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Bookbird

A JOURNAL OF INTERNATIONAL CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

the globalised marketplace and the sense of the local in picturebooks *book 'postcards' from around the world*
an indian reading of the harry potter novels *african novels in canadian schools* *conference gobbledygook*
multilingual publishing in spain *the americas awards for latino books* *international books for professionals*

INTERNATIONAL BOARD ON BOOKS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE IBBY

Bookbird
A JOURNAL OF INTERNATIONAL CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

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

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Bookbird
A JOURNAL OF INTERNATIONAL CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

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

FIT THE FIRST: JAM AND JUDICIOUS ADVICE

FIT THE SECOND: THOUGHTFUL AND GRAVE

FIT THE THIRD: SUCH QUANTITIES OF SAND

FIT THE FOURTH: WRAPPED UP IN A FIVE-POUND NOTE

FIT THE FIFTH: OF SHOES AND SHIPS AND SEALING WAX

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

Editorial

Bleachers and Ginger Beer

WORKING on *Bookbird* is an enjoyable and stimulating experience for us, as articles we receive and publish open up new avenues of discussion and thought about children's books. But it is also a challenging and even a frustrating experience at times: we have little difficulty in sourcing articles from Europe and the Anglophone countries, but despite our best efforts and those of our allies, articles from Africa, South America and Asia are slower to arrive on our desks. Even when we do get articles from non-European and non-Anglophone countries, they often tend, frustratingly, not to be about the books and oral stories of those countries, but about the established canon of children's literature in Britain and America.

It concerns us that English – the language of *Bookbird* – may be seen as limiting for non-English speakers; this could be one reason why the range of articles submitted is not as wide as we might wish. We do our best to assure possible contributors that we can work with them on their English, if that is the problem, or possibly arrange for translation.

Perhaps the hesitation on the part of commentators from Asia, Africa and South America is not primarily due to the language problem but has to do with the global hegemony of English and American children's literature studies. At times, we have wondered if every scholar in Asia is working on English and American children's literature!

We have also sensed a hesitation on the part of some writers and critics from the developing world who perceive a less than enthusiastic readership for articles on books from their regions. Not only is this an unfortunate perception, but it is deeply worrying for *Bookbird*, and indeed IBBY – for what we should be doing, and what we want to do, is to showcase what is happening in writing, publishing, teaching and critical studies of children's literature in *all* parts of the world.

The apparent globalisation of children's literature is another aspect of this problem. Martin Salisbury's article in this issue, 'No Red Buses Please', highlights the pressure that is on picturebook artists to ensure that their work will appeal to publishers in a number of countries. The positive side of this is that illustrators and writers can gain greater international audiences, but on the other hand, demands for non-specific settings (in novels as well as in picturebooks) may produce blandness in what is available on the market. If we lose country- and culture-specific references, not only is this sad for the country or culture concerned, but it is also a loss for children, who are being denied the experience of books that reflect cultural, ethnic and social customs and

Bookbird editors


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ways of life different from their own. The overwhelming imbalance of outward translations from English as compared with inward translation is an indication of how skewed a worldview child readers are offered by international publishing practice. By the same token, many picturebooks of high artistic quality never reach the Anglophone market because they are considered too *avant-garde* for the tastes of that market. Or, if they are available, it's only because of the commitment of smaller publishers – and, praiseworthy as they are, their contribution is by definition small, since small publishers can only afford to reach a small market with their books.

Coming from a small island poised between two great countries (Ireland, which is sandwiched between Britain and the United States) with a high output of books for young people, we grew up reading about bleachers, toboggans and ginger beer – items, along with many others we encountered, that were unfamiliar to Irish people in the mid-20th century. Sometimes we asked adults what these things were, and sometime the adults knew and sometimes they didn't. But it didn't stop us and many, many other youngsters from avidly reading the books. Young people are far more capable, imaginative and adaptable than the nanny-like attitudes of a growing number of publishers and some other gatekeepers of children's literature suggest.

And this is where we come back to criticism and comment. We need articles in *Bookbird* – and elsewhere – which discuss and, where necessary, mediate literatures which may be unfamiliar to some readers. So remember, in 2006 and onwards, we want to know about *your* bleachers and ginger beer.

During the 2005 Bologna Children's Book Fair, John Kilaka received the New Horizons Award, designed to recognise outstanding editorial products in emerging countries. Although Kilaka is Tanzanian, his book was published in Rwanda and also by the Baobab Children's Book Fund, an organisation that publishes in German works from Africa, Asia and Latin America.

This is how the New Horizons jury described the book: 'The text and images are imbued with a sense of otherness, alluding to narration in which the visual is bound to the oral ... [Through hauntingly beautiful bright-coloured pictures] we return to a time when images were not the fruit of television reporting but a transmission of behaviours, wisdom, words, dreams and visions.'

