ibbycompostela2010.org) for the most current information.

**IBBY Section Opens in the United Arab Emirates**

At the beginning of 2010 an IBBY section was established in the United Arab Emirates. Speaking at the launch of the UAE section, Sheikha Budoor bint Sultan Al Qasimi, the current President of the section and Chairperson of the Emirates Publishers Association and Director of Kalimat Children's Publishing House said, "The establishment of the UAE National Chapter of IBBY is a tribute to the efforts exerted by all parties concerned in the publishing of children's literature throughout the country and serves as a recognition of the importance of this production on both the regional and international levels." We warmly welcome our colleagues in the UAE and look forward to many years of close collaboration. The contact details can be found at [www.ibby.org](http://www.ibby.org).

**Hans Christian Andersen winner (1986) and eminent Australian writer Patricia Wrightson, OBE 1921 - 2010**

Along with the late Ivan Southall, Patricia Wrightson undoubtedly established the modern school of children's literature in Australia. She became its leading light in the wake of Ethel Turner, Mary Grant Bruce, Dorothy Wall, and May Gibbs. She paved the way for internationally acclaimed writers such as Joan Phipson, Eleanor Spence, Colin Thiele, Hesba Brinsmead, and Mavis Thorpe Clark. In 1986 she was the first and only Australian writer to be awarded the Hans Christian Andersen Medal for writers — awarded by the International

Board on Books for Young People. Her acceptance speech in Tokyo to a vast global audience brought her a standing ovation. Patricia Wrightson was truly one of Australia's greatest literary ambassadors. Yet she was a genuinely modest person, pleased with her successes, but humble; always elegant and self-possessed, she was in many ways a private person. Even to her intimate friends she spoke little of her early life before her first children's book, *The Crooked Snake* (1955), was awarded Book of the Year by the Children's Book Council of Australia. From then on she became a public figure while her writing developed even greater strength and helped broaden the scope of writing for children worldwide.

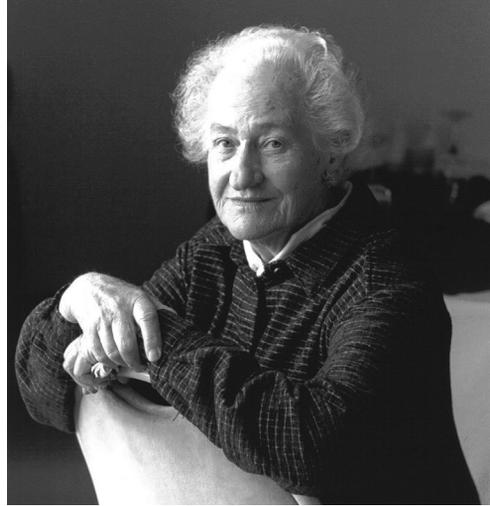
*In 1986 she was the first and only  
Australian writer to be awarded  
the Hans Christian Andersen  
Medal for writers*

In personal conversation and in several of her talks, for which she was in great demand, she intimated that she was an imaginative child who created her own internal world. She referred to her "cubby houses" in which that inner world was developed. She grew up in the years of the Great Depression, and during World War II worked for AWA — "doing her bit" for Australia, the country of her birth of which she was passionately, but realistically, proud. Her war-time marriage was not to last but bore her two children, Peter and Jenny, to whom she remained devoted until her recent death. They, in turn, were her literary sounding boards and helpmates. After the war, Patricia became Administrator of the Bonalbo District Hospital in Northern New South Wales. Living in a country area, having her own children, and being passionate about childhood in all its expressions, she began scribbling, drawing upon her love of the country itself, its outer and inner landscapes, its human inhabitants and, at that time, its children in particular. So *The Crooked Snake* was born. Eschewing the pat Blyton-esque adventure mode of that period, she integrated the characters she knew from experience into a realistic story of country

