

Bookbird

A JOURNAL OF INTERNATIONAL CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

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

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When I was in my early teens I read J. R. R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*. And then I read it again. And again. And again.

Actually I read it eight, nine, or was it ten times in a row? I don't remember exactly. But I do know that whenever I turned the last page of the third book, I picked up the first book again, barely leaving the Grey Havens with Frodo, before starting over with Bilbo's party. I just wanted to be there in that other world. Yes, I lived in Middle Earth during a few very intense years. In some ways it was probably a more real and satisfying experience than being me at the time. In any case, no other book – or film or TV series, for that matter – has influenced me more deeply. I don't expect to find another book that will give me the same thrill of wonder and fulfilment ever. But that doesn't matter. *The Lord of the Rings* changed me, made me the ardent and obsessive book-lover that I am, constantly on the lookout for stories and images that can stir my being. Would I have devoted myself to literature and made it my profession, if it hadn't been for Tolkien's grand fantasy? I doubt it.

I thought about this when I visited the Hobbiton film set on New Zealand a few days before the IBBY world congress 2016 in Auckland. Prior to the visit I was a bit apprehensive that it would be too commercial and superficial, and that it would in some way demean my own vision of Tolkien's world. But somehow it worked. The reason, I think, is that Peter Jackson must have had a similar sea-changing experience of Middle Earth in his youth as I had. For only someone who deeply respects the original story can render it in such minute and loving detail – on screen as well as in landscaped New Zealand soil. Stories that really matter to us beg to be retold, orally, in writing, in pictures, in film, and sometimes by lovingly morphing the very earth.

When editing this issue of Bookbird I also thought about other, newer stories and pictures that may have the potential to take hold of young readers in a similar way. For here we have articles of some of the best contemporary authors and illustrators in the world, the Andersen Award winners 2016 – Cao Wenxuan (China) and Rotraut Susanne Berner (Germany) – as well as the nominees, Louis Jensen (Denmark), Suzy Lee (Korea), Mirjam Pressler (Germany), Pejman Rahimizadeh (Iran), Ted van Lieshout (The Netherlands), Marit Törnqvist (The Netherlands), Alessandro Sanna (Italy), and Lois Lowry (USA). And I wonder whose young life is about to be enchanted or changed or given meaning because of the work of one of these outstanding storytellers in word and image. Will someone build stories with Wenxuan or "feel the Bern" with Berner's illustrations?

In this issue of Bookbird we get a glimpse of the work of all of these outstanding creators. On the cover you can see an illustration by Andersen winner Rotraut Susanne Berner. Further glimpses of visual storytelling can

be had in the journal pages: Berner, Rahimizadeh, Törnqvist, Sanna, and Lee – and others. This is something IBBY and Bookbird are proud of: our ambition to reproduce excellent visual material in our journal. Few, if any, academic journals do that. But we also get glimpses and snippets of the words and views of the ten finalist authors and illustrators. Critics and scholars have come together to produce an anthology of articles on the winners and other finalists. My thanks go out to this excellent group! These articles are both inspiring and learned, and fun to read.

Finally, I should add that this Bookbird also hosts a few texts on other topics. Liz Page reports from the Auckland Congress among other things (Focus IBBY). Christiane Raabe of the International Youth Library reflects over a recent travelling exhibition, "Hello, Dear Enemy": Picture Books for Peace and Humanity." We also have two Letters – one on Pamela Travers's mysterious Moscow-book, the other on a very special children's literature collection in Turin.

Happy Reading!

Björn Sundmark



BJÖRN SUNDMARK is Professor of English Literature in the Faculty of Education, Malmö University, Sweden. He has published numerous articles on children's literature, and is the author of the study *Alice in the Oral-Literary Continuum* (1999) and co-editor of *The Nation in Children's Literature* (Routledge 2013). He is editor of *Bookbird-Journal of International Children's Literature*.

Cao Wenxuan, Hans Christian Andersen Award Winner 2016

Mingzhou Zhang

There is no doubt Cao Wenxuan is a great writer—his unanimous selection by the jury as the laureate of the 2016 H. C. Andersen Award is crystal clear proof. However, the more I read by him and about him, the more curious I get as to why and how he has grown into the person he is now. In order to understand the “big river,” I decided to go to its original sources. Thus, I paid a three-day visit to his home village where he was born and grew up before he left for Beijing at the age of twenty.

Cao Wenxuan’s home is in the serenity of the campus created by his father, Mr. Cao Guisheng, founding headmaster of the school which frequently appears as the main scene in novels such as *The Grass House* and *Bronze and Sunflower*. The whole area is a vast plain crisscrossed by waterways and rice fields through which Cao Wenxuan used to run and play with his youngest sister. You see the reeds waving in the breeze; you see fishing boats and flocks of ducks floating on the water in the peaceful sunshine. It was in such pleasant circumstances I interviewed the author’s youngest sister, Ms. Cao Wenfang, also a famous children’s literature writer; his teacher Mr. Li Yougan, a respected author and educator; and his old friend and classmate Mr. Chen Ming, a famous scriptwriter. Each of them shared with me a lot of stories about Cao’s early years, before he came to Peking University.

Cao Wenxuan was born in 1954, in a small, remote village called Hougang in Yancheng City in the Jiangsu Province. Like most Chinese people in those days, Cao Wenxuan and his family suffered

from extreme poverty. He recalls that spring was his least favorite season because there was no food; last year’s reserves were all gone, and the new harvest had yet to come. He writes,

I was so hungry that I even had an appetite for stones. The sun shed warm light on the earth, but I just wanted it to set in order to bring darkness to the world, so that I didn’t have to see or feel anything and didn’t have to feel hungry.

“Suffering”—and not only from starvation—is a keyword when describing his childhood, but his suffering and hardship ultimately turned into his spiritual and literary wealth. In the postscript to his novel *Bronze and Sunflower*, Cao writes, “We should be grateful for our suffering.” And he has spoken on many occasions about how his suffering in childhood changed him, made him more empathetic: “when the suffering comes, we must remember, but we must not hate, and never remember it as a hatred. Instead, we should be more empathetic and compassionate.”

There is an old Chinese saying: “only when the barns are full, may people know honor and grace.” However, in Cao’s family history, there are several examples that contradict the proverbial wisdom. Cao’s mother was always the last person to eat, after all the kids have eaten. And his father, a self-taught teacher, worked in Shanghai for five years in his youth and eventually went back home and set up a school in the countryside. Despite hardship, his vision was deepened and his horizon broadened by his experiences in Shanghai; he was no longer an isolated,

narrow-minded countryman.

Many villagers, like Cao’s father, came back from the city changed and eager to improve life in the village. But the outside world also came calling to the village. Before and during the Cultural Revolution, artists and writers as well as young students from big modern cities like Shanghai brought books, art, music, new manners and etiquette, proper modern clothes, hygiene, etc. to Cao’s village. These changes greatly impacted the local villagers’ daily life and their understanding of the world of culture and literature. Surely, Cao Wenxuan benefited from it also.

On a personal level, Cao Wenxuan’s teacher and lifelong friend, Li Yougan, the most famous local author, had a decisive influence. It started when, forty-five years ago, Cao’s father invited Li Yougan to stay at his home to teach Cao Wenxuan literary writing. The whole family respected Li Yougan so much that no one made a noise. Even when Cao Wenxuan’s mother was ill, she bore her pain alone in silence.

Despite poverty, Cao Wenxuan has warm and beautiful memories of his childhood and his family. His grandmother was deaf but always had a smile on her face. When he left home for a faraway university, she always stood at the entrance of the village waiting for him to come back. Cao Wenfang, the young-

est sister of Cao Wenxuan and the second children’s literature writer in the family, has recorded in her book titled *Childhood on the Shoulder* the warm relationship between family members and their daily life together. Many episodes in Cao Wenxuan’s *The Grass House*, *Bronze and Sunflower*, and *Ximi* are inspired by incidents in his early life. For example, in *The Grass House*, Sangsang’s father Sangqiao carries him to see a doctor, and in *Bronze and Sunflower*, Sunflower is sitting on the shoulder of Bronze to see the film over the heads of the throng of viewers.

Even some of Cao Wenxuan’s most imaginative works, such as *King Book*, is based on his own life experiences. What Cao does is transform life into fiction. The majority of his work have a realistic approach—for instance, *Bronze and Sunflower*, the autobiographical *Grass House*, and *Qingting Yan* [The Dragonfly Eye], which is the first of his novels to appear after he won the H. C. Andersen Award—and his deepest conviction is that instead of imagination, a writer’s most invaluable asset is his memory. It is through the author’s individual memory that story and history can be represented most accurately and vividly.

Cao Wenxuan’s home village is etched in his mind and keeps coming back in his writing. He de-



scribes the countryside where he grew up as “a typical riverside world. Opening the door meant seeing water and walking out meant crossing bridges. I was constantly surrounded by the sound of oars and mill wheels and the voices of fishermen commanding their ospreys to catch fishes.” Water is present in everything he writes. For him, however, water is not just part of the setting; it also shapes his character, personality, his view of the world, and his artistic pursuit. He uses water to create a unique literary world modelled on the real one.

Unfortunately, however, there was no future in the rural village for young Cao Wenxuan he was often distraught. He used literature to escape the world. At the age of seventeen, he published his first children’s story. In the forty years since then, he has published over a hundred works.

In 1974, Cao Wenxuan studied in Peking University, a top university in China. He learned about philosophy, aesthetics, literary theories, and child psychology, laying a foundation for his writing in children’s literature. After graduation, he became a lecturer at Peking University and is now a professor, teaching courses on Chinese literature and children’s literature. He has supervised close to sixty PhD and MA candidates and has worked with over thirty visiting scholars and teachers from China and abroad. Having accomplished all this, Cao Wenxuan can look back on his childhood with greater appreciation and write about his old life with new depth. As a scholar and writer, his works are of landmark significance in China. He has visited many European and Latin American countries, where he delivers numerous speeches organized by universities and confers with other writers. As a visiting professor, he taught in the University of Tokyo for eighteen months. These invaluable experiences contribute to his understanding of children and children’s literature in other parts of the world.

For the past thirty years, children’s literature in China has been closely associated with the name Cao Wenxuan. Thanks to his outstanding achievements in writing and theory building, he has greatly influenced how and why children’s stories are written in the world’s most populous country. In the 1980s, children’s literature, long regarded as a political tool, was heavily influenced by the dogmatic environment in China. The strong ideological basis for children’s literature resulted in highly similar and didactic

works that were no longer truly literary. Under such difficult circumstances, Cao advocated with courage and wisdom that “children’s literature should return to literature itself.” This conviction was based on his understanding of how significant literature is for children. At that time, Cao Wenxuan took advantage of every situation he could to advocate his views. His effective theoretical explanation plus his personal influence had a significant effect on breaking through the depressing constrictions.

Of all his endeavors, the most visible were the literary works he authored. He used his fresh and highly artistic writings to show that children’s literature also has dignity and standards. His writing provided models for children’s authors in China. Considering his remarkable literary achievements and his persistent aesthetic pursuits, Cao Wenxuan’s contributions to literature for young people can be capsulized in the following:

In the 1980s, Cao proposed the idea that “writers of children’s literature are the shapers of the future national personality,” which had a huge impact. He elucidated the significant responsibilities of children’s authors. Later on, he asserted that “children’s



literature lays a basis for good-naturedness in human beings,” a statement that still inspires our writers. That “artistic beauty has the equivalent power of thoughts” has always been fundamental in Cao’s works. At a time when literary creativity was generally abandoned and people only paid attention to ideological and educational utility, Cao comprehensively redefined children’s literature in China: “Artistic beauty is a basic and indispensable part of children’s literature” and “Aesthetic education is an important function of children’s literature.” In several articles and conversations, he repeatedly said that “only those who have both profound thinking and aesthetic appreciation can be regarded as whole people.” Indeed, he believes that aesthetic beauty should be given more importance in children’s literature than in any other literary endeavor. Fittingly, Cao himself writes some of literature’s most beautiful prose. One reason his works earn so much attention is precisely their aesthetic vision, all too rare in today’s children’s literature. They present humanity and nature with words that affect not only children’s hearts but also adults’. Widely known in China and often shared by whole families, his long novels include *The Grass House*, *The Red Tile*, *Root Bird*, *Ximi*, *Bronze and Sunflower*, *King Book*, *Goats Do Not Eat Heaven Grass*, and *Dingding and Dangdang*. In addition to these much beloved tales, he has written over a hundred short fictions and more than thirty picture books.

In today’s commercial atmosphere, many children’s stories focus on negativity, and many authors place too much emphasis on earning money. But Cao has committed himself to writing books that last. Whether a long piece or a picture book, he wholeheartedly treats his writing as works of art. From his point of view, bestsellers and longstanding sellers are totally different. A true children’s author should write longstanding works tested by endurance on the bookshelf.

Today, the trend is to present life as playful and joyful. Hans Christian Andersen’s more traditional tragedy is less favored. However, in writing and in theory, Cao insists on the spirit of tragedy in children’s books: “Children’s literature cannot simply be defined as ‘a literature that only brings joy to children.’ In addition to the pleasant sensation brought by comedy, children’s literature should also bring children the pleasant sensation from tragedy.”

Humanism is the keyword to understanding his

writing. In China, he introduced the concept of the “coming-of-age novel,” which has fostered extensive writing and theory ever since. Cao’s discussion deals with a longstanding issue in children’s literature, which is the large gap between children and young people. Children’s literature is defined rigidly in China as writing for preteens. As a result, authors cannot control the complexity of their works. The concept of the “coming-of-age novel” divides children’s literature into finer subdivisions, both theoretically and practically, and enables more aspects of life to be written into children’s literature. Cao’s own coming-of-age book series opened up a new aesthetic field in Chinese children’s literature.

Over the last ten years, Cao has broadened his art into the creation of picture books. In this as well, he initiated a new era. From his perspective, picture books should lay a solid basis for children’s spiritual worlds. His ideas, such as “a picture book has no boundary” and “a picture book is the nearest to philosophy in all forms of literary writing,” have had a significant national impact. He always puts forward his theory together with his writing as examples, for which he is acknowledged as “the King of Picture Books in China.”

He is a professor and doctoral supervisor in Peking University, and a prominent scholar with several academic books on literary theory. This is rare for a children’s author. He is the iconic figure in Chinese children’s literature. Cao’s contributions to the advancement of our culture are fundamental, diverse, and deep, and cannot be properly detailed in such a short article.

Cao Wenxuan is now Vice President of the Beijing Writers Association, and one of the directors of the Children’s Literature Committee of the Chinese Writers Association. He is a consultant or editorial board member for several important children’s magazines and research institutions. He is also the instructor for literary societies in several universities. He is often invited to give lectures in seminars on children’s literature and classical international works. He has given many keynote speeches in conferences at home and abroad in venues such as Mexico’s Faculty of Arts, the Writers’ University of Mexico, the University of Brasilia, Japan’s NHK, the University of Tokyo, the Berlin Literary Festival, the Bologna Children’s Book Fair, the Greek Book Fair, and the Korean Writers Association.

As an editor in chief, he has participated in compiling textbooks for primary and secondary schools in China, and has proposed innovative ideas about Chinese education. He proposed several outstanding international children's books that are now included in Chinese textbooks. In tandem with top publishers and other experts, he has helped plan and execute important conferences on the history of children's literature, such as the Lushan Children's Literature Conference in 1998 and the Sanqingshan Children's Literature Conference in 1996. In 2013, the China Publishing Group established the Cao Wenxuan Children's Literature Art Center and related awards, aimed at promoting literary and longstanding works in children's literature and resisting overcommercialization of children's literature.

Cao has compiled anthologies of children's literature for several publishers, including both Chinese original writings and world classics. These compilations included small collections, large collections, and even extra-large collections. They provide outstanding children's literature for Chinese readers, and have had a huge impact in China.

Over the past ten years, to promote reading among children, he has travelled to more than four hundred schools, some in very remote and backward places of China. He has shared his thoughts on reading and writing with thousands of teachers and children.

Cao is a diligent and productive writer with more than one hundred works in various editions. His works have been selected for countless anthologies. Since his novel *The Grass House* was published in 1998, it has been republished more than 300 times with more copies sold each year, a miracle in Chinese publishing history. *Bronze and Sunflower* was published five years later, and it has been republished 170 times in different editions. Other novels, short stories, and picture books also have been published again and again. Clearly, they are not just onetime bestsellers, but longstanding bestsellers and regarded as classics without any dispute by critics and literary historians. Works such as *The Grass House*, *Bronze and Sunflower*, and *Sanjiaodi* have been adapted for films. These have won awards not only in China but also internationally. For example, *The Grass House*, adapted into a film in 1999, won the 19th Chinese Golden Rooster Film Awards for Best Screenplay and the 14th Tehran International Short Film Festival, with

a Special Mention of the Jury.

More than twenty of Cao's works have been included in official and nonofficial Chinese textbooks. It should be noted that there are very strict rules for works in Chinese textbooks. These works must be classical and time-enduring. The ninth chapter of *The Red Tile* (Korean version) has also been included in Korean high school textbooks by South Korea's National Language Teachers Association. Many of Cao's novels, short stories, and picture books have been translated into English, French, German, Russian, Greek, Swedish, Danish, Japanese, Korean, and Vietnamese—such as *The Grass House*, *Bronze and Sunflower*, *Red Tiles and Black Tiles*, *King Book*, *Dingding and Dangdang*, *Ximi*, and *A Feather*. They have been well received abroad. *Bronze and Sunflower* was licensed to Editon Philpp Piquir, a French publisher. After the French edition was published in 2008, it was so well reviewed that Franc Loisirs, a book club partially owned by Bertelsman with over 4.5 million members, published a bookclub edition. The Korean edition of *The Grass House* has been reprinted many times; the Korean Book Review commented, "The author didn't write stereotypical good or bad characters, but full rounded people with all emotions." Having been translated into many other languages and appreciated by millions of readers, Cao's works are both local and international. His increasing global presence is due to his unique ability to see and write about the universal themes in human nature.

Cao's works are also popular in Taiwan and have been recognized through several children's literature awards. He is the most published mainland Chinese children's author in Taiwan. Cao has received many important literary awards. Indeed, he has been honored with more awards than any other children's author in China. Some of these honors are granted by readers, while some are judged by experts. The range of prizes demonstrates that his works have a huge base of readers and are appreciated by experts for both literary and artistic value.

Cao Wenxuan has repeatedly said that "my works were written for myself and I hope that I can enjoy them when I am too old to write." In a society dominated by commercial rules, he pursues the shared themes in human nature and the ideals of literary excellence. His writing has the ability and vitality to transcend time and space. As one critic remarked,

In Dr. Cao's dozens of books, he so fully presents a specifically Chinese but also universal portrait of life's ebbs and flows. His fluid, poetic prose depicts honest, sometimes raw, situations: a lonely feather floating in the wind (*A Feather*; 2013); a lost Down's syndrome boy encountering the kindness or cruelty of strangers (*Dingding and Dangdang*); a child seeking his place in a village of thatched roofs.

A list of publications by and about him objectively confirms the centrality of his contributions to Chinese children's literature and the magnitude of recognition he has received. He is so well respected in China that, last year alone, numerous collections and appreciations of his works were published, including *The Collector's Edition of Cao Wenxuan* (18 volumes, 2014), *A Collection of Cao Wenxuan's Masterpieces* (short stories, 2014), *Fifteen Lectures on Classic Novels* (2014); *On Children's Literatures* (essays, 2014), and *Readings and Appreciations of Cao Wenxuan's Novels* (10 volumes, 2014). Just since 2010, Cao Wenxuan's books have been translated into Korean, French, Estonian, English, Swedish, Russian, Danish, German, Vietnamese, Hebrew, and Arabic!

As Isaac Bashevis Singer once said, "The more local the setting, the more universal the literature becomes." There is, for example, a lot we can all learn from Dr. Cao's characters Dingding and Dangdang, two young boys with Down's Syndrome who become separated from each other and from their protective grandmother in the village they were born in. As the bestselling series takes us all over China along with the two innocent youngsters trying to find each other and to return to Sesame Village, readers learn that humaneness does not require great intellect. We learn through the boys' experiences that money is nowhere as valuable as loyalty, that the bustle and busyness of cities are no substitute for the world of nature, and that care can be given (or denied) in a variety of ways. Even secondary characters are fully depicted as they interact with one wandering boy or the other. Naturally, this village-born author crafts scenes of countryside beauty: hillsides and flocks, villages and towns, rivers and waterways. One memorable scene is in Book Three when Dangdang sees

the ocean for the first time—and we see it that way through his eyes and Dr. Cao's genius. I have rarely been as moved by works of literature as I have been by these novels by Dr. Cao. They are needed antidotes to the plot-driven, action-packed, dystopian, and carelessly written books young readers have become accustomed to.