This is Kilaka's original retelling, vividly illustrated, of a traditional African story told and retold from generation to generation as a crucial part of a society's basic moral, ethical and social education. Good friends Rat and Elephant quarrel but in the end they value and respect each other enough to forgive, reunite and live together in peace.

HELENE SCHÄR, editor of Baobab Books and general manager of Baobab Children's Book Fund

JOHN KILAKA
(Agnes Gyr-Ukunda English trans; Anna Ulrich German trans)

UBUCUTI BW'IMBEBA N'INZOVU/
Good Friends/Gute Freunde

Kilgali, Rwanda: Editions Bakame 2004 32pp
Zurich: Atlantis 2004 32pp ISBN 3715204958
(picturebook, 4–7)

No Red Buses Please

International Co-Editions and the Sense of Place in Picturebooks

Is the tyranny of the co-edition taking away the magic of a 'sense of place' in picturebooks? In this essay, Martin Salisbury discusses the impact of globalised publishing on what picturebook artists may and may not represent

by MARTIN C SALISBURY

Martin Salisbury is a book illustrator and course director of the MA in Children's Book Illustration at Cambridge School of Art, Anglia Polytechnic University in the UK. He is the author of Illustrating Children's Books *(A&C Black/Barrons 2004)*

Time was when you knew where you were in picturebooks. Ardizzone's quintessentially English regency seaside architecture, Ludwig Bemelmens's delightful evocations of Paris, Carl Larsson's cool Scandinavian interiors or NC Wyeth's painstakingly authentic Wild West – they were all inspired by the artists' own back yard, made convincing and real by the illustrator's familiarity with the everyday detail of a place. The setting didn't need to be familiar to the reader; the work of these artists was and is widely adored by those for whom this was often a first introduction to the visual detail of a particular location. For me, as a child at school in the UK in the 1950s, pictorial representations of unfamiliar landscapes and architecture made books that much more intriguing. I clearly remember my own fascination with those oddly shaped barns and weird windmills in what must have been American schoolbooks, their sheer strangeness drawing me into the content of the books.

For the artist/illustrator a sense of place can often be the inspiration for a picturebook. With book illustration becoming increasingly the home of figurative, representational or narrative art (as the fine arts veer ever more towards the purely conceptual), it is inevitable that illustrators trained in the study of nature will frequently look to the world around them when creating the backdrop for this particular form of theatre. A characteristic of the 'born illustrator', as Edward

Ardizzone (1958) identified in a speech to the Double Crown Club back in the 1950s, is a passionate interest in the minutiae of everyday life and living. Another British illustrator of the period, Lynton Lamb, wrote at length about the importance of observational drawing to the student of illustration, and how everyday observed anecdotal detail plays a vital role in the development of the illustrator's visual vocabulary. Illustration students at art schools and universities today still undergo a specialised training that is based on drawing and design. Lamb's waspish comments on perceptions of the illustrator's art are as valid – if not more so – today as they were then:

> *A lot of people enjoy looking at illustration and most of them take all the skill for granted. There is no harm in that; but there are few enough of those who actually commission illustrations who have any real idea of how artists work … (1957)*

This gap between commissioners of and makers of illustration seems to have expanded. With the growing pressures on children's book publishers to succeed in a hugely competitive international market, it is perhaps unsurprising

Edward Ardizzone's quintessentially English middle-class houses are architecturally unmistakeable

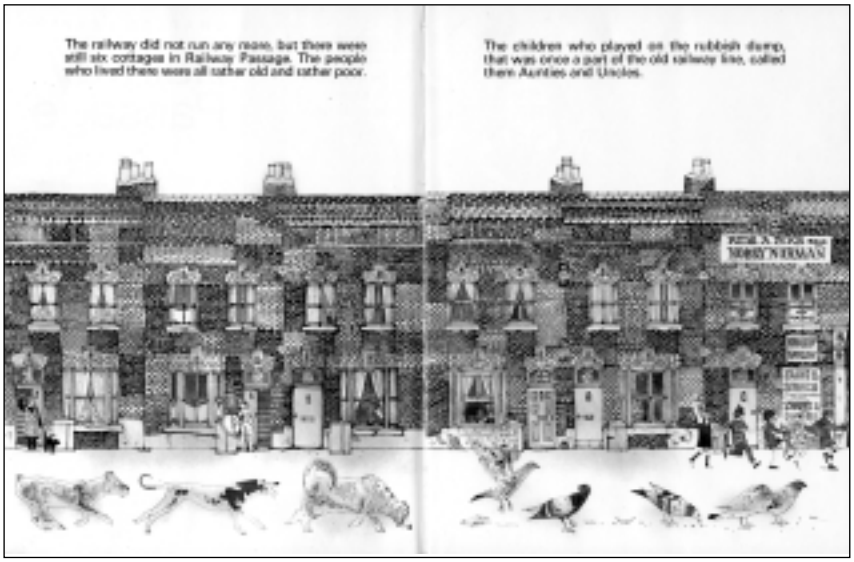
For me as a child pictorial representations of unfamiliar landscapes and architecture made books that much more intriguing

that all manner of spurious and, in my view, often misguided 'dos and don'ts' for illustrators have sprung up in picturebook editors' offices.