children. It is a gentle tale of a group at odds with a gang — the Crooked Snakers — in which the children themselves are entirely recognizable against an Australian landscape: “Behind fences on either side of the road, cattle browsed in the deep, winter-browned native grass; and beyond the paddocks rugged hills walled them in.” From then on Patricia Wrightson was to write constantly, each book, in turn, developing her writing style, moving into city settings, developing new genres such as fantasy, writing for teenagers and later, having edited the *NSW School Magazine*, seemingly simple stories for beginning readers, yet attracting a growing readership among perceptive adults. When the international IBBY jury met in 1986 to discuss Patricia Wrightson’s oeuvre it was evident that she spoke to all nationalities and races. As one juror claimed, the heartbeat of Australia was deeply recognizable in her own Norway and she likened Wrightson’s *Wirrun* trilogy (*The Ice is Coming*, 1977; *The Dark Bright Water*, 1978; *Behind the Wind*, 1981) — that follows the adventures of a mythic Aboriginal superhero — to the Norse Eddas.

It was Wrightson’s use of Aboriginal spirit folk — after deep and detailed research — that brought her writing under the critical microscope. In *An Older Kind of Magic* (1972) she dared to suggest that such spirits could lurk unseen even in Sydney’s Botanical Gardens, intruding as spirits always do into human affairs. In perhaps her most famous book, *The Nargun and the Stars* (1973), for which she was awarded her OBE, the huge rock-like Nargun is a powerful spirit creature able to move mountains while the tricky Potkooorks, Nyols, and Turongs are more impish so that the primary world of Australia’s Hunter Valley is contained within the secondary world of the racial unconscious.

Here, as in the other Wrightson fantasies, humans can benefit from – or be warned by – such spirit creatures. The damaged boy protagonist Simon in the *Nargun* can thus achieve healing and personal integration. In the face of criticism over her use of Aboriginal motifs, the Aboriginal poet Jack Davis, at a Conference entitled “Through Folklore to Literature” rose to his feet and in ringing tones bade the author, “Be brave, Mrs. Wrightson, be brave.”



Patricia Wrightson in the 1990s.

It was not that Wrightson annexed Aboriginality for literary purposes but that she believed passionately in what Aboriginals themselves believed — speaking for all of us — calling one’s “country” not simply the physical environment but the deeply inherent force of the human mind. She held strongly the view that the writer should not demand that the reader suspend disbelief but command belief — and that she did in all her work.

Apart from Wrightson’s brilliant depiction of childhood thinking and behavior she was to win great acclaim for her sympathetic and wise insight into both atypical children and into the dilemmas of old age — the latter as she herself aged. In *A Little Fear* (1983), the feisty Mrs. Tucker removes herself from the soul-destroying benevolence of Sunset House to live in an isolated cottage by the river. As in all her writings, Patricia Wrightson’s personal convictions, her integrity, her deep humanity, and her wisdom are inherent. She has been the worthy recipient of a raft of awards both at home and abroad for ethnic literature, teenage fiction, and the NSW Premier’s Literary Awards, including the Patricia Wrightson Award for Junior Fiction. She has been a true luminary and a gracious and loving friend to a host of us who have loved her for herself and admired her for her integrity as a writer of renown.

*Maurice Saxby AM*

This picture book reinterprets the children's literature classic introducing crazy and up-to-date mischief featuring Lewis Carroll's unforgettable character, Alice. Its writing and illustrations, both surreal and far from conventional, are an outstanding example of contemporary literary nonsense in Spain. It first won the National Prize for Illustration in 1992 and is included among the top 100 children's books of the 20th century for being one of the finest examples of the creative vanguard. Its republishing has been a wonderful idea on the part of Kalandraka. Miquel Obiols is one of the best Spanish representatives of humorous literature. His dedication to children's literature and to audiovisual media has merited him important prizes such as the Critics' Prize at the Bologna Fair. His books, many written in Catalan, have been translated into English, Czech, Chinese, and other languages. The illustrator, Miguel Calatayud, the great master of light and color, has received the National Prize for Illustration on three occasions and was a candidate for the Andersen Award in 2000.