MINGZHOU ZHANG, expert on international cultural exchanges and cooperation, grew up in an isolated remote village. He read a picture book that inspired him to start dreaming about the world. He organized the 2006 IBBY World Congress, and is now IBBY Vice President and CBBY Vice President.

Rotraut Susanne Berner: Telling Stories with a Drawing Pencil. Hans Christian Andersen Award Winner 2016

Doris Breitmoser

For over forty years Rotraut Susanne Berner has been active as an illustrator and book designer, publishing over eighty books and designing nearly eight hundred book covers. With her pictures, she has enriched and expanded on the ideas of a wide range of different authors—such as Vita Andersen, Italo Calvino, Hans Magnus Enzensberger, Luigi Malerba, Gudrun Mebs, Bart Moeyaert, Fritz Mühlenweg, Jürg Schubiger, or Toon Tellegen—but also illustrated books with her own texts. Ranging from cardboard picture books to comic fairy tales, song books, anthologies of poetry, and even some well-known classics, the breadth of style and form to be found in Berner’s works is enormous and her precise craftsmanship highly impressive.

Born in Stuttgart in 1948, Rotraut Susanne Berner grew up in a book-loving household with a publisher as father. There was only one taboo:

comics, which in those days were considered smut and trash. Remembering her childhood, she says,

I was richly endowed in my childhood and draw upon it even today. I grew up in the country and the natural surroundings gave me many opportunities to be on my own and to be free. Today’s children often have a harder time. Though they have more material comforts, their life is often so densely scheduled that there is little opportunity to develop freely on their own. (Scholz)

After graduating from an academic high-school, Berner began work as an assistant at the University of Stuttgart in the departments for photography and architecture before moving to Munich to study journalism and theater history. However,

she ultimately changed track and graduated from a polytechnic university with a degree in graphic design. After gathering some experience in the advertising departments of a variety of publishing houses until 1977, Berner then became a free-lance graphic artist and illustrator, dedicating herself entirely to book promotion. And what better way to advertise a book than through its cover? In the course of producing tailor-made “jackets” for several hundred books, Berner set new standards for the quality of book design. And, of course, she read each and every book that she worked on in order to do it justice. Depending on the type and character of a work, she often experimented with quite different techniques, from pastel chalk all the way to collage. For this particular dedication, her work was honored with the prestigious Celestino Piatti Prize for Book Design already at the beginning of her career. More and more assignments followed. In the beginning, she illustrated everything that came her way, from books on gardening to cookbooks, but quite soon it became clear that her focus would be on children’s and young adult books. And she began to develop what the publisher Hans-Joachim Gelberg has called her very own Berner Style.

The Creator of Wimmlingen

In her cardboard wimmelbooks devoted to the four seasons and to the night, Rotraut Susanne Berner has created her own picture-book universe, a tutorial in picture reading. With the village of Wimmlingen (Scurryville in English-language editions), she has taken the idea of the wimmelbook, which was first developed in the 1960s by Ali Mitgutsch, a step further by adding new dimensions. Each double-sided spread offers endless details, people, and animals just waiting to be discovered. The great attraction is in the interrelationships between the images and the books, which thus become a serialized tale through the repetition of people and places. Berner is a close observer of detail and has maintained a special eye for the child’s realm of experience and the many facets of people’s intertwined lives. With a cheerful twinkle in her eye, she lets these scenes glow in happy tones. In the meantime, Wimmlingen has jumped right out of the picture book and into calendars, cookbooks, and stories of individual characters and—at the request of booksellers—even materialized in various merchandising articles.

Due to the ease with which the quaint world at Wimmlingen presents itself, it might not be evident just how precisely and attentively its creator has dealt with the many characters, locations, and ever new details throughout all five books. The various narratives which she develops with her drawing pencil are constantly being interwoven; characters encounter one another, enter into relationships, and develop themselves further. Rotraut Susanne Berner describes this as a “thoroughly controlled process, both in content and craftsmanship. Each nose must fit, each piece of clothing and each windowsill is double-checked” (Partsch 7f.).

This elaborate and very painstaking manner reveals much about Berner’s own standards—for her own work and for storytelling through both text and illustration, whether for older or younger readers. The disdain for children’s culture and the limited appreciation of children’s and youth literature, especially that of picture book illustration, such as one finds in the feuilleton sections of newspapers makes Berner boil with rage. Whereas she takes great pleasure in challenging her readers and laying a trail, in particular, for the adults who are reading along. With art exhibitions in Wimmlingen, pictures hanging on the walls of her interiors, or particular books on the shelves, again and again Rotraut Susanne Berner’s deeper meaning shines through and also her universality and broad education, her wide scope of interests.

Charlie—an Ode to Everyday Life

Just as successful as the wimmelbooks is by now her series of books about Charlie and the everyday life of a little rabbit, ranging from a cardboard picture book to a volume of short stories. Calmly and undramatically, she sets the stage for a perfectly normal family life: Charlie needs to go to bed, wakes up in the morning, has a few adventures, visits his grandmother, plays hide-and-seek, and gets a new sibling. Tension builds up in the tales when Charlie chafes at all the do’s and don’ts, questions them, puts them to the test, and supported by a loving environment, finds interesting solutions again and again to the challenges found in his daily life. Once again the succinct text and the pictures complement and inspire each other—supplying Charlie’s world with details to be discovered and unraveled, sparking conversations while the book is read aloud, and



creating a sympathetic character to identify with, which nevertheless is also sufficiently distinct in his animal form.

Maxim Gorky once wrote, “One doesn’t need to have lain in the frying pan in order to write about cutlets!” Nevertheless, Rotraut Susanne Berner is occasionally asked how it is possible, as a woman without children, to strike a chord when portraying a child’s point of view or revealing how children can feel acknowledged or misunderstood by adults. And, indeed, her capacity for empathy is one of Berner’s greatest strengths. As she herself explains, “it seems, quite simply, that I still have a close connection to the child that I once was” (Scholz).

When Quality Leads to Success

Rotraut Susanne Berner is, hence, excellent proof that success and quality do not need to be mutually exclusive. In Germany, her books can be found on many children’s bookshelves and in nearly every kindergarten. Moreover, she has been translated into over thirty languages. All around the world, she has a wide base of fans and, at the same time, earned the praise of professional critics. In Germany, she is considered one of the greats of picture book illustration and was awarded, among other things, the Special Prize for Life-time Contributions to Illustration by a jury of the German Children’s Literature Award in 2006. Internationally she has received, for example, the Silver Paintbrush in Holland and had been a finalist several times for the Hans Christian Andersen Award, which she is now—at last—being awarded.

Berner sees herself as following in the tradition of Walter Trier (1890-1951), who became internationally famous for his reductive rendering of the cover illustration for Erich Kästner’s *Emil und die Detektive* [Emil and the Detectives] in the style of the New Objectivity (an artists’ movement of the 1920s) and who was also active as a caricaturist and commercial artist.

Kästner once said of Trier that “everything he draws or paints wears a smile.” And in Berner’s picture world, with its clear contours and saturated colors, the viewer feels welcomed at all times. Furthermore, one is always rewarded for taking a very close look. Cryptic allusions, visual quotes, anthropomorphic characters, and a break with the usual expectations induce a unique, profound sense of

humor that continues to resonate for a long time after.

It is particularly easy to discern her subtle method in *Die Prinzessin kommt um vier* [The Princess Will Arrive at Four], which is based on a story by Wolfdietrich Schnurre and was nominated for the German Children’s Literature Award in 2001. In his simple parable, Schnurre describes a lonely, enchanted hyena who is actually a princess. In order to break the spell, someone would need to invite her over; and the first-person narrator does just that, as a willing player in the game.

Berner begins the tale in the zoo, prefacing the text with a seven-page long series of illustrations. The setting—the street, the zoo, the apartment—unfolds at times only by turning the next page, thus letting the viewers feel that they themselves are part of the plot and able to delve deep into the story. A mysterious, Sphinx-like cat and the rich and exotic world of plants stand in clear contrast to the zoo animals, who are confined to their cages, and to the stereotypical images we have of them. If one has taken good note of the narrator’s headdress, it comes as no surprise when he stops in front of the hyena and gets involved in a conversation.

How the hyena manages to put the cage behind her and arrives on the dot of four, shy but smart with her ladylike handbag, to ring the doorbell is only one of the many riddles among the cheery and colorful pictures which are held in place by crosshatched lines. At first glance, the contrast between the (still) orderly home of the host and the zoo’s cages could not be greater. But then one discovers traces of something wild and untamed about him and his relationship to civilization: found objects from nature and a bookshelf filled with Melville, Cousteau, Humboldt, Linné, Merian, and Jane Goodall. And do not the many crosshatchings somehow resemble the bars of a cage? In view of that, can a transformation really be successful?

Berner seems to be especially inclined toward authors with reductive but profound texts, such as Jürg Schubiger or Bart Moeyaert. These offer the greatest possible range of interpretations, which she can exploit to the maximum with her illustrations.

Powerful Pictures and Powerful Words in Equal Measure

In the picture books which are entirely her own, such as her first “self-produced” creation, *Das*

Abenteuer [The Adventure] (1996), it is evident that she is not only a master of the drawing pen but also of the word. The terse text unfolds its own mood—emphasizing the sinister character of a house which has possibly “swallowed” the polka-dotted red ball, a main element in the story—and with its pithy dialogues has a quite immediate effect. In interaction with the images, the story seems to take on several dimensions. And here, again, there are false leads. The eerie house which the hero, Tanja, has dared to enter is charged with the usual elements of a horror story in both words and pictures, but, naturally, hidden behind the facade there is yet another dimension.

Cross references to comics (e.g., a copy of *Tintin* on a chair, a talking bird with a speech bubble) anticipate Berner’s future dealings with the genre. In her volume *Rotraut Susanne Berners Märchenstunde* [Rotraut Susanne Berner’s Fairy Tale Hour] (1998), two years later, she presents two Grimm fairy tales as comic strips and includes a special joke in the frame story. As usual, Berner-style pranks appear at the unexpected moment.

“Creating pictures is always an intrusion into the reader’s fantasy,” says Berner (Nieder). In fact, her illustrations give wings to the fantasy of the viewers, who cannot then help but carry the ideas a step further.

Lobbying for Illustration Work

The activities of Rotraut Susanne Berner are in no way limited to her own creations. She is quite adept at using her success to help promote illustrating on the whole. Already in 1995, she organized the first “Illustrator’s Corner” at the Frankfurt Book Fair. Today, she is a member of the board of trustees of the Illustration Foundation that is affiliated with the Picture Book Museum of Troisdorf, Germany. The foundation has set itself the goals of collecting, preserving, conserving, archiving, and exhibiting legacies and bequests, collections, or individual works of illustrators; it also supports scholarly research and publications for the interested specialist. The publication of the *Lexikon der Illustration im deutschsprachigen Raum seit 1945*, a “Dictionary of Illustration in German-Speaking Countries since 1945,” has played a central role in this and was a first for Germany. Never before had there been a reference work which focused on the leading figures of illustration. Published as a loose-leaf encyclopedia which is

regularly updated and supplemented, the *Lexikon* includes texts by well-known experts dealing with thirty artists who have made important contributions to book illustration over the past sixty years. Each portrait begins with a biography that also includes prizes won. An essay then gives an evaluation of the illustrator’s oeuvre in terms of contemporary history, style, and also personal background. A bibliography lists monographs, exhibits, and secondary literature. In conclusion, there are full-color and black-and-white examples from the various phases of the artist’s career.

For the artists themselves, a very concrete arena for experimentation is provided by the bibliophile series *Die Tollen Hefte* [Cool Books], which was exhibited at the Bologna Children’s Book Fair in 2016 and already encompasses forty-five volumes. These were designed, in part, by Berner herself, as well as by Wolf Erlbruch, Axel Scheffler, or Henning Wagenbreth. Originally established in 1991 by Berner’s husband, Armin Abmeier, the series has continued under her editorship since his death in 2012. The volumes are exquisitely designed, include lavish original flat screen prints, and are bound with thread stitching. Each volume is composed around a theme—the most recent, *Durch&Durch* [Through&Through] by Nadia Budde, dealt with couples—or a text. The next in the series will be dedicated to Genesis, the second creation story of the Old Testament, and will be designed once again, after a longer break, by Berner herself.

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Suzy Lee's Adventures in Picture book Land

Sungyup Lee

Alice was beginning to get very tired of sitting by her sister on the bank and of having nothing to do: once or twice she had peeped into the book her sister was reading, but it had no pictures or conversations in it, "and what is the use of a book," thought Alice, "without pictures or conversations?"
(Lewis Carroll, Alice's Adventures in Wonderland)

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INTERNET

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Rotraut Susanne Berner's Blog:
<http://rsbuecher.blogspot.de/>



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Alice, one of the most famous heroines in all of children's literature and a figure to whom the inventive Korean artist Suzy Lee has seemingly been attached, asked herself, "What is the use of a book without pictures?" Lee responded in her first picture book without verbal text: *Alice in Wonderland*. Furthermore, it seems that the British girl has inspired the Korean artist in her following works.

Picture books can be defined as an iconotext in which verbal and visual texts coexist and contribute to constructing a literary and artistic narrative. This description emphasizing the intricate and inseparable relationship between verbal and visual factors has been further refined by the French comparatist and literary critic Isabelle Nières-Chevrel. According to Nières-Chevrel, the materiality of a book is also worthy of note: not only does it cause the picture book to exist in the real world, but it also helps to make it work as a fictional narrative world (119). Therefore, a picture book can be considered to be composed of its text, illustrations, and each physical element of the book. However, the text is not truly one of the key channels through which Lee's creative energy flows. It seems that her artistic talent can be fully manifested through the visual and material

constituents of a picture book, as demonstrated by her wordless narrative picture books: *Alice in Wonderland* (2002), *La Revanche des lapins* [Revenge of the rabbits] (2003), *Mirror* (2003), *Wave* (2008), and *Shadow* (2010). When she is not collaborating with another author, Lee's works are particularly silent but suffer no lack of communicative power. The little British girl, Alice, would certainly have appreciated Lee's wordless but communicative books full of pictures. With the exception of a few works, the stories are conveyed simply through lines and forms expressed in her favorite medium, charcoal, alongside delicate touches of color. Most of Lee's solo works do not speak, but show: they lead readers to feel, think, and tell their own story. Through her books, the reader becomes a sort of intersemiotic translator, interpreting the visual factors into a verbal language.

If Lee's works do not rely on a written text, another factor—the book as a physical object—becomes enhanced. Her imaginative nonverbal worlds are magnificently embodied or incarnated in and via the book. The materiality of a book is a concern not only for picture books but also for any other published text: it is like a container of the contents. As for a picture book, the book as a physical object can acquire even more importance

than other types of published text because it performs communicative, aesthetic, and even narrative functions. In other words, every single element of a book—such as its size, form, the type of paper, layout, cover, end paper, title page, gutter, and dust jacket (if there is one)—conveys a message and becomes part of the narrative world found within its pages. Each element of a book is the space for a creative playground in which Lee fashions her own imaginative world. It appears that, for her, the book as a physical object is a tangible medium of expression applied in order to tell a story, just like a verbal language or visual elements. Her famous Border Trilogy—*Mirror*, *Wave*, and *Shadow*—makes use of book formats and gutters with remarkably high effectiveness. Therefore, it is not surprising that she considers herself not a picture book author-illustrator but a “book artist.”

A book is really a mysterious object because it establishes a link between a fictional world and readers in the real world. It is a physical border where illusion meets reality. Like the frame of a painting, it belongs to the real world and the fictive one at the same time to spark a connection between a work of fiction and its readers. Held in the hands, a book is a “real” physical object that compels its reader to recognize that what is contained inside is simply fiction. Therefore, it is no exaggeration to state that a book as a physical object is a meta-fictional medium. This ambivalent object has seduced the inventive Korean book artist Suzy Lee as she has taken pleasure in blurring the borders between reality and fantasy ever since her first picture book, *Alice in Wonderland*. This wordless picture book is ironically concluded with an allusive verbal expression, the

epitaph of Lewis Carroll asking “Is all our life, then, but a dream?” Trapped in a cat-and-mouse game, Alice and her counter-partner, the White Rabbit, pass through a theater, a fireplace, and finally, a book. Within their chase, multiple layers of an illusory world are successively unveiled. Initially represented through photographic cutouts which provide a sense of reality, Alice transforms into a character depicted in pencil drawings while the reverse occurs to the White Rabbit. There is no longer an impermeable barrier between reality and illusion: the two worlds are much closer to each other than was believed and finally intermingle. Besides, the mysterious relationship between reality and illusion is cleverly implied by six paintings revisited in this picture book. The tension between reality and fantasy is a recurring theme in Lee’s other works as well: the ice cream-truck driver’s confusion between dream and reality in *La Revanche des lapins*; a little girl’s dream-like visit to a zoo in *Zoo*; a girl’s chimerical trip with a bird in *Loiseau noir*; the blurred barrier between the real world and the reflection in a mirror in *Mirror*; and the intriguing play occurring between a little girl and her mischievous shadow friends in *Shadow*. The fragile line of demarcation separating reality and illusion is symbolized by the book gutter, which is a precious material element to Lee. The gutter is necessary for bookbinding, which means that a portion of every sheet must be “lost” in the gutter of the binding. This ordinary and almost disappeared portion of a book has become an extraordinary, even essential, element in Lee’s narrative world. It symbolizes a clouding of the boundary between reality and illusion, the theme on which some of her stories are based. The gutter already played this

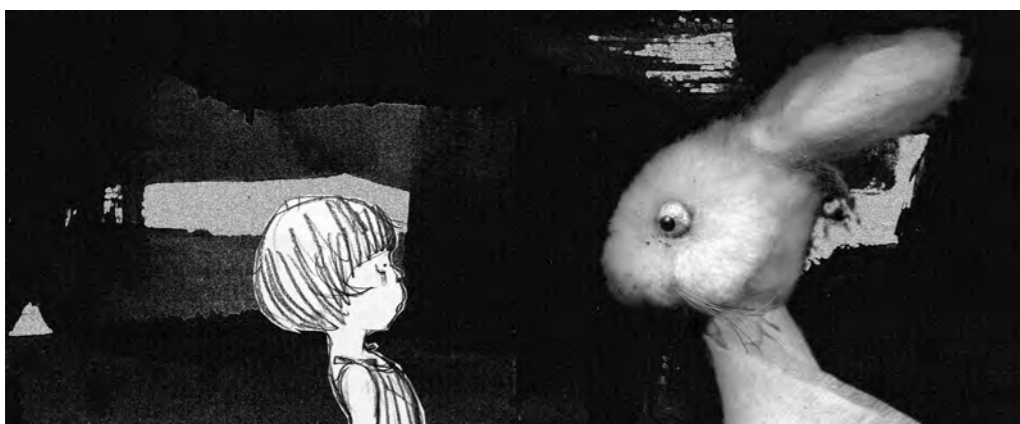


narrative role in Lee’s first work, *Alice in Wonderland*: there is one double-spread with a parody of a Korean folk painting on which the left page is the reflection of the right (or vice versa). It appears that the gutter of the double-spread functions as a mirror, although it is unclear which page is the reflected image.

The concept of the gutter is artfully applied in the Border Trilogy: the border may physically mean the gutter and metaphorically a space where reality and imagination meet and interact to create something new. After discovering and exploring their imaginative world or alter egos, the small heroines of the three stories mature and their world becomes enriched. For example, in *Shadow*, the skirt of the playful girl turns yellow, the thematic color of her fantasy, when she finished playing with her illusory

companions. It is like a reader whose interior world is stretched and expanded after reading a book: he or she becomes tinted with the shades of the imaginary world. Certainly, the reader will never be the same person as before. This correlation between colors and someone with the ability to see “beyond” the tangible world is recognizable in *Zoo* (2004). A young girl enjoys some time with animals after following a mysterious peacock which appears to play the role of a guide, as the white rabbit did for Alice. The scenes of her dreamlike visit are rendered in color, in contrast to the near monochrome of her frightened parents who believe that they have lost her.