These are largely induced by that Holy Grail for publishers outside of the United States – the co-edition, in other words, a book published jointly by different publishers in more than one country. Most picturebooks published outside of the US now need to sell co-editions to publishers in other countries (most importantly, the US) if they are to generate sufficient sales to be financially viable. In the United Kingdom, for example, sales of 750 hardback and maybe three or four thousand paperback are the norm for a picturebook. This is not enough. Hardback sales are generally considered a dead loss now in the UK, so that leaves the paperback editions, with their tiny spines, jostling for attention on the packed shelves, a bewildering state of affairs for the buying public. It is this sort of thing that has led the Waterstones chain of bookshops to change their policy on picturebooks: they now choose a shorter list of books and display them to better effect.

Most picturebooks published outside of the US now need to sell co-editions to publishers in other countries

So the picturebook market has gradually become polarised – an 'all or nothing' situation where everyone is chasing the next big seller, the next *Gruffalo*, *Maisy* or *Daisy Duck*, and the mid-list titles are squeezed out. It is a situation that frequently lends itself to imitative commissioning and caution in relation to new ideas. And the



Charles Keeping liked to use the East End of London as a backdrop for many of his picture-books such as Railway Passage

Everyone is chasing the next big seller and the mid-list titles are squeezed out, and we get imitative commissioning and caution about new ideas

desperation to sell editions overseas has led to a curious set of assumptions about how this is best achieved. Illustrators (who are increasingly also the authors) of picturebooks are being asked to avoid all 'local' visual references in their artwork. Urban scenes are frequently stripped of any architectural detail that might identify them too closely with a particular place of origin. At its worst, the consequence of this practice manifests itself in the form of bland, generic land- and cityscapes with little or no sense of the atmosphere and character of real place. Had a tendency such as this existed a few years back, we can assume that, for example, Charles Keeping's wonderful evocations of his beloved East End of London would not have seen the light of day in picturebooks such as *Railway Passage* or *Adam and Paradise Island*, Keeping's final book. These books were not, of course, *about* London; their universal themes were simply placed over a backdrop that, being so close to the artist's heart, gave them a heightened, more convincing sense of reality.

Daisy Duck *author/illustrator Jane Simmons began her watery artistic journey with sketchbook studies such as this one*

As an artist and illustrator myself, now working primarily in art and design education, I have been lucky enough to work with many talented young book illustrators who have gone on to great success in this area. Among these former students have been Jane Simmons (*Daisy Duck*), Thomas Taylor (designer of the first and definitive *Harry Potter* cover, and more recently *The Loudest Roar/The Biggest Splash*), Adrian Reynolds (*Harry and the Dinosaurs/Robots* with Ian Whybrow), Selina Young, Alison Bartlett, Paula Metcalf (one of the

most exciting talents to arrive on the picturebook scene in recent years) and many more. Looking back at the development of individual students, the evolution of each particular visual language brings a reminder of the importance of place for so many of them. As a student, Jane Simmons had already lived for much of her life on a small riverboat and her early sketchbooks reflected this. Water continued to dominate her subject matter through the *Daisy* and *Ebb and Flo* books for the publishers, Orchard Books. It is interesting to see how Simmons's more recent work (for example, *Pog and the Birdies*) is informed by her new watery home on the Mediterranean. Her colour palette has moved from the deep stodgy greens of a fen riverbank to the warm red rooftops and translucent violet shadows of her new surroundings. Early colour studies by Alison Bartlett and Selina Young produced on student drawing trips to Portugal show how this process of observation provides the starting point for the subsequent imaginative pictorial vocabulary.

Selina Young's title page illustration from Once Upon a Tide *by Tony Mitton (David Fickling 2005)*

Of course, for many academics, despite the increasing lip service paid to the pictures, the main purpose of the picturebook is still its role in leading towards reading. But many of us in the graphic arts believe that the quality of the art itself has an important role to play in the all-round development of the child.