Alicia Muñoz Álvarez



Miquel Obiols  
**Libro de las M'Alicias /**  
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 Illus. Miguel Calatayud  
 Vigo, Spain: Kalandraka, 2009.  
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## 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.

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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 (glenna.sloan@qc.cuny.edu).

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**Contact details:** Please send two copies to: kurkjianc@att.net; kurkjianc@gmail.com and svardell@twu.edu

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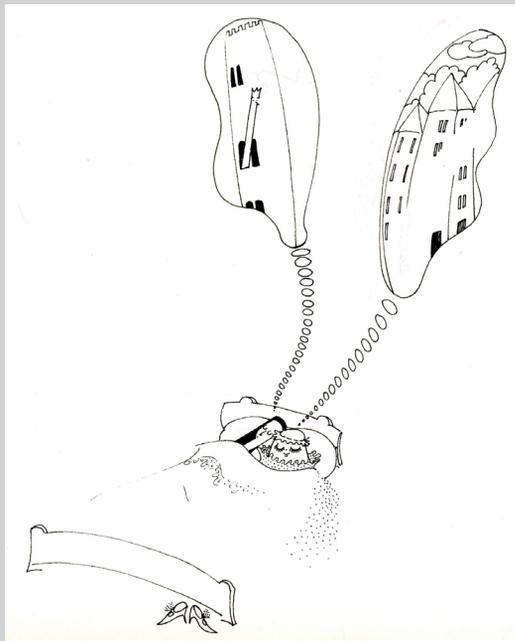
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# POEM-POEMA

by MIQUEL DESCLOT



Miquel Desclot (pen name of Miquel Creus) was born in Barcelona, was a Lecturer at Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, and is a freelance writer of poetry, essays, books for children, memoirs, and poetic translations. He wrote the following poem for his son several years ago.



## *El casament del llapis i la goma* (poema en català)

Un llapis de dibuixar  
i una goma d'esborrar  
van voler fer un casament  
que en parlés tota la gent.

Ell es va posar un barret  
que semblava un panellet  
i ella una sabata rosa  
que li feia molta nosa.

Ell va dibuixar un convidat  
amb xampany i gall rostit  
i ella va esborrar-ne un tros  
per poder-hi posar arròs.

En ser l'hora de la festa  
ell va dirigir l'orquestra  
i ella va esborrar un trombó  
que li feia mitja por.

I quan va arribar la nit  
ell era més llarg que el llit  
i va haver-lo d'estirar  
com un dia sense pa.

Ella, amb camisa de tul,  
no hi podia posar el cul  
i va esborrar-ne la vora  
per poder-lo treure a fora.

Ell va somiar un castell  
on el rei era igual que ell  
i ella va esborrar el palau  
on dormia el príncep blau.

## *The Wedding of the Pencil and the Eraser*

A drawing-pencil, sharp and dapper,  
and his true love, a pink eraser,  
resolved to wed and hold a fete,  
the like the town had never met.

He chose to wear the strangest cap:  
it looked just like a floury bap;  
and she a strawberry-colored shoe  
in which she stuck, as fast as glue.

He drew a sumptuous wedding-feast,  
champagne and canapés on toast;  
but she rubbed out the soup-tureen  
to make room for an aubergine.

And when he'd drawn the orchestra,  
he was both baton and conductor;  
but she erased the bass-trombone,  
abhorring its funereal tone.

And when night fell and bed was sought,  
he found he'd drawn the thing too short,  
so made it stretch to meet his want,  
as folks must do when things are scant.

She, in a gown of white shantung,  
could find no room to park her bum,  
and so rubbed out a certain wedge,  
to let her dangle o'er the edge.

That night he dreamed a castle grim,  
in which the king looked just like him;  
while she erased the palace fair,  
the blue prince fading into air.

*(Go to [IBBY.org](http://IBBY.org) for translations of this poem into castellano, euskera, and galego.)*

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