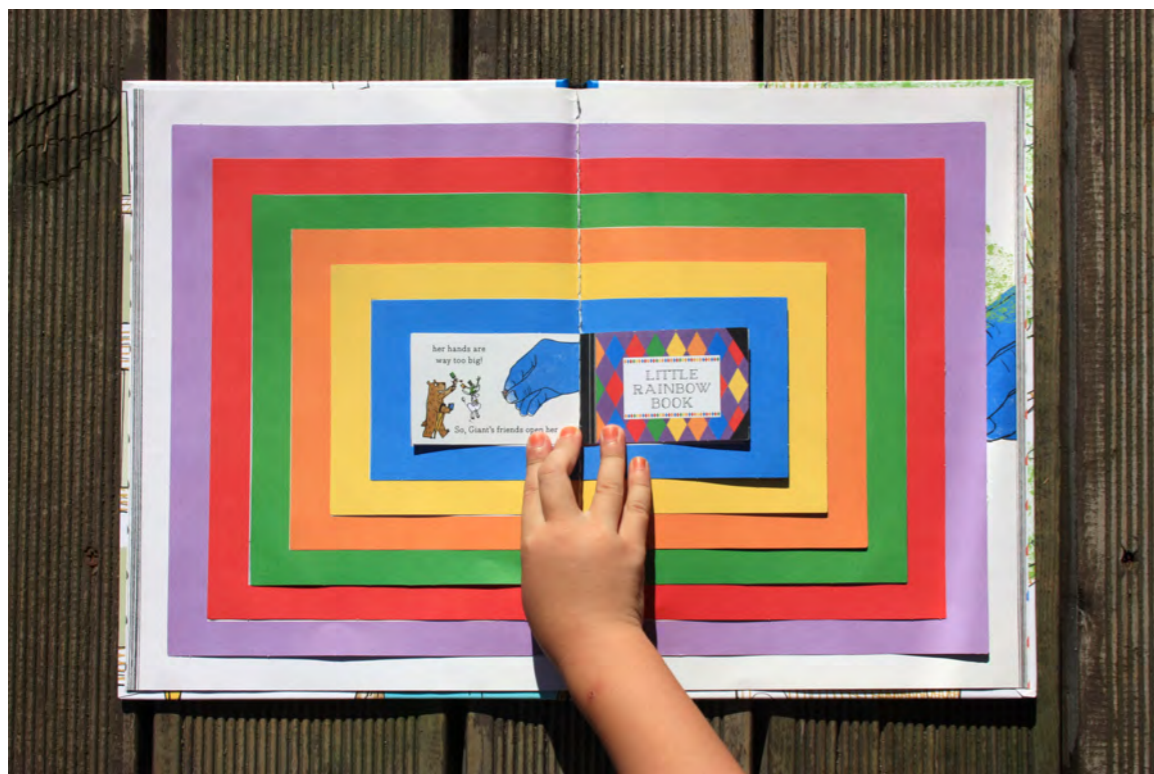
In her illustrations for other texts, Lee seems much more generous with her use of color, as can be seen in *Open This Little Book* (2013, text by Jesse



Klausmeier) and *Ask Me* (2015, text by Bernard Waber). Even though her visual interpretations are expressed through a diversity of vivid colors, the physical elements of the book still play an important role in these two iconotexts. In *Open This Little Book*, Lee makes ideal use of various sizes of paper in order to embody physically the theme of the work. This technique represents a sort of “mise en abîme”—that is, a story within a story, or more concretely in this case, a book within a book. Therefore, it appears that Lee’s collaboration with Klausmeier demonstrates once again her leitmotif of a circular relationship—like a Möbius strip—or a blurring of the lines separating reality and illusion. While illustrating Waber’s touchingly poetic text, Lee brought into play another feature of books in order to cross a border between fiction and non-fiction. The visual narrative begins in the front endpaper, before the verbal narrator sets out to talk. The nature of the bookbinding process requires all hardcover books to have endpapers. This portion of a book constitutes a “space between” in which the reader is no longer outside nor yet inside the story (Sipe and McGuire). However, it can be used to add an aesthetic or

narrative dimension to picture books. This “space between” provides a fictional arena for Lee’s visual narrative: with the title page, the front endpaper shows a small girl and her father preparing themselves for a joyful walk and leaving their home. Therefore, the “peritextual” space blurs the boundary between an editorial convention—which belongs to reality—and a fictional world.

Lee would not have created a picture book simply to please Alice and support her complaints regarding a book without pictures, although she does adore this adventurous girl sandwiched between reality and fantasy. Unlike the British heroine, however, Lee in fact loves some texts to the point of illustrating them: her own text in *Zoo* and her essay on the Border Trilogy are flawless. However, she knows that her book is able to convey the full depth of her intended story without resorting to a single word. Rimbaud asserts that the poet makes himself a *voyant* (seer) able to view something hidden behind the visible world and reveal what he or she has seen. The French symbolist might have even seen the color of each letter. In his sonnet “Voyelles” (vowels), he assigns a color to each vowel: “Black A, White E,



Red I, Blue O and Green U.” This poet must have been able to uniquely observe the world and the “beyond” world and use colors to express himself, although he did not himself paint or illustrate. Lee is also in possession of vision penetrating enough to capture meaningful moments within the real life surrounding her and can describe them in her unique nonverbal manner of expression. She sees, then she shows. Her narrative world, which is dreamlike but still rooted in her experiential life, can be visualized and materialized in a book, which has, fortunately for us, lead her into the field of picture books. Since her *Alice in Wonderland*, she has pursued artistic adventures back and forth between reality and fantasy.

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SUNGYUP LEE is a professor for special appointment at Ewha Womans University in Seoul, South Korea. Her work has centered around the translation between French and Korean and French area studies. She also has a particular interest in picture books as a translator and researcher.

This retelling of a folktale of Inukpak, a First Nations giant, is a primer to Inuit giant tales. Inukpak, who was “huge, even for a giant,” takes only a few steps to travel from one side of the Arctic to the other. One day, he meets a human hunter who was so much smaller than he that he thinks the man is a child. The hunter is terrified, but Inukpak decided to care for the tiny human whom he sees as vulnerable in the Arctic terrain. Even though he does not want to go, what can the hunter say to the giant? Throughout their adventures, Inukpak keeps the hunter safe, even placing him in his boot (which is huge for the hunter) to keep him warm at night. Eventually, the two become friends and continue to travel and have adventures. “And that is why, in every region of the Arctic, you can find stories about a huge giant who adopted a human!”
Laretta Henderson



**On the Shoulder of a Giant:
An Inuit Folktale**
Neil Christopher
Illus. Jim Nelson
Toronto, Canada: Inhabit
Media, 2015. 37 pp.
ISBN-13: 978-1772270020
(Folktale; ages 5-7)

Marit Törnqvist: A Direct Line from My Heart to My Hand

Toin Duijx

Marit Törnqvist is one of the most famous illustrators in the Netherlands. She has won several awards, has been nominated several times for the Hans Christian Andersen Award and made the shortlist in 2016, and has also been the Dutch IBBY-section nominee for the past few years for the famous Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award. Törnqvist illustrates books by other authors—mostly Astrid Lindgren; her mother, Rita Verschuur, is the translator of several books by Lindgren—but she also writes books herself with her own illustrations.

Since 1988, I have been working as an illustrator of children's literature, writer, and decor designer. I also like to do projects with children next to these occupations, because I am—and always will be—very curious to look at their view on the world.

Sweden

Marit Törnqvist was born in Sweden in 1964 but grew up in Holland and studied illustration at the Gerrit Rietveld Academie in Amsterdam. As the second child in a family with three children, Marit spent the majority of her earlier years in Uppsala, in the house where her father had lived together with her grandfather. The old-fashioned furniture in the dark but atmospheric rooms would later return in her illustrations in many different ways.

When she was five, the family moved to Holland. Marit's mother, Rita Törnqvist, is Dutch and her father Swedish. Several times, she had to move with the family to a new village and also to a new school.

I was being bullied at school. I didn't know any Dutch words, because my parents apparently had never considered the fact that we might have to move to the Netherlands at any moment in the near future. In class, my classmates used to pinch my skin with their nails under my table and did not stop until the wound started to bleed.

During Törnqvist's first year at the academy, her parents decided to split. Since there was no home to return to, Marit decided to stay and rent a room in Amsterdam. To escape her miserable situation in Amsterdam, she fled to Sweden a couple of times: "At the farm of Karl-Erik and Lena I found consolation. Seeing these two people together, so close to nature, it made me feel a bit humble."

At the academy, Törnqvist attended courses by, amongst others, Thé Tjong-Khing and Carl Hollander—both famous and very influential illustrators themselves. She stayed after graduation in Amsterdam, got married, and now has two daughters, Jasmin and Rosalie. She has a beautiful atelier at the attic of her canal-side house in Amsterdam. But every year, she goes back to Sweden to work on her books in a lovely cottage in the middle of nowhere but also to work with Swedish translators of her books or with Swedish authors who want her to illustrate their texts. During the past two years, Marit has been very active in projects concerning refugee children and adolescents.

One very special project she worked on in Sweden was Junibacken. She designed a three-dimensional journey through Astrid Lindgren's work at the Junibacken children's cultural center in

Stockholm (she has been the artistic adviser to the project since 1997).

My three-dimensional projects have always known some struggles. When I was designing the 'stories-journey' on Junibacken in Stockholm, I tried to work in the same intuitive way as during my smaller book projects. However, this time I was facing a project in which millions (of Swedish krona's) had been invested and about seventy construction workers to whom I had to transfer my thoughts and feelings. Eventually, I succeeded in building something that was very close to my other work, namely a personal interpretation of the work of Astrid Lindgren.

The Red Bird

Following her final exams in 1987 at the Academy of Arts in Amsterdam, Törnqvist was asked by the Swedish publisher Rabén & Sjögren to work as an illustrator with the writer Astrid Lindgren. She has since then illustrated several of Astrid Lindgren's works.

Marit Törnqvist first read *The Red Bird* when she was six years old. Many years later, after she had created pictures for Astrid Lindgren's *A Calf for Christmas* and *The Day Adam Got Mad*, she at last felt ready to illustrate Matthew and Anna's story. A long time ago, in the days of poverty, Matthew and Anna lived with the sternest farmer in the village. Times were hard, and the children worked harder, with no comfort except each other. Then one day, against the gray sky and the white snow, came a glorious red bird. And the red bird led them to a miraculous

haven where the sun shines and food is plentiful, where children have time for laughter and play. To stay there, Anna and Matthew must make a simple, impossible choice. It will be one that changes their lives forever. With breath-taking artistry, wisdom, and compassion, Astrid Lindgren and Marit Törnqvist have created a story that touches the deepest longings in all of us.

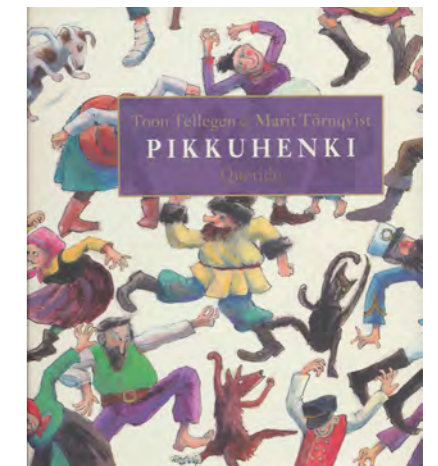
Illustrator

Marit Törnqvist is a sought-after illustrator. She is a slow worker, as she says herself, but also will only illustrate texts of others if she has really a good feeling about the text, the language, and the story:

An important part of my work consists of choosing the texts that I will illustrate. I receive a lot of offers, but as I indicated earlier, I maintain a slow working tempo. Moreover, many stories that I am offered do not fit me well.

A good example is the story *Bigger Than a Dream* (*Groter dan een droom*, 2012) by Jef Aerts, a comforting book about how to understand loss. A boy hears a girl calling him one morning. Is it his sister, the sister on the faded photograph on the wall? He never knew her because she died long before he was born. But now she is calling her little brother because she wants to go out on her bike. It is the beginning of an unforgettable adventure.

Törnqvist's illustrations offer consolation and safety for the children's verses of Sjoerd Kuyper and those of Hans and Monique Hagen (*Jij bent de liefste*), but they are grim and uncanny when accompanying Toon Tellegen's sinister fairy tale, *Pikkuhenki* (2005).



She painted *Jij bent de liefste* using primarily gouache and acrylic paint. Standing at the printing press, she feared that she had failed; the press sheets showed a cacophony of colors, lacking any sign of unity and harmony.

Pikkuhenki of Toon Tellegen is a classic and unusual fairytale about two young heroes, Pikkuhenki and Iwan, who “long ago, in a land far from here” set off into the world, where they are confronted with fear, sadness, doubt, light, and darkness and, strengthened by their travels, turn safely homewards. Törnqvist’s strong illustrations, with their sense of colour, reflect Tellegen’s text, sometimes in a very detailed way. The people who Pikkuhenki saw “dancing and kissing and shutting each other away for a hundred years in castles covered with roses” are all there, for example, depicted subtly and with a nod towards Grimm’s fairytales, just as Tellegen does with his words. In this book, Törnqvist depicts a world between dreams and reality, where children can escape in times of difficulty. Because of her unpredictable and frugal illustrations, the majority of them being very subdued although some of them containing surprisingly happy colors, she received the Gouden Penseel (Golden Pencil). The critics received the book enthusiastically: “Astounding illustrations, each of which makes you think that Marit Törnqvist must possess supernatural powers” (Provinciale Zeeuwse Courant) or “A modern fairytale that embraces traditional fairytales with one sweeping gesture” (Vrij Nederland).

For the Children’s Bookweek 2016, Törnqvist made the beautiful picture book *Fabians feest* (Paul’s Party) about the fantasy of a child that meets the rationality of his mother.... It was printed in 51.500 copies and sold out within one month.

Author

Törnqvist is first and foremost an illustrator of children’s books, but she has also written some books of her own: *Klein verhaal over liefde* and *Wat niemand had verwacht*.

In the books I have written myself, I seem to return to small, standing illustrations with a natural frame, created with diverse techniques and an enormous simplicity in their composition. A possible explanation for this would be that I refrain from realism in the texts I write and maintain a somewhat allegorical way of story-telling.

Klein verhaal over liefde (Small story about love) is a short love story. “High upon a pole / Far out to sea / A girl was sitting. / She sat there day in, day out / Through wind rain and snow.” Translation rights for the book were sold to Germany, Sweden, China, France, Germany, Japan, and Korea, and the book won the Dutch a Silver Pencil Award (for the text) in 1996.

In *Wat niemand had verwacht*, everyone is running and galloping and is busy. A girl who is running faster than everyone else falls into a deep pit. For a while, people try to help her, then they talk a little about her, and then life goes on because everyone’s too busy to really do anything for her. But the girl gets lucky. One man is different, and he takes care of her. He throws a warm sweater down, as well as food and drinks. It is not him who saves her, though, but a boy who watches his ball disappear into the pit and wants it back. Everything is different for the girl now. She slowly fights her way through the stream of busy people. Not far behind her, a man is also fighting his way against the stream: the man whose red sweater she is wearing. Will he find her?

Törnqvist’s beautiful atmospheric illustrations support her bitter parable about our modern time and society in such a special way that you will find it hard to get them out of your mind again. For her illustrations in this book, she received the Golden Plaque Bib Bratislava in 2011.

Social Projects

Marit Törnqvist visited in 2006 Doctors without Borders in Burundi and wrote a book about it: *Bellen blazen in Burundi* (Blowing bubbles in Burundi).

For that book, I had painted ten illustrations on white paper and the cover had already been finished. Moreover, I had drawn forty small figures with colored pencils and pastel chalk. The combination of these two conflicted and I felt that the big illustrations were too bright for the message I wanted them to convey. Eventually, I retreated to my Swedish atelier and made seventeen new drawings using pastel chalk on purple-brown paper. I had never done something like that before, but it corresponded with what I wanted the illustrations to tell. Shape and composition are things that partly arise intuitively, but as soon as I know which way the process is going, I impose new restrictions on myself that often lead to new surprises. Forty small chapters and fifty-seven color

illustrations about the impressions of this impressive journey.

Supported by the Dutch IBBY-section, Törnqvist was very active in an exchange project between Dutch children and children from a small village in the jungle of Suriname, “just because I get an enormous amount of satisfaction out of working with children.”

In Sweden, she worked on several projects for refugee children, and at this moment she is working together with publishing house Querido and the Dutch IBBY-section on a book with stories of famous Dutch children’s book writers and illustrators for refugee children in asylum seekers centers. The book will be published in October 2016, and authors and illustrators will, after a workshop, work with the refugee children and the children will receive a copy of the book.

Conclusion

Marit Törnqvist’s illustrations seem, as Joukje Akveld wrote in a book about the Dutch illustrator, “an anachronism in an age in which everything has to be hip, shiny and streamlined.” Akveld continues to say that “although such a presumption would be rather untrue; her work would be an anachronism in every age, because Törnqvist creates images that relate to neither past nor present. This does not mean that her illustrations are distant or impersonal; the majority of Törnqvist’s work breathes a warm and comforting atmosphere.” You can feel this in all her books. The last words are from Törnqvist herself:

Sometimes when I’m drawing I feel as if there’s a direct line from my heart to my hand. There’s no intellect involved. The materials I work with are spread out across my drawing board and I choose them almost by intuition.’

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TOIN DUIJX (1956) is coordinator of education at Leiden University and co-founder of the master’s program in Children’s literature at Tilburg University (2010). He is also secretary of the Dutch IBBY-section, ‘Aussenlektor’ at the International Youth Library in Munich and editor of the magazine ‘Literatuur zonder leeftijd’ (Literature without age).

Mirjam Pressler: Many, Many Peepholes

Carolin Farbmacher

In describing our need for books, Mirjam Pressler has often been quoted as saying,

Without books, the world remains narrowed; the possibilities for what is imaginable and thus also do-able, are limited. We need many books, many, many different books. Many little peepholes in the wall that stands between us and the oftentimes inexplicable world. ... And naturally they should not be only the ones that everyone wants to look through. That would be an irresponsible reduction of our perspectives of the world. (Pressler in Gelberg, *Werkstattbuch* 71)

As an author and a translator, Pressler herself has created many such peepholes of highest literary quality that expand perspective and worldview. What's more, with her kind of peepholes she stands up for the rights of the weak and disadvantaged, for religious tolerance, and against fascism, both in the past and the present. Pressler is a champion for intercultural understanding through literature. With her nomination for the shortlist of the Hans Christian Andersen Award, we have someone who excellently fulfills the IBBY mission of promoting intercultural understanding through children's books.

A Roundabout Path to Literature

Pressler has described her path to literature as an accidental one. She was born in Darmstadt, Germany, in 1940, as the illegitimate child of a Jewish mother. The girl grew up in the care of non-Jewish foster parents who belonged to the lower social class, as well as in an orphanage, thus able to survive the Holocaust. Pressler grew up in intellectually narrow confines, often experiencing corporal punishment

and a sense of ostracism and insecurity. Although reading was considered a waste of time, it became a secret sanctuary in her childhood. Later, Pressler studied painting and languages in Frankfurt am Main and Munich; she also spent one year living in a kibbutz in Israel. Upon returning to her native country, she married and had three daughters, whom, after her divorce, she raised alone. One of the variety of jobs she took was running her own jeans shop. When the landlord cancelled her shop's rental contract, she decided, at the age of thirty-nine, to supplement her income from a part-time office job by writing her first young adult novel. Within the next two years, she had published five further novels. Pressler's career as a translator began in 1983, in an equally unusual manner. On a whim after a party, she decided to translate a book from Dutch, even though she did not know the language. Hence, she could only complete the project with a dictionary and a grammar book.

Since then, she has written over fifty books for children and young adults—including picture books, early readers—as well as books for adults, and she has also translated more than two hundred other works. Her anti-authoritarian novels have become part of the modern classics of German children's and young adult literature. Often the themes and plots of her books are connected in some way with her own biography, making the stories “taste of real-life experience,” as her publisher, Hans-Joachim Gelberg has put it (Budeus-Budde: *Wenn Geschichten nach Erlebtem schmecken* 5). In many other countries, it is also possible to look through her peepholes: Her debut novel, *Bitterschokolade* [Bitter Chocolate], for example, has been translated into eighteen other languages.

Mirjam Pressler is not only a tireless writer but

she also spends many days of the year on the road, giving author readings and meeting with her young readers. In her home city of Landshut, near Munich, she is the patron of the Landshut Youth Book Prize, which is awarded annually by the local young adult reading club.

Giving a Voice to the Weak

At the center of Mirjam Pressler's books is the topic of childhood and adolescence. In her works, she does not describe a protective, idyllic picture-book world of growing up. Her books deal with the difficult side of living—with damaged childhoods, with children and young people who suffer and long only for a little happiness. Her protagonists include, for example, the overweight Eva in *Bitterschokolade*; the handicapped Thomas, who like his younger brother must cope with an overly dominant mother (*Stolperschritte* [Stumbling Steps]); Ilse, who feels rejected both at home and at school (*Novemberkatzen* [November Cats]); and Halinka, who grows up in an orphanage (*Wenn das Glück kommt, muss man ihm einen Stuhl hinstellen* [When Fortune Arrives, You Need to Offer Him a Chair]). These stories do not come with a classical happy ending but suggest, rather, strategies for coping with difficult situations.

Mirjam Pressler takes children and adolescents seriously and shares their concerns. She succeeds in an unforgettable way in describing their cares, fears, and longings and in putting into words the most complex and secret of feelings. As an author, she is a gifted translator who turns speechlessness into words. Her utmost concern, as she herself says, is “to speak and to express fears, desires, and not to hide or cover up inhibitions” (Gelberg, *Werkstattbuch*

46). In her books, Mirjam Pressler takes the side of the weak and champions the cause of tolerance and acceptance of others.

A Rapprochement with the Jewish Fate

Since the early 1990s, Pressler has grappled increasingly with Jewish childhoods during the European Holocaust in the 1930s and 1940s. For many years, she dedicated herself very intensively to Anne Frank's story. The girl who lived in hiding with her family for over two years in Holland but was sent to her death in a concentration camp has come to symbolize Jewish childhood during the years of National Socialism. The diary, which she wrote in order to make her daily life more bearable, ranks today among the great works of world literature. Mirjam Pressler undertook a new translation into German and created a new standard edition which is now considered the authoritative version all around the world. In 1992, Pressler published a biography of Anne Frank with the title *Ich sehne mich so... Die Lebensgeschichte der Anne Frank* [Anne Frank: A Hidden Life]—her first book of non-fiction—for which she received the German Children's Literature Award the very next year. In addition to the biography, in 2009, she also published a collection of letters written within the Frank's family circle: *Grüße und Küsse an alle* [Greetings and Kisses to Everyone]. Thus, Mirjam Pressler has succeeded in showing Anne Frank not only as an icon and a victim but above all as a young girl with whom today's generation of readers can identify.

Pressler has also dealt with the fate of Jews in other works. Her book *Die Zeit der schlafenden Hunde* [Time of the Sleeping Dogs] is dedicated to the



topic of forced labor and how a family comes to terms with its past. *Ein Buch für Hanna* [A Book for Hanna] was written for a friend of hers and tells the story of a young girl who flees from the Nazis, survives a concentration camp, and emigrates to Israel. Pressler attempts to explain, as she states in the book's foreword, how someone "who experienced nearly always loss, rather than encouragement, and very nearly died herself, could become such an energetic young woman, so warm-hearted and capable of happiness." The novel *Malka Mai* [Malka Mai] is also based on a real story. The sketchy memories of the real Malka, whose mother had to leave her behind when fleeing the Nazis, were filled out with added details to make a readable story.

In her novels, the author offers young readers a broad picture of the Shoah and encourages remembrance of the Jewish victims and survivors. As always, the key question is how can one survive in difficult and even inhuman situations.

Motifs of World Literature for Promoting Religious Tolerance

In addition to real experiences, Mirjam Pressler makes use of literary references and sources of world literature in order to make readers more familiar with Jewish culture and, thus, contribute to international understanding. In *Shylocks Tochter* [Shylock's Daughter], she presents a re-telling of Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice* from a Jewish perspective. She tackles the negative image of the Jewish moneylender and offers insights into the life of Jews in Venice's ghetto, as well as depicting the co-existence of Christians and Jews in the sixteenth century. With *Golem, stiller Bruder* [Golem, Silent Brother], Pressler takes on a figure of Jewish mysticism. According to

legend, Rabbi Löw created an artificial man out of clay, a golem, in order to protect the residents of the Jewish Ghetto in Prague. The fifteen-year-old narrator, Jankel, develops a special relationship to him which comes to a very dramatic end. Set in Prague in the period around 1600, this historical novel is also an introduction to the rich mythology of the Jewish religion. *Nathan und seine Kinder* [Nathan and His Children] is Pressler's adaptation of Gotthold Ephraim Lessing's key text of the European Enlightenment, *Nathan der Weise* [Nathan the Wise]. It was important to her to make the difficult and complex drama more accessible to today's readers and ensure that the tale is not forgotten. Like the original, *Nathan und seine Kinder* makes a plea for tolerance and peaceful coexistence among different world religions—thus dealing with issues that have lost none of their brisance today. In honor of her seventy-fifth birthday last year, Pressler's publisher issued a special edition of this important work.

Dismantling Foreignness through Works from Foreign Literature

To expand the range of views into other cultures through literary peepholes, Mirjam Pressler has also contributed numerous translations. She translates works for adults along with books for children and young adults from five different languages: Dutch, Hebrew, Yiddish, English, and Afrikaans. Among the many authors she has translated are Gila Almagor, Els Beerten, David Grossman, Roberto Innocenti, Louis Krüger, Joke van Leeuwen, Karen Levine, Ted van Lieshout, Maretha Maartens, Bart Moeyart, Uri Orlev, Amos Oz, Anton Quintana, Tami Shem-Tov, Karlijn Stoffels, Toon Tellegen, and Ida Vos. Mirjam Pressler is a master translator who puts herself into the thoughts of the author she is translating in order to convey his or her words, even attempting "to feel what is there between the lines" (Pressler in Budeus-Budde, *Ein ganzes Sofa für das Glück* 69).

Translators are always mediators of another culture, and this is particularly evident in the case of Mirjam Pressler. Her translations have led to Dutch and Flemish literature gaining recognition in Germany and Israeli children's and youth literature even being made available at all. For several years, she was the editor of a book series of Israeli authors. Thanks to her, German readers have made the acquaintance of a wide range of Jewish protagonists



and, hence, gained a more nuanced image of Israeli society. She herself has said,

for me translating is not only one of the nicest but also one of the most important activities there is. Translated texts can achieve things that one's own literature cannot afford to do. Books from foreign literature reduce foreignness and through them we expand our own horizons—not only our literary horizons. (Pressler in Gelberg, *Werkstattbuch* 72)

An Award-Winning Author and Translator

Both for the works she herself has written and the books she has translated, Mirjam Pressler has garnered numerous awards. Her very first novel, *Bitterschokolade*, was awarded the Oldenburg Youth Literature Prize for a First Work in 1980. Many further prizes followed, the latest being the Leipzig Book Fair Prize and the Award for translated contemporary literatures in 2015 for her translation of Amos Oz's *Judas*. Repeatedly, she has been given recognition for her body of work, such as the German Book Award and the German Academy's Prize for Children's and Youth Literature. To date, she is the only winner of the German Children's Literature Award for both her complete work as translator (1994) and for her complete work as author (2010). She received the Carl Zuckmayer Medal for her "services to the German language" and the Bavarian Medal of Honor. Her dedication to literature as a means of intercultural understanding has also been given explicit recognition. She received the Janusz Korczak Medal, which is awarded to those who have made contributions to Christian-Jewish and German-Israel reconciliation, and also the Buber-Rosenzweig Medal for her contributions to Christian-Jewish understanding. Now, for the second time, Mirjam Pressler is on the shortlist for the Hans Christian Andersen Award.

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Ted van Lieshout as Transformer

Jan Van Coillie

“If there is one word that characterizes Ted’s work it is this: Transformation.” I fully agree with these words by Aidan Chambers. Transformation is such a fundamental issue in Ted van Lieshout’s work that he is constantly searching for new ways to transform his themes into words and images. He does this so intensely that he might transform the view of his readers and maybe even society.

Transforming the Self

Most of van Lieshout’s characters wrestle with change. At the same time, they are looking for something to hold on to and for recognition. The protagonist in his first book, *Raafs reizend theater* (1986), enters a travelling theatre company consisting of marginalized people who find respect amongst each other. The rhymed story *Weggedaantje Stippelmuis* (1992) is a variant of Andersen’s “Ugly duckling.” Stippelmuis comes from a chicken egg and is rejected by his father. Finally, he dies in a mouse trap and transforms into a ladybird.

The “I” in van Lieshout’s poems, too, is constantly searching for recognition and love. This searching is typical of growing up, a process that van Lieshout describes as turbulent and confrontational. Coming-of-age implies transformation and this in turn is accompanied by uncertainty and fear. Van Lieshout expresses these feelings in a most penetrating way in *Mijn botjes zijn bekleed met deftig vel* (1990). Inside the first person narrator, a storm rages, but on the outside, nothing can be seen because “skin overcasts the raging.” He is intensely aware of the fact that he is changing and tries to preserve himself. The poem ends with an invitation: “My little bones are covered with respectable skin / And the one who takes the

trouble to stroke it / Hears that it talks: thank you so much, thank you so much” (55).¹

According to the blurb, *Multiple Noise* (1992) contains poems that “deal with searching, with developing and changing.” Sexuality plays an important role, together with the search for a home and for someone who loves him. And again, this search is accompanied by fear: “It is the fear to lose, to / get / lost, misplaced, gone missing” (*Hou van mij* 63). In *Papieren museum* (2002), the ugly-duckling-motif appears again. The narrator wonders why he cannot get up one lovely day and “be transformed from what he was / in the one he’s meant to be / in something beautiful / at least? When everything is moving, / when everything becomes new, why does the mirror / listen so slowly when I look in it?” (158).

That van Lieshout succeeds in expressing his feelings and experiences so intensely, mainly results from the fact that he writes about himself. He characterises his collected poems *Hou van mij* (2009) as “a portrait of a youth, in which I shaped my own thoughts. I myself am the model for the child I describe” (Leysen).

When a child, van Lieshout lost his father as well as his older brother. Part of his work can be seen as an attempt to cope with this loss. Using paradoxes and precise words, he tries to communicate his clashing feelings: “I always always / and everywhere and every time / must do everything always on my own. I don’t / mind that you died, but you have / left me terribly on my own, haven’t you? Even though. I know you did not die on purpose” (169). In *Begin een torentje van niks* (1994), he dedicates his poetry to his father. For him, he built a tower of words “in twenty lines, for us a little house to live in” (77). The death of his

older brother is still more difficult for van Lieshout to come to terms with: “How can it be that I stay on my own just like that. / As if someone has chosen randomly, / has not taken care of who of us it was. / How much closer can death be?” (12). In 1996, van Lieshout transforms his brother’s death in the novel *Gebr.* In that novel Lucas, the protagonist, not only discovers a different brother but also himself, and his homosexuality.

Another radical childhood experience was the relation the eleven-year-old Ted had with an adult man. This theme already pops up implicitly in his early work, but it was not until 1999 that he wrote about it in detail in his collection of poems *Zeer kleine liefde*, and in 2012 in his novel for adults *Mijn meneer*. This relation, too, was essentially a process of transformation during which the young protagonist tries to break away from his mother in search of someone who “finds” him: “Oh, I dare / not say that I want to go out / because it is time that someone finds me. Nice. To / begin with. / That someone finds me nice / to begin with. / That someone begins me” (122).

Van Lieshout also writes openly about the complex relation with his mother. Most importantly, he can always come home to her: “However old you are, you will always be my child” (*Hou van mij* 9). His greatest fear then is to lose her too. At the same time, several poems reveal a love-hate-relation: “I think: one mother to be collected free of charge. / But then, alas, I love that witch” (16). On the one hand he is looking for security and appreciation, but on the other he wants to detach himself from her. In his stories for young children, he approaches the special relationship with his mother with humor. In *Herrie* (1995), for instance, a naughty girl and her mother both try to get it their own way using clever tricks.

Humor is essential in van Lieshout’s work. Mostly he uses humor to put dark feelings into perspective, as in the title of his debut: *Van verdriet kun je grappige hoedjes vouwen* (1986, Out of sadness you can fold funny little hats). He admires this relativizing irony in the work of Annie M. G. Schmidt, whom he calls a major example. In his poems for young children, her influence is very straightforward—although van Lieshout’s poems are more rebellious and break more taboos. It is striking how these light-hearted, rhyming verses become increasingly important in his work after 2000. Many of his recent poems

play primarily with words. In 2012, he started a series of rhyming picture books about Farmer Boris, characterized by a merry optimism and a consistent understanding of a child’s play.

Transforming the Form

The way in which van Lieshout shapes his content constantly transforms, too, in a never-ending search for new combinations of text and image. In his earlier collections of poems, the pictures are still at the service of the poems. At the beginning, he uses one specific technique in each collection, but later on he switches techniques for each poem. In *Multiple Noise* (1992), he strives for an equilibrium between text and illustrations, resulting in a “silent noise” between both (Lieshout, *Multiple Noise* blurb).

With the three parts of *Papieren museum*, he tries to realize his dream of an “integral” work of art. In it, he combines poems with pictures of existing paintings and sculptures. In his next collections, he experiments with the possibilities of the computer. Following Marcel Duchamp, he creates readymades by turning ordinary objects such as toilet rolls into fine art. He also makes “picture sonnets” by arranging little photographs as sonnets. In *Driedelig paard* (2011), he introduces yet another new form, which he calls *blokgedichten* (block poems): each text fills a full page and is aligned to the left. With these texts, which look perfect for the tablet, van Lieshout positions himself, according to Chambers, “at the growing point of what is the future of literature” (Chambers 119).

Transforming Views

Van Lieshout also wants his readers to look at the world and themselves in a different way: “I try to show the world as it really is, by looking at it just a little differently” (De Veen). His words look easy and transparent at first sight, but underneath there is often a deeper layer. Van Lieshout invites his readers to discover this layer by confronting them with unusual word combinations: “If everything is on its way. / If everything becomes new, why does / the mirror listen so slowly when I look in it?” (*Hou van mij* 158). Many of the questions he asks make the reader think about what seems evident: “How deep goes love, that’s the question./ How far beyond the borders?” (38)

Van Lieshout’s illustrations, too, force you to

watch differently. In *Een lichtblauw kleurpotlood en een hollend huis* (1997), for instance, the combination of poems and collages creates new meanings. Next to the poem “Blanke slavinnen” (white female slaves), he puts a collage of paper shreds with zebra and leopard motives in which he integrates part of Picasso’s *Les Femmes d’Alger*. His picture sonnets make you look differently at the classical sonnet, and the block poems blur the borders between poetry and prose. Moreover, he parodies the language of official letters and fairy tales.

In several of his books, van Lieshout explains in an afterword how he made his illustrations, aiming at “somehow making modern art transparent for children. So that they can work with it themselves” (Maas). This aim also lies at the root of his non-fiction books about art. Through his personal approach, he wants to bring art to life. According to him, works of art call for those who want to hear it: “See me, choose me” (*Stil leven* 12).

Transforming Society

In the artist van Lieshout also lurks an activist, wanting to change society. The collection *Wij zijn een wonder, misschien zijn wij bijzonder* (2012) was written with a clear aim that he specifies on his blog: “I was thinking our tolerance was much worse than some years ago, and in my own way I wanted to pay attention to this by writing a book in which being different was seen as something positive.” In one of the poems, Joris Jan Bas puts on a dress one morning and tells his father there is a girl inside him. In the poems he wrote for TV programs for small children, van Lieshout tried to bring to the fore delicate themes such as bullying or homosexuality.

Believing in the transformative power of literature, van Lieshout is a passionate promoter of reading. He is one of the driving forces behind the “Middays of the children’s book,” where people from the field of children’s literature meet and the Golden Frame is awarded. Most of his efforts go to the promotion of poetry for young readers. With the series *Poëziespektakel* (2008-2012) he stimulated old and new talent to write poems for children. In 2016, he started *Pretpark poëzie*, an online periodical full of poems by and for young and old. During his visits to schools, he introduces pupils to poetry in an accessible way. He bundles his experiences in *Rond vierkant vierkant rond* (2015); the book offers not

only an original introduction to poetry forms and techniques but also an enthusiastic invitation to use them. To show how this works, van Lieshout inserts photographs of picture sonnets, made by children and adults. His series about Farmer Boris also inspires the youngest, something made clear in his blog post showing a picture of a long line of stuffed animals and toys on their way to the beach, just like Boris.

Ted van Lieshout is a unique multi-talent. Like no other, he succeeds in expressing feelings so precisely and heavily loaded that young and old readers alike feel addressed. He never crouches down for his readers. In his own words,

I take children seriously in my work, as a group, but also as individuals. That is my main concern. But I do not envisage a target audience, I just watch the creative process I’m in and feel completely free to make the book I want to make. (qtd. in Vanden Bosch)

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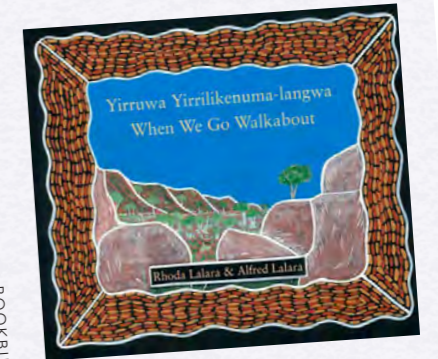
(Endnotes)

¹ Unless indicated otherwise, all quotations are taken from Hou van mij (2009) and are my translations.

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The very informative Endnotes of Yirruwa Yirrilikenuma-langwa, *When We Go Walkabout* make this book irresistible. They relate the story of the creators of the book—Rhoda Lalara and Alfred Lalara—while also telling the story of this Warnindilyakwa family. They describe how the art for the book was done and reveal the secrets that are in the illustrations. They provide us with an introduction to the Warnindilyakwa culture, an Aboriginal people on Groote Eylandt off the coast of Australia. And they explain “two-way learning.” The picture book itself is lovely. The animals (some familiar, some not) are vividly illustrated, and the text is simple and clear. While this is an excellent book to share with young children, it is also a fine example for older children who are learning English as a new language. The Endnotes include a barcode and web address to allow readers to hear Ms. Larlarla read the text. Sadly, these sites are no longer available, but YouTube provides an example (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=49wvOy-isOI>).

Ann Neely



Yirruwa Yirrilikenuma-langwa, When We Go Walkabout
Rhoda Lalara
Illus. Alfred Lalara
Crows Nest, NSW, Australia:
Allen & Unwin Publisher,
2014. 32 pp.
ISBN: 978-1-74331-456-2
(Picture book; ages 3+)

BOOKBIRD POSTCARDS

Lois Lowry: A Giver of Books for Children

Evelyn B. Freeman

For my own grandchildren—and for all those of their generation—I try, through writing, to convey my passionate awareness that we live intertwined on this planet and that our future depends upon our caring more, and doing more, for one another.)
(Lowry, “Biography”)

Award-winning author Lois Lowry conveys this theme of connectedness through her more than forty books for children. Her body of work has contributed immeasurably to the field of children’s literature, delighting readers with her unforgettable characters and humorous stories as well as fostering conversation and deep thinking on serious topics.

About Lois Lowry

Lowry was born on March 20, 1937 in Honolulu, Hawaii. The middle child, she had an older sister, Helen, and a young brother, Jon. She describes herself as “a solitary child who lived in the world of books and my own imagination” (Lowry, “Biography”). Because her father was an army dentist, she moved often during childhood and lived in Japan for a few years. Lowry attended Brown University but interrupted her education after sophomore year to marry a naval officer; they had four children: two boys and two girls. When the family moved to Maine, she attended the University of Southern Maine, where she finished her degree in English literature and pursued graduate work. Lowry wrote professionally for magazines as a freelance journalist before she began writing books for children. During this time, she and her husband divorced in 1977.

Lowry has experienced great loss in her life, and these experiences have influenced her writing. Her sister died of cancer at the age of twenty-eight, an incident that provided the basis for her first novel, *A Summer to Die*, published in 1977. This novel, which sensitively deals with the themes of death and serious illness, received the International Reading Association Children’s Literature Award (given for newly published authors). In 1995, her older son, Grey, an Air Force pilot, died in a plane crash at age thirty-six. Lowry writes about this devastating loss in her memoir, *Looking Back* (1998) and describes his death as “the saddest day of my life” (167). Then her partner of thirty years, Martin, died in 2011.

Today, Lowry is a grandmother and lives in Cambridge, Massachusetts, but continues to spend time at her 1769 farmhouse in Maine. In addition to her renown as a writer, Lowry is also an accomplished photographer and one of her photographs appears on the book jackets of both *The Giver* (1993) and *Messenger* (2004). Readers can learn more about Lowry on her website: www.loislowry.com.

Her Work

Lowry is a prolific and versatile writer whose books span genres, children’s interest and reading levels, and tone. Her two books, honored with the Newbery Medal, are quite different. *Number the Stars*

(1989) is historical fiction while *The Giver* (1993) is a dystopian novel. Lowry is at ease writing books that are provocative, provide insight into historical events, or cause laughter and joy. She points out that her “books have varied in content and style. Yet it seems that all of them deal, essentially, with the same general theme: the importance of human connections” (Lowry, “Biography”).

Lowry received her first Newbery Medal in 1990 for *Number the Stars*, the historical novel set in Denmark during World War II and based on the childhood experiences of Lowry’s friend Annelise Platt, to whom she dedicates the book. Told from the perspective of ten-year-old Annemarie, the book introduces readers to both the horrors of the Holocaust and the courage of those involved in the Danish resistance. Annemarie demonstrates strength and determination as she and her family save her best friend Ellen from the Nazis. According to Haley-James, “Lowry takes readers beyond themselves. In none of her books does she succeed in this to a greater extent than in *Number the Stars* (Houghton), a story in which she makes the abstract concepts of love, commitment, and courage visible and real” (423). The book also received the National Jewish Book Award and The Sydney Taylor Award.

Lowry has created unforgettable characters with whom readers can readily identify in several of her book series about the adventures and experiences of children. Humor and laughter resound in many of her books for younger readers, who first meet Anastasia Krupnik in 1979 when she is ten years old in the book by the same name. Anastasia lives in Boston with her father, a university professor; her mother, a painter; and soon to be brother, Sam, born in the first book. Anastasia is a list maker and each chapter in the first book concludes with her list of “Things I Love!” and “Things I Hate!” The ninth and final Anastasia book, *Anastasia Absolutely*, was published in 1995 when she is thirteen. Huck, Hepler, and Hickman note this about the Anastasia books: “Lowry has a gift for natural sounding dialogue and situational humor, anchored by keen observations of human nature and family relationships” (473). Similarly, Lowry’s editor,

Walter Lorraine, reflects that “the Anastasia stories are very funny, but woven into that humor is far more worldly insight than is usual for such popular fiction” (426). Anastasia’s brother, Sam, has his own series of three books.

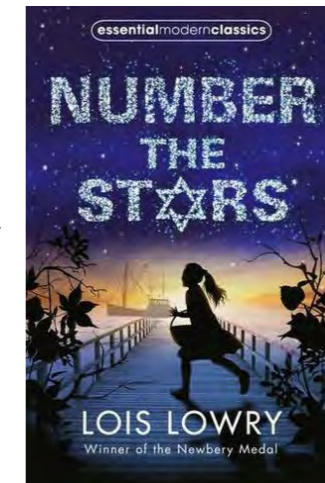
More recently, we meet another young girl in the early chapters of a book series about Gooney Bird Greene, a character reminiscent of Pippi Longstocking. In *Gooney Bird Greene* (2002), Gooney, a second grader, arrives at her new school wearing pajamas and cowboy boots. She tells outrageous tales that enthrall her classmates but insists that she shares “only absolutely true stories” (21). There are six books in the Gooney Bird series.

Lowry presents a satirical view of “old-fashioned” stories in *The Willoughbys* (2008) with references to thirteen well-known books, such as *Anne of Green Gables* (Montgomery, 1908) and *James and the Giant Peach* (Dahl, 1961). The four Willoughby children have repugnant, uncaring parents who leave them with a nanny so they can explore the world. An abandoned baby, a rich hermit, and other “old-fashioned” story elements add to the book’s hilarity.

In addition to novels, Lowry has written a picture book, *Crow Call* (2009), based on her own experience when her father returned home from World War II. Its message of a parent and child reconnecting after

a long separation is relevant today as many children live in military families whose parents have been deployed. In this tender story of a father recently returned from war and his daughter, the young girl accompanies her father to hunt crows that have been destroying the crops. The father shows her how to use the crow call that she blows, successfully causing the appearance of an abundance of crows. Sensing his daughter’s concern for the crows and their babies, the father never raises his gun but revels in his daughter’s awe of being able to summon the crows. Bagram Ibatoulline’s realistic illustrations, rendered in watercolor and acrylic gouache on paper, recreate the rural setting and beautifully represent the relationship between father and daughter.

In addition to the two Newbery Medals, Lowry’s other books have received numerous awards, and she



has been recognized with many honors for her body of work. Her books have been widely translated into twenty-eight different languages, including Vietnamese, Persian, Basque, and Afrikaans.

Significance of The Giver Quartet

Since its publication in 1993, *The Giver* has profoundly influenced the field of children's literature and has continued its popularity with new generations of readers. The book has sold more than twelve million copies. Eric Coble was commissioned by Oregon Children's Theatre to adapt the book for the stage and wrote a seventy-minute play. *The Giver* has also become an opera, composed by Susan Kander, which premiered in Kansas City in January 2012. The movie version—starring Jeff Bridges, Meryl Streep, and Brenton Thwaites as Jonas—was released in 2014.

This groundbreaking dystopian novel raised questions about the meaning of utopia, the importance of choice and freedom, and the struggle between good and evil. It was published fifteen years before the enormous popularity of this genre as a result of *The Hunger Games* (Collins, 2008) and *Divergent* (Roth, 2011) series. Some might say Lowry set the stage for the increased interest in the dystopian novel.

In her acceptance speech for the Newbery Medal, Lowry reflects on the many memories that inspired the book. Some of these included her family's move to Tokyo, where she did not know the language; her college dormitory, where one girl was different from the others; her father's loss of memory as he aged; a painter about whom she wrote for a magazine who had an amazing capacity to see color and later became blind. These memories and others came together as she created "a world that existed only in my imagination—the world of 'only us, only now.' I tried to make Jonas's world seem familiar, comfortable, and safe, and I tried to seduce the reader" ("Newbery" 419).

In the futuristic setting of *The Giver*, a young boy Jonas is chosen to receive training from The Giver so that he can be his community's keeper of memories. Although the community appears utopian, Jonas gradually realizes its very dark side. Jonas escapes

the community with the infant Gabriel, who is scheduled to be "released" (killed).

The ending to *The Giver* is deliberately ambiguous, which has caused consternation for many readers. People have questioned Lowry about the correct interpretation of the ending. She indicates, "There isn't one. There's a right one for each of us, and it depends on our own beliefs, our own hopes" ("Newbery" 420). However, a decade later in *Messenger* (2004), we do learn the fate of Jonas and Gabriel.

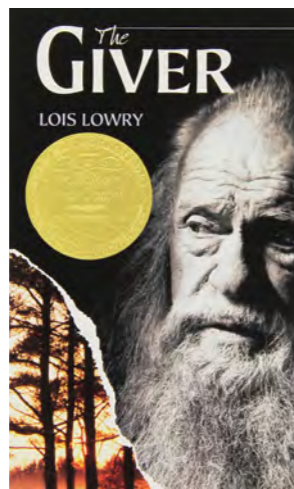
In her 2007 acceptance for the Margaret A. Edwards Award, Lowry reflects on the enduring popularity of this book: "readers live in a world that is wounded and needs saving. They want to make that mythic journey with a boy named Jonas. They want to share his passionate yearning and to emerge into a place where there is music" ("Margaret" 25).

Despite its critical acclaim and consistent popularity, *The Giver* is one of the most frequently challenged and banned books. Reasons cited include infanticide, suicide, euthanasia, and other inappropriate content for its intended audience.

The Giver is the first book in what has become the Giver Quartet with *Gathering Blue* (2000), *Messenger* (2004), and *Son* (2012) completing the series. All four books are dystopian novels and many characters are similar. The protagonist of *Gathering Blue* is Kira, a disabled girl who possesses a special gift. Readers are also introduced to Matty, who becomes the main character of *Messenger*. In *Son*, the plot comes full circle from *The Giver* as Jonas is now married to Kira and Gabriel is reunited with his birth mother, Claire. The August 21, 2016, *New York Times* Best Seller List for Children's Series ranks *The Giver Quartet* number 8 and indicates that it has spent 125 weeks on the Best Seller List.

Conclusion

For nearly four decades, Lois Lowry has shared her gift of storytelling with multiple generations of readers. She has taken them into the past, anchored them in the present, and created future worlds for them to explore. Readers have met memorable



characters and pondered difficult questions. They have laughed, cried, and discussed what they have read. Her books are as relevant today as they were when she began writing for children. These books testify to Lois Lowry's lasting contribution to children's literature.

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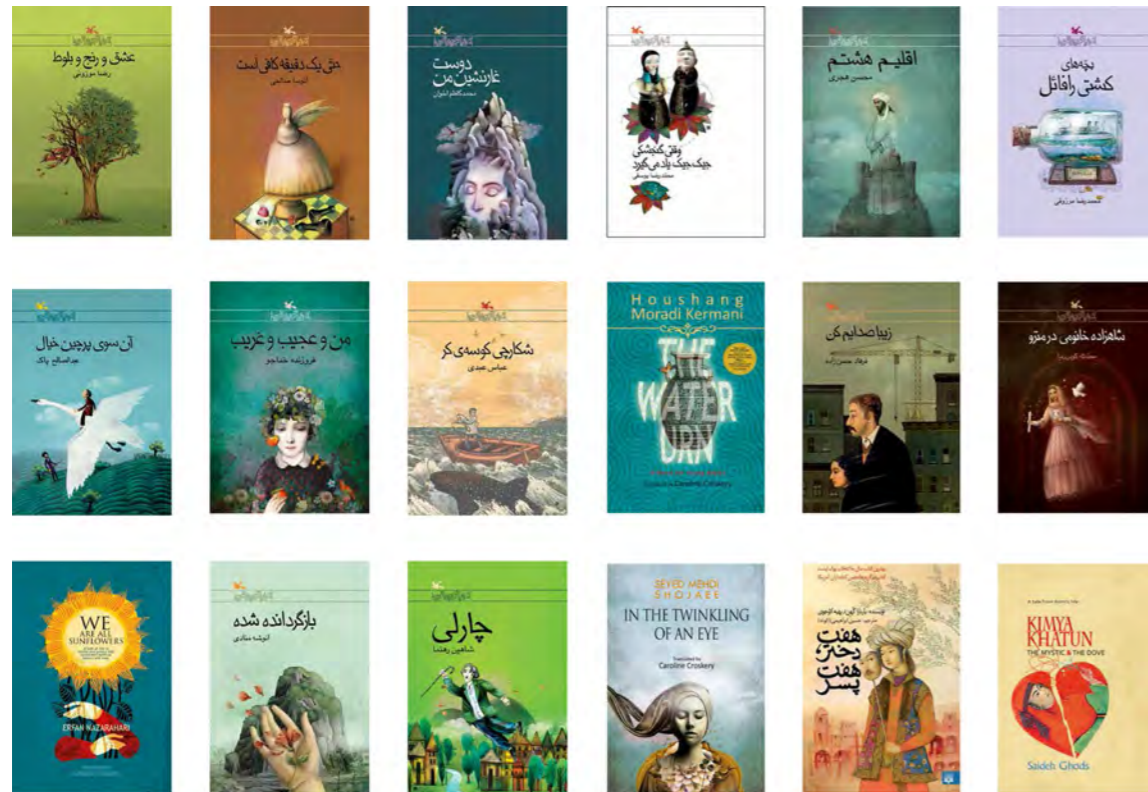
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Pejman Rahimizadeh: A Magnificent Storyteller

Sahar Tarhandeh



One of the most talented among the younger generation of Iranian artists, the illustrator, painter, and graphic designer Pejman Rahimizadeh was born in 1970. He graduated with a Master of Arts in Visual Communication from the Department of Art and Architecture of Azad University in Tehran in 1995. Before entering the field of children's illustration, Rahimizadeh got his start working for several years in advertising, magazine publishing, and the printing industry and has been a freelance graphic artist and illustrator ever since. He has illustrated over sixty children's and young adults' books and has also designed approximately five hundred book covers. Today he is one of Iran's leading illustrators; he is a versatile and complex artist, able to draw on his vast repertory of theoretical and practical experience in his art yet at the same time keep his finger on the pulse of the rhythms of today's increasingly sophisticated young readership.

For more than twenty years, Rahimizadeh has been developing his own personal style, gaining him widespread recognition in Iran as well as abroad. He is a very sincere artist, true to his roots, and adhering to the best Iranian traditions of children's book illustration. He puts his heart and soul into his work, making each illustration a veritable labour of love. His work appeals to the hearts of children and young adults, ushering them into a world full of mystery and beauty. Each of his books, while distinctly marked with Rahimizadeh's signature style, is unique with its own atmosphere and mood. In fact, one can say that his works are remarkable for their diversity and innovation. While being hugely popular with the audience for which they are intended, they have also been the subject of academic studies, Rahimizadeh himself being a university teacher. His interpretations of the varied works he has illustrated are never mere mimetic depictions of his subject matter, simply echoing whatever the author has written; Rahimizadeh manages to burrow his way underneath a text, showing what has been told but amplifying it with layer upon symbolic layer so that the resulting visual image offers an exhilarating counterpoint to the text on the page. In fact, in his books, text and illustration function in tandem to an extraordinary degree, a feature which is manifestly palpable in his latest work *Rostam and Esfandiyar*.



Rostam and Esfandiyar by Marjan Fouladvand

The King has promised to hand over the crown to his invincible son, Esfandiyar, as his successor. However, in no hurry to do so, the old king has been sending his son out on various missions testing his fortitude. So far, his son has always met all the challenges and won all the battles his father has charged him with. This time his father sends him to battle against an opponent for which he is no match ...

Through broad strokes; solid, classic forms; and bold, upright lines in natural and man-made structures as well as regular and repetitive arrangements of illustrative elements, the artist succeeds in conjuring up the heroic warrior culture required by this familiar chapter drawn from the national epic of Iran. The use of exaggeration in parts of the body imparts a physical masculinity to this story of ancient super-heroes. In addition, attention to hairstyle, costume, and accessories aid the contemporary reader in making better sense of the more obscure parts of the text. Arrangement of natural and artificial props alongside the characters is reminiscent of a theatre scene. It is

as if natural elements, trees, and architectural spaces (particularly interiors) have been sketched on a curtain and the characters are the dramatis personae on a stage. This type of approach to illustration is different in respect to the illustrator's other works and reflects a modern attitude towards well-known text.

Rahimizadeh chooses his texts with great care. The tales of some of Iran's great storytellers have been illustrated by him. Some, more than others, readily lend themselves to the full extent of his creative and technical abilities; Rahimizadeh seems to have a special talent for illustrating mystical and historical tales. One example is *Secret: Based on the Story of Rumi's Masnavi*. In this work, while remaining faithful to the text, Rahimizadeh allows himself to be transported to the imaginative limits of the storyline to realize the full potential of the text. Placement of the characters in space and their influence on the surrounding environment make the text more tangible to the reader. In this Sufi classic, each illustration is conceived of as a separate strand going off somewhere, perhaps on its own tangent, but like the narration itself, eventually returning to join the whole as one unified narration.



Secret: Based on the Story of Rumi's Masnavi
by Zohreh Parirukh

Once upon a time, there was a young king who heard there was a certain tree far away in India the fruits of which had the power to bestow eternal life. As it happened, the king fell ill just then and felt an untimely death was in store for him. He sent a messenger to India to fetch the fruits of the tree...

The illustrator takes advantage of varying watercolor opacity to bestow an ethereal quality to an atmosphere imbued with symbolic forms and colors. This serves to convey the spiritual and mystical ambiance called for by the text. The use of the spiral in the compositions merits special attention. The spiral, seen as a symbol of cyclical or upward motion, represents the wheel of life (birth, life, death), steps on the path of growth, and journey towards the attainment of knowledge about existence and eternity. The spiral is wholly suitable and related to the mystical message of the text. Additionally, the use of the circle as a center of the compositions and the turning of the elements around it can be seen as a symbol of both motion and unity.

Rahimizadeh himself is a great storyteller. Through his artistic medium, he uses his color shading, grey scale, and play of shadow and light towards supplying the required historical yet poetic shades and nuances to unleash different layers of stories and to tell his own. In most of his works, Rahimizadeh uses signs and symbols from different historical schools of visual culture of Iranian painting and illustration traditions—such as symbols from stone inscriptions, miniatures, ancient Iranian architecture, lithograph books, scientific notation, and clothing—to reinforce the content and greatly enrich his works. In *The King and the Deer*, the theme of the story revolves around the struggle between the heart and the mind, and as such, the illustrator, with the insertion of symbolic elements such as the heart and birds, succeeds not only in capturing the essence of the text but even moves beyond it. There exists a specific kind of rhythm and music in the form of Iranian decorative art which Rahimizadeh internalizes and then re-releases. This feature, as well as the creation of a smooth visuality in the illustrations, contributes to important expressive features. It should, however, be noted that Rahimizadeh takes the signs and symbols further from mere decorative elements and aptly integrates these to profound effect within the illustration.

In *Arash: The Tale of Archery of the Storytelling Man*, by using familiar Iranian visual symbols yet with a different approach, Rahimizadeh challenges the readers to view this familiar story in a new light. In what may be called an "interactive" technique, with the help of visual signs and elements, he takes his audience on a journey to seek out individual

components and the relationships linking them. Furthermore, readers are invited to respond to the reading experience and make their own personal judgments and arrive at their own conclusions based on the text, the pictures, and their own understanding. From many angles, *Arash* may be considered one of Rahimizadeh's most significant works.



Arash: The Tale of Archery of the Storytelling Man
by Marjan Foulad&and

The ancient tribes of Iran had been defending themselves in a losing battle against the neighboring tribes of Turan. Arash was neither a well-known archer nor a seasoned chief, but he was one of the remaining men of Iran. The enemy's delegate demanded that the Iranian elders choose an archer to shoot an arrow from the top of a mountain. Wherever the arrow landed would determine the border of Iran and Turan...

Rahimizadeh's visual approach carries a strong artistic signature. In the visual structure of his works, there is sophisticated ambiguity and mystery. In fact, qualities like composition, rich color palette, creation of mood, and attention to design of figures and objects set his work apart. His technique has shown rapid but systematic evolution over the years,

culminating in an easily recognizable style, all his own. This transformation from an empirical illustrator to a mature, pragmatic one can be seen in *Mah Pishani of Our Story*, in which his venture in designing and formatting comes to an apex. Rahimizadeh puts his store of past experience aside and with complete reliance on lines, forms, and colors lets his

imagination run free with faces, bodies, clothes, and accessories. In this book, we encounter an energetic, fresh, and powerful structure of colors. The colors are alive and fresh, and there are no grey shades. The unique sketches of this book make it stand out as an exceptional work of art among his other works.



Mah Pishani of Our Story by Majid Shafi

Mah Pishaani (moon foreheaded) was a girl born with a conspicuous blue mark on her forehead. Having such a blighted daughter was the source of great chagrin for her father. Her stepmother mistreated her and made her work hard every day. In the eyes of her father, she was cursed and the reason for his bad luck. No one liked Mah Pishaani...

Rahimizadeh takes his readers seriously and is responsive to them; he shows them respect and tries to take them to a new level of storytelling to reach a new aesthetic in each of his books. In *Friendship Can't Be Lost, Nor Enmity*, variations in composition and the use of near-far perspective create unpredictability in

the work and result in a certain push-and-pull effect between book and reader. By refraining from use of perspective and true-to-life proportions and by employing simplified designs for personalities and illustrative elements, this illustrator here creates a work reminiscent of Iranian traditional forms. The illustrator succeeds in approaching the text from different angles, enabling the reader to get into the illustration and then travel beyond it as far as the imagination allows.



Friendship Can't Be Lost, Nor Enmity
by Mehdi Shojai

One day a leopard was roaming around in search of prey. Without warning, he suddenly found himself falling down into a deep hole. When he landed, panic-stricken, at the bottom, he was surprised to find himself in the company of a goldsmith, a snake, and a monkey. Although the four were all afraid of each other, they decided to put their fear aside in order to work together to find a way out...

Pejman Rahimizadeh's works are close to the hearts of Iranian children and to those of the many children who read his books around the world. His illustrations grace the walls of well-known national and international galleries, and he has been the recipient of numerous awards at many levels. He has made a lasting contribution to the advancement of children's literature both within the borders of Iran and internationally. His success in making such a timeless and universal contribution may be attributed

to continued ambition to illustrate outstanding works for children and young adults, his creation of works of lasting value for different age groups, his deep understanding of signs and symbols rooted in Iranian visual culture, and his effective artistic influence on contemporary Iranian illustrators.

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Fantastic Tales and Poetic Square Stories: Important Features in the Danish Author Louis Jensen's Literature for Children

Anna Karlskov Skyggebjerg

Louis Jensen's oeuvre is one of the most original in contemporary Danish children's literature. He was born in the same country as H. C. Andersen (1805-1875), and the two authors actually have several things in common. The works of both of these are highly experimental and innovative, and during their lives, they often challenged non-written conventions about how to write for children. In Jensen's books, there is a great deal of cruelty and evil, but also love and friendship between different creatures and humans. Jensen's language is highly poetic, and it is rich with intertextual references and metafictional episodes.

This article is an attempt to describe some key features in Jensen's work from his debut as an author of children's literature in 1986 with *Krystalmanden* [The Crystal Man] until today. During this period, he has published more than thirty-five books for children and young adults, including picture books, poetry, short stories, and novels. In addition, he continues to write poetry, novels, and memoirs for adults. In this article, the main focus is on Jensen's special treatment of the fantastic tale as a genre,

and his 1001 "square stories." The latter is his own invention; the chosen format is just a very small prose story graphically formed as a square. The square stories are published in eleven books illustrated by the Danish artist Lilian Brøgger (b.1950). One hundred stories are included in each of the first ten volumes; and in the last volume, there is only one square-story, named "the last story in the world." This last story is illustrated with a hundred pictures which refer to characters, motifs, and themes from the magic universe constructed in all the square-stories.

In most of Louis Jensen's books, the main character has something to do with the supernatural, the magic, or the fantastic. Although often rejected in connection with children's literature, the description and categorization of the fantastic by the literary scholar Tzvetan Todorov (*Introduction à la littérature fantastique*) is relevant when it comes to understanding Jensen. Todorov has never written directly about the fantastic in children's literature, but the central European tradition he refers to has been an inspiration for Jensen. As for Todorov's theory, one can claim that the hesitation or doubt between a literal or metaphorical understanding

of magic, which for Todorov is the hallmark of the genre, is often toned down in children's literature. The protagonists in children's literature are often quick to accept the existence of the supernatural, and by using the narrator's voice in support of the main character, many works set the scene for a similar unproblematic acceptance of the supernatural by the reader. This is not always the case in Jensen's works, where the narrator and the inscribed reader position often represent hesitation. In all cases, the question of literal or symbolic reference has to be raised in a subsequent interpretation. The hesitation is directed to the understanding of the magical events because these events do not refer directly to a symbolic or a realistic world, and the fantastic text is therefore open to more than one interpretation. This point is especially relevant in relation to some of Jensen's novels and short stories where characters, features, and events have both symbolic and realistic references and meanings.

In Todorov's system of genres, purely fantastic texts are bordered on the one side by the uncanny and on the other by the marvelous. Uncanny tales are related to realism and especially psychological realism, where a supernatural event is finally interpreted with a psychological explanation. The marvelous (or the fairy story) is characterized by a magical world in which there is no problem relating to the supernatural, and the interpretation will quite naturally be allegorical. It appears that the fantastic tales in children's literature in general (or a large number of them), in Todorov's sense, border on the

marvelous. Todorov distinguishes between different border categories where the fantastic is closely related to the two other categories; these categories are named the fantastic-marvelous and the fantastic-uncanny.

In Louis Jensen's authorship, the category of the fantastic-uncanny is, for instance, represented in the young adult novel *2 kroner og 25 øre* (2010) [2 Crowns and 25 Cents]. The main character is a young man who wants to save people from starvation in Africa and therefore starts his own collection of money and emergency aid. Unfortunately, he becomes obsessed by his project, and he begins to steal to be able to help more people. Towards the end, he steals a car because he wants to travel to Africa. On his way, he seeks help from an angel, but this creature is not able to save him or his project. He ends up in a mental hospital with a deep depression. In this case, the representation of the magic can easily be seen a projection of the main characters dreams and a sign of his mental illness. The combination of recognizable problems (a kind of realism), exaggeration, and magic elements creates a novel which is very difficult to forget. The fantastic-uncanny is the label of literature where magical elements or events tend to be explained as something uncanny (for instance, with psychological reasons) but still there is room for some doubt or hesitation in the interpretation. This book asks: Who defines mental illness? Is it the main character or is it society, where both angels and aid projects are looked upon as crazy hallucinations?

It is also possible to place some of Louis Jensen's

tales at the other end of the spectrum, in the category of the fantastic-marvelous. According to Todorov, the realm of the fantastic-marvelous is closely related to fairy tales, where the magic is naturalized and the characters as well as the readers quickly accept magical events. In this tradition, magical events and creatures will often be interpreted as a sign of something else. The reader will understand that teddy bears and dolls represent human characteristics or perspectives. In Jensen's prose, picture books, and poetry, it is possible to meet magical elements and other magic features in a setting with references to both fairy tales and a contemporary realistic world. Jensen is also often inspired by fairy-tale characters, and he has written a lot of stories with animated toys or other anthropomorphized things. Two recent examples are the illustrated novel *Kong Knap* (2013) [King Button] and the picture book *Tre venner* (2013) [Three friends], where animated toys play an important role. *Kong Knap* is a burlesque story where a teddy bear loses one of his eyes and seeks to find it on a journey that takes him around the world. He meets other animated characters like a singing trio of hares and thirteen tiresome trolls. In *Tre venner*, a Swedish toy horse, a sugar cube, and a paper knife get involved in each other's lives and travel around the world together. The story is reminiscent of a fictional opera libretto about love, friendship, jealousy, revenge, and death. At the same time, it is a fairy tale in the tradition of E. T. A. Hofmann's and H. C. Andersen's tales about animated toys. There are clear references to Andersen's fairy tale "Kjærestefolkene" (1844) [The Sweathearts], which is a sad and ironic love story about the relationship between a spinning top and a ball.

Many of Jensen's books can also be categorized as purely fantastic, although Todorov's fantastic is a narrow category. As already mentioned, in fantastic works the narrator/characters and the readers hesitate when they have to explain magical elements, and it is not possible with a fixed understanding of the magic in a purely fantastic text. There are different ways in which readers respond to magical elements; they either accept the magic as something unnatural or interpret the magic as something natural—for instance, a dream, a hallucination, or a vision.

Jensen's project with the square-stories began in 1992 with the collection named *Hundrede historier* [A

Hundred Stories]. Readers and critics were skeptical to the whole idea, and it was discussed whether there was a target group for literature like this. Were the square-stories for children or adults, or were they simply too artificial to be understood by anyone? Gradually, Jensen's stories were accepted by critics and educators, and after a couple of collections were out, the genre seemed normalized. When book number eleven (the last book, with only story included) was published, it received positive reviews in all Danish papers.

Furthermore, children's literature researchers have found it interesting to discuss the square stories (Rasmussen, for instance), and reception studies have been done with readers of different ages (see Kampp). In short, these studies have shown that children, in general, have been more open-minded to these stories than adult readers. Young children, aged five to ten, have valued their reading experiences more positively than older children, and the youngest readers have enjoyed both the interpretation process and the composition of their own square-stories.

As an author, Louis Jensen is quite demanding for his readers and not the least for his many illustrators. All the 1001 square-stories have been illustrated by the same illustrator, Lilian Brøgger, who has given the texts new meanings without closing the openness to many interpretations that is one of their hallmarks. Her interpretation of the characters and the tone in the stories is quite at the same innovative level as the texts. Together, the author and the illustrator have created their own genre with 1001 examples that are not identical.

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Who's Afraid of the White Sheet? The Art of Alessandro Sanna

Isabella Del Monte and Marcella Terrusi

The magic of pencil gestures, the metaphysical quality of watercolors, the restless search for the hidden source and soul of images—these characteristics best describe Alessandro Sanna's artistic world as illustrator and author of picture books. Born in 1975 in Mantua, Alessandro Sanna started his visual explorations as a painter. In a conference he had with us in 2015 at the historical Biblioteca Terenziana in Mantua, Sanna told us how his artistic journey began with working on canvas. In the late 90s, he started visiting the Bologna Children's Book Fair carrying a large number of his unpublished sketches. While Italian publishers initially did not welcome Sanna's artwork and considered them as "out of time," in France, Éditions Grandir became the springboard for his career with *Le roi cycliste* (2001)—where the dialogue between languages and different materials and the combination of sign, color, collage, and white space that will lead him to find his métier in the following years is already evident.

The page is for Sanna the ultimate and chosen homeland, as the book format allows him to express his love for wordless narrative and color. His signature style is a dynamic balance between different elements that have as a common starting point in the grammar of gestures. Sanna is like "the king of the bicycle," putting in equilibrium the dynamic development of a visual thought, the dialogue with great artists of illustration and painting, and the invitation to the reader to explore the visibility of the world.

His stylistic approach and great storytelling

ability depend on his powerful and enchanting sense of style. Alessandro Sanna explored and animated the pages of picture books both as illustrator and as author, with titles dedicated to artists such as Mondrian and van Gogh. He has also been an outstanding visual interpret of several classics of literature, such as Miguel de Cervantes, Beppe Fenoglio, and Italo Calvino, as well as contemporary poets like Vivian Lamarque, Roberto Piumini, and Bruno Tognolini. His rich oeuvre includes books for toddlers and young adults, covers for classics, and original poems in illustrations. Since 2001, he has published sixty-nine titles, which have been published in twelve different countries all around the world (Italy, France, Korea, Spain, Brazil, Estonia, USA, China, Germany, Turkey, Japan, and Russia).

His works have been shown in many exhibitions and have also appeared in national and international magazines such as *Corriere della Sera*, *Il Sole24Ore*, *The New York Times Book Review*, and *The New Yorker*. He currently collaborates with *Vanity Fair France* for the column *Fumoir*. In 2007, he designed *Mostra di Pittura (Art Exhibition)* an "art book" for children, co-published by Corraini Editore and the Centre Pompidou. In the same year he started an important collaboration with Einaudi Editore, which led, in 2015, to the publication of *L'anima degli animali (The soul of animals)* a collection of writings by Aristotele, Plutarco and Porfirio with twelve watercolour illustrations, for the prestigious collection of Millenni Einaudi. In 2014, Alessandro Sanna's masterpiece *Fiume Lento (The River)* was included in the "White Ravens 2014" selection and won the Italian "Premio



Fiume lento [The River]. Milano, Italy: Rizzoli, 2013.



Pinocchio prima di Pinocchio [Pinocchio: The Origin Story]. Roma, Italy: Orecchio Acerbo, 2015.

Andersen” as best illustrator of the year.

Alessandro Sanna is a prolific and versatile author. His versatility comes from an attraction for movement and dynamism, since his drawing always tends to create and capture an impression of movement that naturally flows from the rapid and precise lines of his gesture. As Sanna himself stated, “My drawing, whether in black-and-white or colored, does always capture a movement. I catch it with my pen and the observer makes it move.” The great capability of Alessandro Sanna to explore different subjects and to use different competencies can be highlighted by focusing on some selected titles:

Una casa la mia casa

The idea of this small-sized picture book was inspired by the earthquake in L’Aquila which occurred in 2009. A few weeks after the disaster, local teachers and librarians invited Sanna to go there; he did not want to go without a “tool,” he said. In the next days, he started to work on a book explicitly conceived for L’Aquila children and for all those children who have lost their homes. The basic drawing of the house—four-lined, and shaped as any child would make it—is repeated in each page in exactly the same position. What keeps changing, page after page, is a red and sinuous crayon line by which the house shape transforms in many different images representing the feeling of being “at home”: a kid, a cat, a blazer... As Sanna himself stated in the interview he had with us, the blazer has a particular connection with the idea of home: it brings things inside and take things outside; it carries various smells on it and objects in its pockets. The blazer is the “emblem of movement,” the lively movement of what is inside and outside the house walls. In this sense, home is where the polarities of in and out, of visible and invisible, melt: the visible black shape of the house and the invisible identities that inhabit its walls, which are represented by the red line.

Piccola luce.

This delicate picture book is a visual apology of birth, which tells the feelings of a man who is becoming a father. The author found the inspiration from his own personal experience while he was waiting for his first child: “I was completely thrilled and confused, and every single thing spread a sort of energy in me, telling me that it was going to be a lively creature. I

did not use strong colors or breathtaking landscapes to convey these feelings. I just used a pen, because it is something that is able to dialogue with white. It seems more like writing a poem on a paper sheet,” he told us. *Piccola Luce* can actually be considered as a visual poem; the book is made with a fountain pen and just a drop of watercolor to represent the imagined and dreamed daughter appearing as a little light that illuminates objects and bodies, as a sign of a luminous genesis.

ABC di boccacce

This special spelling-book is a fold out book made of fifty-two pages (twice the number of letters in the alphabet). For each letter, Sanna portrayed a child, a boy or a girl, with different faces and dresses but with one thing in common: the children’s facial expressions—turning their mouths and faces to express many different feelings—imitate the alphabet letters and invite the reader to play as if he/she was in front of an imaginary mirror. The author told us that this book came out after a series of workshops in some schools where he used to “steal children’s faces and expressions with portrait sketches.” In the following years, he realized that he had drawers full of those portraits, and he decided to use them for an ABC book that could be used without limits of language.

Tracce

The book *Tracce* can be considered an emblematic example of Sanna’s poetry. The author himself has defined it as “an important book”—so important that he does not even have a copy because, he said, he always feels the need to present it as a gift. *Tracce* is a wordless black and white story. It is a book about the slow approach towards the deepest spaces of memory, slightly touching on the tragedy of Shoah. A man and his dog walk in the snow, and their traces become holes in the ground. It is a movement of images that, like roots, dig into the depths of universal memory.

Fiume lento

First published in the USA by Enchanted Lion, this outstanding picture book is one of Sanna’s masterpieces. *Fiume Lento* is a “silent book” that involves the reader in a mental journey along the banks of the river Po. Through the alternation of four

different decades and the metamorphosis of the four seasons, the author exposes the “inner seasonality of being human.” The book contains a great theme of literature as well as that of the river: Sanna’s Po can be seen as Mark Twain’s Mississippi. The Great River is a powerful metaphor of existence, of the unstoppable flow of life, and of the power of creation that the element of water represents. In this sense, the use of watercolor perfectly conveys this idea of fluidity and movement; the watercolor seems to have a metaphysical quality:

The color seems to be used as a metaphor of physical law, to give an account of the energy, of the material that creates the world. In these images, it looks like Sanna tried to tell us that everything belongs to everything, because everything is made by the same bright essence.

Such a metaphysical essence seems to belong also to the wide and foggy Po Valley, where the author lives, with fog and snow being two of his favorite elements, as he said at the Illustrator’s Caf  in Bologna in a conversation with Marcella Terrusi at the Bologna Children’s Book Fair 2015: “Two dangerous things, for sure, that can make you feel lost. But if you find them by the river, in the right conditions, they are just pure magic.” *Fiume Lento* is a tribute to the evocative power of images. Silvana Sola, professor of illustration at School for Communication Design ISIA Urbino and founder with Grazia Gotti of the celebrated Giannino Stoppioni Children’s Bookshop (Urbino) defines the book as “a tribute to silence, to the movement of water, to the stories that are alive in the images rather than in words.”

Pinocchio prima di Pinocchio

This large-format picture book is an imagined philosophical prequel to the story of *Pinocchio*, the famous classic Italian tale. Alessandro Sanna, by imagining the genesis of that piece of wood that became Pinocchio, conveys a larger vision of life and death as well as a wider cosmogony of existence; he explores the border between visible and invisible, concrete signs and abstract forms, the quality of color and the pureness of thought. From the tree of life, a small branch becomes alive after having been struck by lightning, and it starts to wander around the

world. From the deep contact with natural elements, this “branch-kid”—the soul of Pinocchio, the soul of life—looks for its own identity until it finds it in total communion with nature: “it lives and dies and lives again—in the bellies of beasts, in the bellowing depths of the ocean, in the moon-kissed valleys of the earth—until it crawls out of the primordial seas of existence as the promise of a new tree.” According to Sanna, this story is a structure that holds a very intense personal experience he had during his visits to a pediatric hospital to meditate on what precedes life and what could follow it.

Alessandro Sanna’s stylistic and narrative approach creates harmony from essential and evocative gestures which capture the eyes of the readers and invite them to observe on a deeper level, to follow the movement of his narrative flow through the metaphysical power of rapid signs and white spaces. It is not a coincidence that the most important color to him is white: “I use blue a lot, but my colors would be useless without white. White is space, time, sound, emotion, light. That is all. I would say that white is development, a thought looking for its shape. A magical moment.”

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This Israeli author-illustrator's debut picture book, *Abukacha's Shoes*, retells a story told Tessler by her aunt, who heard it from her aunt. Abukacha has very large feet and so has "the biggest shoes in the whole wide world." When his shoes develop holes, Abukacha has a new pair made. He attempts to discard his old shoes—putting them in the garbage, drowning them in the sea, and throwing them down a deep well. But someone always recognizes the shoes and returns them to him. Abukacha then attaches the old shoes to a hot air balloon and they fly away. When the shoes return to land in his garden, Abukacha "understood that this was where his shoes belonged and this was where they would stay." Children will delight in this humorous tale with its repetitive story pattern and unique collage illustrations, crafted with mixed media. Tessler has incorporated photographs of her family members who perished in the Holocaust to represent the book's characters. An author's note explains the story's origin and the use of the photographs.

Evelyn B. Freeman



BOOKBIRD POSTCARDS

Abukacha's Shoes
Tamar Tessler
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(Picture book; ages 4-8)

An Enchanted Journey: Discovering the Children's Literature Collection of the MUSLI

Bahar Gürsel

For the historians of the *Risorgimento* (Italian unification), the city of Turin possesses an indispensable place. Apart from being the keeper of the Holy Shroud and the owner of the world's second greatest museum of Egyptian history, Turin became the first capital city of Italy in 1861 when the Kingdom of Piedmont-Sardinia proclaimed the unification of the country. Only five years later the capital was moved to Florence, yet throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Turin remained to be one of the most important political and cultural landmarks of the country. This venerable Northern Italian city, at the foot of the majestic Alps still shelters a considerable number of concealed and conspicuous premises, and its dazzling baroque edifices host fascinating and precious surprises.

Undoubtedly, one of these surprises is the School and Children's Book Museum (Museo del-

la Scuola e del Libro per l'Infanzia, the MUSLI), which is situated in Palazzo Barolo. The building is originally a seventeenth-century palace and was the house of Marquis Carlo Tancredi Falletti di Barolo (1782-1838) and his wife Giulia Falletti di Barolo (1785-1864), who are regarded as two of the significant names of the *Risorgimento* which commenced to flourish by the end of the Napoleonic rule. Since the couple never had children, they directed their attention to the moral and religious education of the infants in Turin and Piedmont. For that purpose, inside the walls of Palazzo Barolo, they opened a nursery (*asilo infantile*) in 1830. After the death of her husband, the marchioness constituted the Opera Barolo (<http://www.operabarolo.it/>), which continued to concentrate on numerous cultural, social, and educational activities. In 2002, the Foundation Tancredi di Barolo was born as an outcome of the initiative taken by the same charity/public work organization. The

entire children's literature collection of the family of Professor Pompeo Vagliani—who is the Director of the MUSLI—was donated to the Foundation (www.fondazionetancredibarolo.com). It is currently supported by numerous public institutions and private bodies, and it possesses an archive which comprises around twelve thousand primary sources (alphabet books, picture books, textbooks, costume books, music books, etc.) in numerous European languages and covers a time span from the eighteenth to the second half of the twentieth century. Every weekday from 9:00 to 14:00, the library, which is situated on the second floor of Palazzo Barolo, is open to all researchers who contact the foundation beforehand to make appointment.

For a historian whose main area of interest is built on tracing the reflections of various political and cultural interactions, clashes, changes, and developments on late nineteenth- and early-twentieth century children's literature, the MUSLI library is a genuine trove to explore. For instance, during my concise research on Italian textbooks in September 2015, I had the opportunity to consult numerous primary sources from the early nineteenth century to the end of Fascism and the 1950s. In addition, on the table which I was working, there was a variety of *Pinocchio* books in different languages that were going to be displayed in an exhibition outside the museum. The MUSLI's collection of different translations and editions of *Alice in Wonderland* is also worth denoting. Numerous translations of Edmondo de Amicis' *Cuore* [*The Heart of a Boy*—which was published in 1886 in the form of a child's diary to depict a primary school in late nineteenth-century Turin—demonstrate the popularity of the book in Europe during the indicated period of time. However, finding the exact location of the intended works to consult could be an initial problem for a researcher since the library unfortunately does not have a complete catalog due to insufficient funding; however, Prof. Vagliani personally guides everyone to the right shelf in one of the rooms of the library.

Aside from the archival collection, certain sections of the museum are also remarkable within the scope of discovering significant works and aspects in the history of children's literature. One part of the permanent exhibition is dedicated to moveable/mechanical picture books of the second half of the nineteenth century. In addition to presenting the

works of the renowned European writers, the mechanical details of the books are also demonstrated through the medium of computers. In line with this idea, the children who visit the museum acquire the possibility of learning how the children in the last decade of the nineteenth century played with or read Lothar Meggendorfer's books. With the help of the keyboard, they discover the secrets behind the vivid mimics and gestures of the Bavarian illustrator's *Dancing Master*. Furthermore, the MUSLI's temporary exhibitions provide its visitors new, distinct, and authentic experiences. This summer, the museum hosted the Turkish artist and professor Nazan Erkmen's brilliant illustrations of Nasreddin Hodja, the most celebrated Turkish trickster and storyteller. Accompanying the artwork, a number of different translations of Ignác Kúnos' *Forty-four Turkish Fairy Tales* along with the European translation of *Thousand and One Nights* were selected from the museum's archive for display. The title of the exhibition was "Il Corpo della Fiaba. Racconti dall'Anatolia" [The Body of Fairy Tale. Tales from Anatolia], and it offered a colorful glimpse of Turkey and its fairy tales with a slight emphasis on the Middle East.

The MUSLI has a guidebook—which provides a meticulous textual and visual introduction to the museum and its archive—with the title of *Il Viaggio Incantato* [*The Enchanted Journey*] that is reminiscent of the reality which a researcher begins to experience as soon as he/she enters the place. Undertaking even a very brief study at the MUSLI's archive provides the scholar the idiosyncratic experience of exploring a very small segment of its collection which has been superbly accumulated and protected. Although the museum's website does not currently offer an online catalog, finding the exact sources that a children's literature and/or education researcher looks for is fairly uncomplicated and easy thanks to the goodwill and support of its staff and Prof. Vagliani's guidance and expertise.

To make a long story short, the MUSLI deserves much more international attention since it is a children's literature and school museum which possesses a very valuable and pivotal archive that does not only provide primary and secondary sources in Italian but also in various languages. The place is not only important for the academic researchers who aspire to conduct new and authentic archival studies, it is also significant for the artists and educators in whose

careers children's education and literature possess a crucial role. The museum already retains an international mission as an outcome of its transnational/international sources, resources and foci of interest, yet it still deserves to be a more active international center for children's literature research. This could possibly be achieved as a result of a more cognizant scholarly interest (until now only one Italian professor of history of education has published a comprehensive article about the MUSLI in the Italian journal *History of Education & Children's Literature*) and the possibility of securing an increase in international funding and further development of collaboration.

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NOTES

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Moscow Excursion: A Forgotten Book by Pamela L. Travers

Olga Mäeots

The very first book by the author of *Mary Poppins* was not a fairy-tale but a travelogue: *Moscow Excursion*—a story of a visit to the USSR in 1932. It was published in 1934 and seems to remain unnoticed by the public. At the time, none of the critics devoted it proper attention, either considering it “a cheap caricature,” or, condemning it outright: “the author fails to remain within the limits of probability and good taste. His facts are exaggerated and distorted, his characters act like maniacs or morons” (*The Saturday Review*). The book seems to have been regarded as a whimsical parody on the popular genre and well-known memoirs of those who travelled to Soviet Russia before her (such as G. B. Shaw, H. G. Wells, J. Reed, etc.).

To make a Russian translation one had to solve many secrets Travers has left in her book, which from the first pages looks like a detective story. “The characters in the book are all synthesized personages,” warns Travers in the preface to her story and replaces all the names with “fictitious initials.” But attentive reading has proved that the author created a deliberate mystification. It becomes obvious that Pamela Travers left a vividly written memoir that not only present us a true to life picture of Soviet Russia in the crucial moment of its history but also reveals many forgotten details of Soviet-British cultural relations in 1920-30s.

The book also proves Travers’ personal interest in Russian culture—first of all, the new experimental Soviet art. In addition to the program suggested to

English travelers by Soviet tourist agencies, which aimed to promote achievements of the communist regime, Pamela Travers managed at her own risk to establish contacts with a variety of people—from strangers in the streets to poets and artists. On her own initiative, she visited private homes (which was not approved by the Soviet authorities) as well as a theatre and a film studio. As a result, her picture of Soviet life lacked attractive gloss but contained depth and real colors.

The Russian translation is supported by a detailed commentary made by the translator, Olga Mäeots, who managed to reveal initials used by Travers to hide the real names of people Travers met—well-known journalists, stage directors, a playwright, a cameraman, etc. In the new deciphered version, *Moscow Excursion* appears to be a fascinating story written not by a prejudiced author but by a person looking for the evidences of the great social experiment as well as the achievements of the avant-garde art and, at the same time, horrified by the anti-humanism of the Soviet regime.

Moscow Excursion adds new features to the portrait of its author and could be considered an important key to the biography of Pamela Travers, which is still full of secrets.

Travers, Pamela. *Moskovskaya Ekskursija* [Moscow Excursion]. St.-Petersburg: Limbus-Press, 2016. 288 pages. ISBN:978-5-8370-0691-3
The Saturday Review, 1935, August 17 p. 20

Hello, Dear Enemy! Picture Books for Peace and Humanity. Remarks on the International Youth Library Exhibition

Christiane Raabe



The Idea Behind the Exhibition

War, terror, and violence, insurmountable walls and borders, will exist as long as national struggles for power, ideologies, and fanaticism of all kinds threaten our communal human spirit. The “culture of peace” that UNESCO has been endorsing for years remains a distant goal. Images of violence, destruction, hatred and suffering and of poverty and misery dominate the headlines. Hundreds of thousands of people are on the run. Burdened by past trauma, they become neighbors to those who grew up in comfort and security. World events of the last months have propelled this topic to prominence in current discussions, yet it is not new.

At the International Youth Library, the topic of war and peace has been of central concern for many years. We are especially interested in how picture books narrate the topic. Children are confronted in many ways by war, hostility, and escape—some bear its traumatic effects, others are not immediately affected but are inquisitive. Picture books dealing with this topic in literary and artistic ways cannot answer all questions nor can they still all fears, but they can provoke reflection and inspire dialogue that sensitizes readers to processes of exclusion and invites them jointly to reflect on the foundations for a peaceful future.

Arising out of these considerations, the International Youth Library sent a “peace and tolerance” collection of forty picture books to the IBBY Congress in New Delhi in 1998. International interest in the books was so strong that the collection was reworked several times in the following years, enhanced with informational plates and a catalogue with commentary. The book exhibition “Hello, Dear Enemy! Picture Books for Peace and Tolerance” emerged from this collection of books and traveled the world: from Japan to Russia and Europe, all the way to the United States and Latin America.

On the Current Version of “Hello, Dear Enemy!”

In the fall of 2014, against the backdrop of the rapidly intensifying global crisis of the last two years, the exhibition was thoroughly updated in terms of its content, and a staging design for the presentation of the books was also developed. The exhibition now carries the slightly altered title “Hello,

Dear Enemy! Picture Books for Peace and Humanity” and contains sixty picture books, of which the majority have been published within the last fifteen years. The exhibition is thematically divided into four groups which deal respectively with the concrete experiences of war and escape; the causes of war and violence; xenophobia and prejudice; and, finally, peace utopias. In contrast to earlier book selections, this exhibition focuses its content on the present; thus, picture books on the Holocaust and Hiroshima, which were given much room in earlier versions of the exhibition, are absent. This decision was made in part because compelling picture books have appeared in the last few years that directly consider the role of children in actual war zones and broach the experiences of persecution and escape. Also, the topics of the Holocaust and Hiroshima weigh so heavily that they ought to receive their own exhibitions.

Most of the picture books in the exhibition convey assurance and a clear message. Reality as presented in picture books lies at a distance from the real world, given the straightforwardness of their stories and their abstract, funny, comic-like, naïve, or colorful illustrations. This allows children to encounter existential needs, fears, and threats without suffering traumatic effects. That said, these stories avoid sentimentality and downplaying as much as they avoid shocking directness. Instead, characteristic stylistic techniques of picture book illustration such as humor, facial miming, gestures, exaggeration, and simplification are utilized; the literary template of the animal fable is also often drawn upon. This creates a balance between the seriousness of the topic and what is appropriate for children to handle.

In the category of “Lived experiences of war, destruction and escape,” there are picture books concerned with everyday life in crisis areas and with the reality of war, dictatorship, escape, homelessness, and uprootedness. In contrast to newspaper and television images, the traumatizing experiences as a rule are not described and depicted directly. Young readers are cushioned from the brutal reality by means of a pictorial language that departs from visual realism by using atmospheric, sometimes delicate and sketch-like, sometimes naïve pictures. The positive ending that many of these books close with also helps protect young readers. The award-winning picture book *Akim Runs* (2012) by



Claude K. Dubois; *La Caja de Cartón* [The Cardboard Box], the story of escape written by Arnal Txabi in 2010 and illustrated in an unusual way by Hassan Amekan; or the elaborately constructed fanfold-book *Migrar* (2011) by illustrator Javier Martínez Pedro and author José Manuel Mateo all belong in this group—as do Jeanette Winter’s engaged stories in *Nasreen’s Secret School: A True Story from Afghanistan* (2009); Karin Gruß’s war story *A Red Shoe* (2012), illustrated by Tobias Krejtschi; and Antonio Skármeta’s *La Composición* [The Essay] (2000).

In the second group, “The creation and escalation of war and violence,” the devastating consequences of escalating conflicts are thematized in original and surprising ways. Animals are often the main characters in these picture books, which show through the fable form and in compelling, sometimes even funny ways how disputes can take on lives of their own. It all begins with differences of opinion, a testing of powers and a race to arms, hungering for power, insistence on one’s own standpoint, and brooding over negative emotions such as envy, resentment, and hatred. The conflicts, at first verbally pursued, become physical. Friends, neighbors, and brothers become enemies, until they are fighting one another tooth and nail. Not always, but usually, the stories we have chosen end with reconciliation. This group contains classic picture books such as David McKee’s famous fable *Two Monsters* (1984), Dr. Seuss’ *The Butter Battle Book* (1984), and Nikolaj Popov’s *Why?* as well as more recent publications such as Birte Müller’s *Herr Müller und Herr Meier* (2001), Kathrin Schärer’s *So war das! Nein, so! Nein, so!* [It was this way! No, this way! No, this way!] (2007), and Binette Schroeder’s *Ritter Rüstig & Ritter Rostig* (2009).

The picture books in the group “Prejudice, exclusion, and views of the enemy” show in exemplary ways how prejudice and xenophobia express themselves in violence and how they can be overcome with impartiality and humanity. Most picture books describe the process of exclusion from the view of long-time residents or anonymous masses, who take up an unreflective, defensive attitude as soon as a foreigner or refugee enters their world. Usually, a single individual stands in front of a hostile crowd. Armin Greder shows this in a particularly oppressive way in *The Island* (2002), while the Norwegian picture book *Fremmed* [Foreign] (2010)

by author trio Bendik, Kaia, and Trond Brænne and illustrated by Per Dybvig shows this in a particularly funny way. The self-authorizing of an individual to become the leader of a group can start a process of exclusion that leads to the ostracization of those group members who do not fit into the picture of the new person in power. Award-winning French illustrator Eric Battut shows this in an impressive way in *Comme le loup blanc* [Like the white wolf] (2002). Picture books rarely consider the experience of being a foreigner as experienced by the foreigner him- or herself or through the eyes of the displaced—the person who is looked at suspiciously or the immigrant in a hostile environment. The most compelling and well-known example of this kind of story is Shaun Tan’s *The Arrival* (2009).

The final group includes picture books that stand in the tradition of post-WWII pacifist children’s literature. Besides the children’s book classics *The Story of Ferdinand* by Munro Leaf (1936), *The Animals’ Conference* by Erich Kästner (1949), and *The General* by Michael Foreman (1961), this group also includes books with more recent anti-war perspectives. Their simple yet profound stories show that the vilification of so-called enemies, along with the conviction that war is the only option for resolution, can often only be countered by pressure coming from the outside. The positive picture of humanity that these picture books convey to children is that human beings are good and peace-loving but sometimes, if necessary, must be forced to find peace and happiness through unconventional means. So, for instance, a blue baron in the eponymous book *Le baron bleu* (2014) by Gilles Baum and Thierry Dedieu throws books such as Tolstoy’s *War and Peace* out of a fighter plane into the trenches below. The soldiers become absorbed in their reading and forget to wage war. In the parable *Le petit soldat qui cherchait la guerre* [The little soldier in search of the war] (2000), a soldier encounters the devastation of war on his journey to locate his troop and puts aside his uniform.

The exhibition’s display has a powerful visual and emotional impact on visitors. Crude wooden fences—covered with paint, paper shreds, and scribbles—on which placards with key motifs from the picture books are glued, dominate the room. A central textual passage is printed on every placard, and on the lower edge of the placard, there is a print of

the cover of the book from which the placard’s motif is taken as well as the complete bibliographic references and a short plot synopsis.

The picture books featured on the placards are located in simple wooden boxes mounted on the fences, or lie on shelving boards inserted into the fences. Visitors can take the picture books from the shelves and boxes and look at them in a reading nook. Numerous book objects and mise-en-scène with well-known characters or scenes from central picture books complete the exhibition.

Educational Outreach

A program of educational offerings directed at children and teenagers was developed alongside the exhibition that was shown at the International Youth Library from November 2014 to October 2015, and it became available as a traveling exhibition starting in 2016. Illustrators from at home and abroad came to Munich to work with students. Adolescents with and without refugee backgrounds were invited to the Library, and interculturally trained pedagogues encouraged them to share their life stories, their mindsets, and their likes and dislikes in groups of two. Together they created pictorial question-and-answer cards on topics such as family, friends, and music—which circumvented linguistic barriers and enabled creative free space for conversation. For many German youths, this workshop was the first intensive encounter they

had with a peer with a refugee story.

A comic workshop designed mainly for children with immigration experience animated children to use pen and paper to invent super heroes who overcome their foreignness and isolation by gaining super powers. In little comic strips, children drew the story of their imagined super hero. Further workshops used role-playing as a way to work through the creation of disputes and conflicts and to search for peaceful ways to counter escalating violence.

There was great demand for the workshops, and the young participants showed a high level of concentration and commitment in the discussions. This tells us that they feel the topics of war and peace, escape and persecution, and prejudice and ostracization to be very timely; they are eager to speak or to write about them or to express their worries, fears, wishes, and dreams through art. It is thus our hope that the exhibition has to some small extent helped children and young adults access pictures of the world founded on respect for life, non-violence, and humanity and thereby strengthened peace in the world.

Starting in 2016, this exhibition can be booked in various forms, with or without staging elements, as a traveling exhibition. For questions and booking arrangements, please contact: Maria Luise Weber, Tel.: +49 (89) 89 12 11-21, Email: wanderausstellung@ijb.de



54.4/2016

By Liz Page



LIZ PAGE is Executive Director of the International Board on Books for Young People (IBBY)

Introducing the 2016–2018 IBBY Executive Committee



From left to right, back row: Ferelith Hordon, Carole Bloch, Zohreh Ghaeni, Cristina Vargas, Anastasia Arkhipova, and Ellis Vance; front row: Hasmig Chahinian, Wally De Doncker, Evelyn Freeman, Serpil Ural, and Mingzhou Zhang. Not in the picture: Patricia Aldana, Sunji Jamba, Björn Sundmark, and Liz Page.

The 2016–2018 IBBY Executive Committee was elected by the members at the 2016 General Assembly in Auckland, New Zealand on Sunday, 21 August 2016. From nominations submitted by the IBBY National Sections, the following people were elected to serve for the 2016 to 2018 term of office.

Wally De Doncker, from Belgium, was elected to serve for his second term as IBBY President. He trained as a teacher and served as a special teacher of children's literature. He began writing full-time in 2001, and since then, his books have reached readers in more than thirteen countries in Europe and beyond. For many years, Wally was an active board member of the Flemish Branch of IBBY-Belgium. In 2008 he was elected to serve as a member of the IBBY Executive Committee for the period 2008–2010. He was re-elected in 2010 and served as Vice-President from 2010 to 2012. He is a frequent contributor to publications that deal with the international dimension of children's literature and is a regular guest in libraries, schools, and other settings where children and adults come to enjoy his readings.

Patricia Aldana, from Canada, was elected President of the 2018 Hans Christian Andersen Award Jury. She was born and brought up in Guatemala and moved to Canada in 1971. In 1978 she founded Groundwood Books with a mandate to publish high-quality Canadian and international children's books for all ages; she remained the publisher until 2012. She was honoured with the Order of Canada in 2010 and has won prizes in Canada for her work in advocating children's and adults' freedom to read. She was elected to the IBBY Executive Committee in 1996 and served for four years. She was later re-elected in 2004 and served for one term as Vice-President before she was elected IBBY President in China in 2006, serving for two terms until 2010. In 2014 she was elected President of the 2016 Hans Christian Andersen Award Jury. Patricia is currently President of the IBBY Foundation.

Anastasia Arkhipova, from Russia, is a well-known illustrator who has been a member of the Moscow Union of Artists since 1986 and a member of Russian IBBY since 2005. She has served on several international juries, including the BIB Jury in

2007, 2009, and 2015; the Nami Island International Concours 2012 and 2015; and the Hans Christian Andersen Jury for the 2012 and 2014 Awards. In 2006 she was elected to the IBBY Executive Committee and served until 2010.

Carole Bloch, from South Africa, is currently the Executive Director of the Project for the Study of Alternative Education in South Africa (PRAESA), an independent research and development unit affiliated to the University of Cape Town. In 2015 she was a founding member and a trustee of the Nal'ibali Trust and in 2014 a member of the South African Ministry of Education reading advisory committee. Under her leadership, PRAESA received the 2014 IBBY-Asahi Reading Promotion Award, and in 2015 PRAESA won the Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award (ALMA).

Hasmig Chahinian, from France, was born and grew up in Lebanon. She is currently in charge of children's literature from the Arab World at the international division of the French National Centre for Children's Literature (*Centre national de la littérature pour la jeunesse—La Joie par les livres*) a service of the French National Library. She served as a member of the IBBY Executive Committee for two terms from 2010 to 2014, from 2012 as Vice President.

Evelyn B. Freeman, from the USA, retired as Dean and Director of The Ohio State University-Mansfield where she served from 2003 until December 2010. She is currently Professor Emerita in the Department of Teaching and Learning and teaches courses in children's literature and language arts. She has been an active member of USBBY for more than two decades, serving as its secretary for three years. She served as co-editor of *Bookbird* from 2001–2004 and was elected to the IBBY Executive Committee in 2014. She is IBBY Vice-President for the term 2016–18.

Zohreh Ghaeni, from Iran, is an expert in literature for children, lecturer, researcher, editor, historian, and co-author of the *History of Children's Literature in Iran* (10 volumes). She is a member of the Children's Book Council and was a member of the Andersen Award Jury in 2002 and 2004, and she was later elected as Jury President for the 2008 and

2010 Awards. She has also been a member of the CineKid International Jury in 2005 and a member of the International Jury for the Nami Concours in 2013, 2015, and 2017. She leads the reading promotion project “Read With Me,” one of the winners of the 2016 IBBY-Asahi Reading Promotion Award.

Ferelith Hordon, from the UK, worked as a professional children’s librarian in public libraries for over forty years, where she was active in community literacy working with parents, children, and schools. She has been a member of IBBY UK since the 1980s and a member of the IBBY UK Committee; she also served on the Organizing Committee for the IBBY World Congress in London 2012. She is currently the editor of IBBYLink, the IBBY UK journal, and the children’s online book review journal Books for Keeps. She was first elected to the IBBY Executive Committee in 2014.

Sunjidmaa Jamba, from Mongolia, is the Founding Member and Director of Mongolian IBBY and a member of the Board of the Council for Sustainable Development and Social Responsibility. As an External Affairs and Partnership Officer at the World Bank, she was responsible for external affairs of the Bank operation and activities in Mongolia. She also managed the Governance Project and Community Initiative programmes funded by the World Bank jointly with other international and Mongolian institutions. She was first elected to the IBBY Executive Committee in 2014. She is the President of the 2018 IBBY-Asahi Reading Promotion Award.

Serpil Ural, from Turkey, was re-elected after serving on the Executive Committee since 2014. She was a founding member of IBBY Turkey in 1994 and has been an active member since then. She served on the Turkish IBBY Executive Committee for the terms 2000–2002 and 2014–2015, and she is currently the President of IBBY Turkey. She has been writing and illustrating children’s books since 1978, and her works have been published in Turkey and abroad. She has won various awards and was Turkey’s author nominee for the 2014 Andersen Award.

Maria Cristina Vargas, from Mexico, has been working for IBBY Mexico for the past five years. She coordinates the annual publishing of the *Guía de libros recomendados para niños y jóvenes* (Catalogue of Recommended Books for Young People) by IBBY Mexico and is the Section’s link to the Iberoamerican publishing houses, authors, and illustrators. She was a co-organizer of the 34th IBBY Congress held in Mexico City in 2014. In 2015 she was a member of the jury of the *Premio Iberoamericano de Literatura Infantil y Juvenil SM* (Iberoamerican Award of Young People Literature SM).

Mingzhou Zhang, from China, first served on the IBBY Executive Committee from 2008 to 2012 and was the 2012 Chair of the IBBY-Asahi Reading Promotion Award. He was re-elected to the EC in 2014. He was the organizer of the 2006 IBBY World Congress held in Macau, China and is currently the General Manager of the CCPPG (Chinese Children’s Press and Publications Group) International division and Vice President of CBBY–IBBY China. He is IBBY Vice-President for the term 2016–2018.

Urs Fröhlicher, from Switzerland, was re-elected as IBBY auditor. Urs is a licensed bookkeeper and tax advisor who, together with his wife, set up the firm Fröhlicher Treuhand in 1994.

Ellis Vance, from California, USA, was reconfirmed as IBBY Treasurer. Ellis is an active member of USBBY and is currently its Executive Director. He served as IBBY Vice President between 2006 and 2008 and has been treasurer since 2008.

Björn Sundmark, from Malmö, Sweden, was reconfirmed as *Bookbird* Editor.

Liz Page and **Luzmaria Stauffenegger** were reconfirmed as IBBY Executive Director and Administrative Assistant respectively. **Susan Dewhirst** was introduced as Administrative Assistant at the IBBY Secretariat in Basel.

World Literature for Children and Young People at Brazilian Section’s Olympic Library

The ideal of promoting cooperation between peoples motivated the creation of IBBY and the Olympic Games—the first through children’s stories, the latter through sports. That same sentiment was present in June this year: in Rio de Janeiro and at the FNLIJ Olympic Library.

Classical characters from the UK’s literature for children and young people were remembered during London’s Olympic Games in 2012. The creation of an international library on the occasion of a UN conference in Rio was similar. Such accomplishments inspired us to dream about the creation of such a library during Rio’s Olympic Games, in which picture books by authors from participating countries could be gathered together.

Being unable to achieve such a goal on a national level, IBBY Brazil decided to make it in our own simple way by bringing books to children, like all national sections do. And so we did it, and our Olympic Library was a success! Symbolizing the Olympic Games and the union of continents, the five colored rings were the link between the Games and the two hundred titles from fifty-nine

nations that we collected. Delighted with the variety of forms and illustrations, children discovered many sorts of alphabets, books that read from left to right, and books depicting various cultures, boosting their curiosity and their wish to know more!

We used part of our international collection from the 1999 donation of books from the Bologna Children’s Book Fair, from guest countries of Salão FNLIJ do Livro para Crianças e Jovens, and from Brazilian jury members of HCA Awards. We also received books from many national sections: Armenia, Australia, Estonia, Slovenia, USA, Japan, Lithuania, Mexico, United Kingdom, and Uruguay. The Embassies of Slovakia and India also sent contributions.

As in the Olympics, we would like to pass on the baton and suggest IBBY to lead a proposal for a Children’s International Library as part of the Olympics next host city: Tokyo in 2020!

Elizabeth Serra
General Secretary – FNLIJ
(Translation: Renan Ji)



The Hans Christian Andersen Awards

—The Jury Perspective

We do a lot of good things, and it is nice to say we do. As more than one reader of this text will have interpreted by the use of the first person plural, I am speaking collectively of many men and women who, from different perspectives, work in the sector of children's and young people's books, of their efforts, talent, knowledge, and professionalism. This is why I did not think twice when I was asked to talk about my experience as a member of the Andersen Awards Jury. It is a personal and collective honour, beside it being an obligation to share as it concerns us all. Moreover, I also thought about making the most of the opportunity provided by the magazine LAZARILLO to start from the beginning, and to place ourselves in the situation, as all good teachers and storytellers do...

Everyone has almost certainly heard of the Andersen Awards, which are often described as the Nobel Prize for children's literature, but why this comparison, and where has this prestige arisen from? Well behold, this is the story...

Many years ago, more specifically in 1953, in the wake of the terrible events of the Second World War, IBBY (International Board on Books for Young People) was founded in Zurich, which although started out with just a few members, now comprises a network of over seventy countries. This involved the creation of a Non-Governmental Organisation with a fee from each member country, following in the footsteps of many other entities founded at the same time, but in this case to focus all efforts on the promotion of international understanding through good children's and young people's books, as a right of all boys and girls, a tool for peace, which would educate them as citizens. Furthermore, this NGO placed an emphasis not only on selfless campaigns for the promotion of reading and the generation of readers but on the creation of a publishing industry throughout the world and producing good professionals: writers, illustrators, editors, translators, teachers, booksellers, librarians, university researchers, etc. This was the only way of guaranteeing good books would appear and survive.

Not surprisingly, the founder of IBBY, Jella

Lepman, was a visionary and modern woman. A journalist by profession and politically involved, she fled Nazi Germany with her two children, worked for the Allies at the British Foreign Office, and worked in the reconstruction of Germany after the War as an advisor at American Headquarters on issues in relation to childhood. Everything she saw and experienced led her to strive for professional excellence in all that we work on in the world of children's literature to ensure children would benefit from our best efforts.

This same philosophy resulted in the Andersen Award being created in 1956 to acknowledge excellence among writers of children's literature. Ten years later, a similar award was created for the best illustrator. Since then, the Andersen Award has been presented every two years to a writer and an illustrator in acknowledgment of the values of their entire works. The Danish Crown, with Her Majesty Queen Margrethe II as the patron of honour, and a sponsor, Nami Island Inc., provide the funding and guarantees the splendour of the award-giving ceremony, which always takes place in the city hosting the IBBY Biennial World Congress.

The candidates for the Andersen Award are nominated exclusively by the IBBY National Sections. In other words, almost eighty current National Sections, with their organisational diversity, but with a common goal—to choose, prepare, and nominate their author (they may nominate an author, an illustrator, or both) in the form of a dossier and a sample of their written or illustrated works, which are submitted to the different members of the jury. The National Sections comprising IBBY are subject to strict criteria with regard to the nomination of someone for the Andersen Award and need to strive to prove they meet all the requirements. For example,

– Nominated authors and illustrators must have made a substantial contribution to young people's literature. Their work will be assessed with regard to the highest levels of quality, regardless of being little-known, as occurs in many cases of mi-

nority languages, political oppression, etc.
– Nominated authors and illustrators must have produced an expansive portfolio of children's literature, as their life's work will be assessed.

– The National Sections are responsible for preparing a dossier containing interviews, opinions, etc., which illustrates the impact of the candidate in his or her country of origin and worldwide.
– All additional material to the candidates' actual works must be prepared in English.
– A translation into English of representative samples of the work is required.

The selection of the Jury is also extremely thorough. Each National Section may submit a candidate endorsed by a curriculum featuring his or her knowledge, experience, values, and reading languages, but only ten are chosen. The ten members of the Jury are chosen by the IBBY Executive Committee upon recommendation of the jury president, who has been elected by the National Sections at the biennial General Assembly. No member of the jury, including the President, may serve more than two terms.

Finally, we come to my experience: the excitement of being elected a candidate for Spain, the pride of aspiring to and representing the Spanish Organisation of Children's Books, the preparation of my curriculum, the contacts, the wait... and suddenly, surprisingly, when I thought I had been beaten to the post by other candidates who were undoubtedly better prepared than I was, I heard the following during a press conference at the Bologna Children's Book Fair:

The **2016 Jury**, selected by the IBBY Executive Committee from nominations made by its national sections, comprises the following ten distinguished members from across the globe.

Jury President, **Patricia Aldana** (Toronto, Canada), will lead the Jury to select the winners of the 2016 Hans Christian Andersen Awards but is not a voting member.

Kirsten Bystrup, from Frederiksværk, Denmark, is a librarian. Languages:

Danish, Swedish, Norwegian, German, English, and French.

Reina Duarte, from Barcelona, Spain, is a publishing director at the EDEBE Group, focusing on fiction and non-fiction for children and young adults. Languages: Spanish, Catalan, Galician, Italian, Portuguese, and English.

Andrej Ilc, from Ljubljana, Slovenia, is an editor and the head of the fiction department at the Mladinskaknjiga Publishing House. Languages: Slovenian, English, and German.

Yasmine Motawy, from Cairo, Egypt, is a senior instructor at the Department of Rhetoric and Composition of the American University of Cairo. Languages: Arabic, English, and French.

María Beatriz Medina, from Caracas, Venezuela, is the Executive Director of Banco del Libro. Languages: Spanish, Italian, French, German, and English.

Dolores Prades, from São Paulo, Brazil, and nominated by IBBY Cuba, is a publisher and consultant for children's literature. Languages: Portuguese, Spanish, English, and French.

Lola Rubio, from Buenos Aires, Argentina, is an editor and librarian. Languages: Spanish, Portuguese, French, and English.

Susan M. Stan, from Minneapolis, USA, is Professor Emerita at the Central Michigan University. Languages: English, French, German, and Spanish.

Wu Qing, from Beijing, China, is a former professor at the Foreign Studies University in Beijing. Languages: Chinese and English.

Shohreh Yousefi, from Tehran, Iran, is a pre-school education manager, children's literature expert and editor at the Daftar Feni Publishing House for children and young people. Languages: Persian and English.

How was I to know as they do not let you know in advance! The official notification arrived soon after, of course, and the avalanche began: the agen-



Hans Christian Andersen Award Jury 2016, from left to right, back row: Lola Rubio, Wu Qing, Reina Duarte, María Beatriz Medina, Andrej Ilc, Patricia Aldana, Kirsten Bystrup, and Shohreh Yousefi; front row: Dolores Prades, Yasmine Motawwy, Elda Nogueira, and Susan Stan.

da for almost two years of my life for which I was going to be involved with the Andersen Awards, communicating with the other members of the Jury, the list of the fifty-seven candidates, the practical guidelines for dealing with the hundreds of books and materials from all over the world (a minimum of five books per candidate, which works out to an average of ten to twenty books per author and illustrator), the thousands of downloads via all possible means (WeTransfer and Dropbox in most cases), the passwords to access the private forum to discuss and exchange opinions, doubts and resolving problems involving fellow jurors, and above all, the guidelines we needed to adopt in order to judge the best authors and illustrators in the world: the best from Germany, Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, China, Colombia, Croatia, Spain, Estonia, the United States, Greece, Iran, Italy, Korea, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, Russia, Turkey, Sweden, Switzerland...

It so happens the magic of the art is universal and we can assess all these creations using this guide:

- An assessment is conducted of the author's complete works.
- An assessment is conducted of the

aesthetic quality of both the literature and the illustrations.

- An assessment is conducted of the originality and innovation of the candidate's complete works.
- An assessment is conducted of the candidate's ability to view the world from the point of view of children/young people.
- An assessment is conducted of the candidate's ability to spark the curiosity and imagination of children/young people
- Cultural differences are also taken into account and analyzed.
- The members of the Jury may not be biased in their own interests, be they nationalistic or of any other nature.

The first few weeks of my work as a member of the Andersen Awards Jury consisted of the implementation of a rigorous system to process all the materials coming in, and the following months, I focused on reading, reading, reading, assessing the illustrated books, and taking notes—mountains of notes, as you cannot trust your memory when you are dealing with such a large volume of material over such a long period of time. This largely solitary work

included sharing impressions with my colleagues on the magnificent closed communication platform provided by the organisation.

The weekends came and went, my summer in Scotland consisted of lots of reading in the midst of lakes and mountains, Christmas came, and suddenly, it was all over. It was time to present our scores in order to choose the ten finalists. Each member of the Jury was required to rate the candidates individually and submit the results to the organisation's headquarters in Switzerland. As I discovered later, everyone was equally nervous: Will we agree? Will the discussion be tough?

The next engagement would be in person: the president and the ten members of the Jury travelled from all over the world to the IBBY headquarters in Basel. We were to spend five days together, from Thursday to Monday, attending meetings from nine in the morning to six in the evening. We would only leave after having first agreed upon five finalists per category and then, on the last day, two winners.

I will not go into the details of the stories about the journeys, our shared breakfasts, the marathon sessions putting forward arguments, debates, and discussions, outings in the city in the evenings, get-togethers with the other members of IBBY, the dinner jokes... I will simply say that I have rarely undergone a more enriching experience from both a personal and professional point of view; rarely has a work team hit it off so well, creating bonds of friendship I now regard as unbreakable. My misgivings with regard to potential influences undermining the criterion of quality disappeared—the responsibility of our commitment brought us all together. The ten finalists, voted unanimously, were

AUTHORS:

Germany: Mirjam Pressler
China: Cao Wenxuan
Denmark: Louis Jensen
Netherlands: Ted van Lieshout
USA: Lois Lowry

ILLUSTRATORS:

Germany: Rotraut Susanne Berner
Netherlands: Marit Törnqvist
Iran: Pejman Rahimizadeh
Italy: Alessandro Sanna
Korea: Suzy Lee

This list was published in the months of February and March. The final vote cast, which was also unanimous, was for who would be the proud winners of the 2016 Andersen Award, but we needed to keep that a secret. A major press conference was held to make the announcement at the Bologna International Children's Book Fair. This gave me the opportunity to meet up with many of my fellow jurors once again, and we applauded wildly when our president, Patricia Aldana, in the company of the president of IBBY, Wally De Doncker, announced, "The Hans Christian Andersen Award Jury of the International Board on Books for Young People (IBBY) has named Cao Wenxuan, from China, winner of the 2016 Hans Christian Andersen Author Award and Rotraut Susanne Berner, from Germany, winner of the 2016 Hans Christian Andersen Illustrator Award."

However, the end of this tale is missing, a wonderful end like in fairy tales. There will also be a ball and a grand event, when the Andersen Award prize-giving ceremony takes place on Saturday, 20 August 2016, in the city of Auckland, New Zealand, during the IBBY World Congress. This is where the two winners will collect their reward and we will pay them homage. However, we will not forget all the authors and illustrators assessed, whose quality shines like treasure, the treasure of good children's and young people's books—which have no borders, which become lasting favourites for generation after generation, which make you cry and laugh and feel that everything was all worthwhile... Moreover, it should be pointed out that absolutely everyone involved in this work acts selflessly, at our own expense, with no grants or salary, as a humble contribution to a cause we believe in: the creation of a better world with children's and young people's literature.

By Reina Duarte

This article first appeared in the magazine LAZARILLO

Nonfiction for Children and Teenagers

THE QUEST FOR THE REAL: NONFICTION FOR CHILDREN AND TEENAGERS

Bookbird: A Journal of International Children's Literature invites contributions for a special issue on "nonfiction for children and young adults." While many children and teenagers prefer to read nonfiction for pleasure (from books of records to military history to sex education) the focus of research and writing about young readers skews extremely heavily towards fiction. Indeed *Bookbird* itself has not focused on nonfiction since 2003 and no winner or shortlisted candidate for the Hans Christian Andersen writing prize has ever been an author of nonfiction. The previous special issue came at a time where color images and computer design were transforming younger nonfiction, and (so it seemed) digital technologies threatened to replace print altogether. Today, though, nonfiction is experiencing a renaissance with, for example, books that take a global approach to history, explore ecological issues, present new scientific discoveries, or inspire readers to take action. A special issue on nonfiction presents an opportunity to explore in many directions, from the publishing practices in different countries to the beliefs and assumptions of adult professionals. If we exclude textbooks and school work, where does nonfiction fit in the reading lives of young people?

Topics for papers might include, but are not limited to:

- A description of the ways in which subjects such as history, science, technology, math, or engineering are crafted for young readers in a country or region – outside of textbooks.
- An analysis of what defines a book as "nonfiction" in a given area. What rules of citation and evidence are expected? Where does memoir fit? What about books that use the forms of nonfiction on a fictional topic (Dragonology, for example).

- Is a preference for fiction or nonfiction linked to gender? Why? Is this a social construct? A matter of concern? Is this true across lands, languages, and regions?
- Are nonfiction books well served in awards and honors, why or why not?
- Fiction is often praised for "story" or "imagination": do these terms have a place in nonfiction? In contrast, nonfiction is often thought of as recounting known facts, but it can also be seen as modeling the never-ending quest for knowledge. How do story, fact, and exploration figure in the nonfiction of an author or authors?
- In many countries nonfiction is presented in series. Why? Are there examples of authors writing individual books out of a passion for a particular subject?
- Most nonfiction for younger readers makes extensive use of images; how is line, color, archival or current photography, utilized in nonfiction? What innovations in design creatively link images and text?
- In schools the focus of history is often the story of that nation, so young people grow up in historical silos. How can nonfiction outside of school serve to connect separate histories?

Full papers should be submitted to the editor, Björn Sundmark (bjorn.sundmark@mah.se), and guest editor, Marc Aronson (bookmarch@aol.com) by 30 January 2017. Please see *Bookbird's* website at www.ibby.org/bookbird for full submission details. Papers which are not accepted for this issue will be considered for later issues of *Bookbird*.

Writing by Children and Youth

"ANOTHER CHILDREN'S LITERATURE": WRITING BY CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Bookbird: A Journal of International Children's Literature invites contributions for a special issue on "another children's literature"—one created by children and youth themselves. Usually, "children's literature" has been assumed to be literature written by adults for children. In this issue, however, we intend to focus on literature created by children and youth. While there has been some critical attention to the juvenilia of canonical authors and considerable educational and psychological interest in what children's writing reveals about children, comparatively little attention has been paid to the literary dimensions of—and theoretical issues raised by—children's and youths' writing.

In the *Routledge Companion to Children's Literature* (2010), Evelyn Arizpe and Morag Styles with Abigail Rokison consider writing by children a "neglected dimension of children's literature and its scholarship," wondering "whether children's writing can be considered 'literature'" and even whether children's writing is "a genre in itself": they conclude that "a serious study of children's writing as literature is still to be written." This special issue on "another children's literature," recognizing with Juliet McMaster that "literature by children is a different matter from literature for children," hopes to undo some of that neglect of literature written by children and youth. As David Rudd writes, "It might still be argued that unlike women and other minority groups, children still have no voice, their literature being created for them, rather than creating their own. But this is nonsense. Children produce literature in vast quantities."

Topics for papers might include, but are not limited to:

- exceptional cases of important texts published by writers before they were adults, including both contemporary and earlier texts written by children and youth

- publication (and obstacles to publication) of children's and youths' creative writing, including submissions to writing contests and literary anthologies in magazines and books
- adult mediation, including censorship, of child- and youth-authored texts
- in addition to fiction and non-fiction, drama, poetry, and song lyrics written by children and youth
- collaborative writings of children and youth with adults
- children's and youths' online "writing," including blogging and fan fiction
- potentially distinctive characteristics of writing by children and youth, including narratology, representation, plot, mode, language play, characterization, focalization, closure, or intertextuality

Full papers should be submitted to the editor, Björn Sundmark (bjorn.sundmark@mah.se), and guest editor, Peter E. Cumming (cummingp@yorku.ca) by 1 November 2016. Please see *Bookbird's* website at www.ibby.org/bookbird for full submission details. Papers which are not accepted for this issue will be considered for later issues of *Bookbird*.

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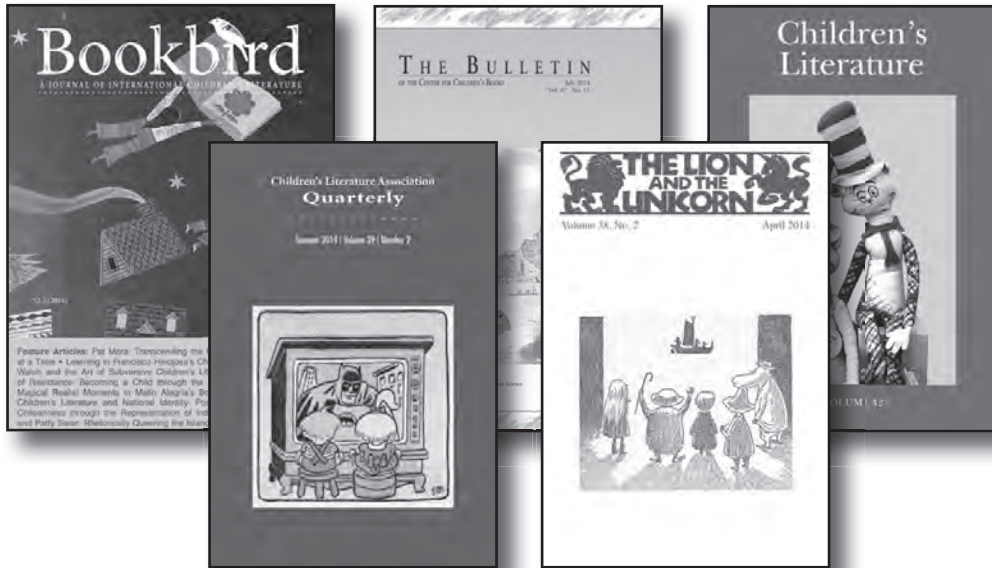
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