Colour studies from Selina Young's student sketchbook – the place where her 'sense of place' was honed

I often come into contact with publishers of children's books, who contribute to the programme I run in children's book illustration. The students and I never tire of challenging editors about their approach to their work and about what gets published and why. When asked about the issue of place, one publisher talked about the 'barriers' that have to be crossed to get a book published. The four days of intense trading at the Bologna Children's Book Fair leave publishers and editors quickly jaded, being bombarded with book proposals hour after hour and soon finding themselves looking for reasons to turn things down. Anything that at first glance has a non-international appearance is treated with extreme caution. Then of course there is the notorious chain of people that come between book and child: the marketing people, accounts people, sales people, bookshop managers, shop assistants and parents, all of whom have a say in what is 'appropriate' and what reaches the child's bookshelf. The well-established artists and authors tend to be excused, having earned the right to bypass these rules, breaking through the 'barriers' to create their own brand identity; not so the newcomers.

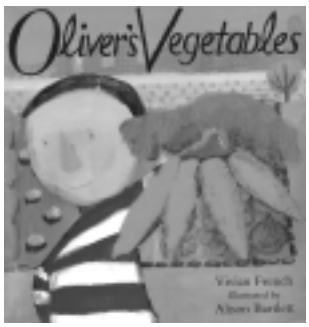
Anything that at first glance has a non-international appearance is treated with extreme caution

Animal characters also come in for scrutiny from the transferability police. This is particularly mystifying. Badgers and hedgehogs are frequently sent crawling back to the drawing board as being unrecognisable to

In countries where the pressures to sell co-editions are less severe, it is interesting to see the kind of artistic and conceptual excellence that can be achieved

an American audience. Now, excuse me for stating the obvious, but as far as I know, we don't have bears, crocodiles or lions roaming the woods here in the UK, and yet they seem to feature pretty successfully in our picturebooks. Surely the only thing that matters about an animal character is that it is convincing as a personality on its own terms, even if the species is new to science.

In countries where the pressures to sell co-editions are less severe, it is interesting to see the kind of artistic and conceptual excellence that can be achieved. Some of the most original books to emerge in recent years have come from Scandinavia. In Norway, where a population of only around four million means that most children's books are imported, an enlightened government arts council scheme provides subsidy for a small number of indigenous language picturebooks. Publishers are invited to tender ideas and each year a few are chosen. The books are invariably highly inventive, non-patronising, challenging and accessible to both children and adults. They tend to be refreshingly free of hang-ups and definitions about suitability for age groups. In particular the publisher Cappelen has been notable for the quality and variety of its output. A stunning recent example is Stian Hole's *Den gamle mannen og hvalen* [The old man and the whale]. This is a picturebook that exudes a Nordic sense of place. The exquisite digital collage images are laden with an explicit evocation of the northern maritime setting of a charming tale of feuding brothers. The brothers' long-standing stand-off is brought to an end by extraordinary circumstances. This is a book that I would very much like to see translated into English, along with many others that are appearing in some of the smaller European countries. Sadly, this seems unlikely if such richly atmospheric picturebooks are deemed to be too 'local'.



A colour study by Alison Bartlett made as a student at the Cambridge School of Art on location in Portugal

Right: Alison Bartlett's familiar painterly style

It is surely a misguided notion that a book that represents or celebrates the peculiarities of place should need to be visually 'translated' in order to be acceptable to international audiences

Perhaps an equivalent of the 'slow food' movement needs to be instigated in relation to picturebooks, to allow for a reintroduction of regional delicacies for children, and to provide a quality challenge to the global picturebook. It is surely a misguided notion that a book that represents or celebrates the peculiarities of place should need to be visually 'translated' in order to be acceptable to international audiences. It seems to me to be

Stian Hole's Den gamle mannen og hvalen *is laden with Nordic atmosphere*

about as clever an idea as trying to rework classic comedy series for other nations, by recycling the content, minus the chemistry (and the laughs). Something is invariably lost.

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Jane Simmons (2004) *Pog and the Birdies* London: Orchard

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CHEMISTRY is representative of the 137 titles (19 are Eyewitness en Español) in the celebrated non-fiction series, Eyewitness Books, created in Britain in the 1980s. Of uniform length, the books instruct readers in a myriad of subjects from Africa, Archaeology, Dinosaur, Everest, Prehistoric Life to Watercolour and Weather. No space is wasted on the pages of these large-format books where the interrelationship of text and illustrations is, as Michael Cart wrote in an article on the series in Booklist, October 2002, 'more than appealing, it is downright symbiotic, each form adding meaning to the other'. Arranged with ample white space in CHEMISTRY are colourful, informative photos, drawings and charts accompanied by bite-sized chunks of explanatory text that supply definitions, history and in-depth but easy-to-digest discussion of the subject. Included is a useful glossary and sections designed to appeal to young (and not so young) readers: Amazing Facts, Questions and Answers, Timeline, Find Out More. Cart, who is a critic and librarian, calls the Eyewitness titles 'a veritable visual encyclopedia for the twenty-first century'.

Glenna Sloan

ANN NEWMARK

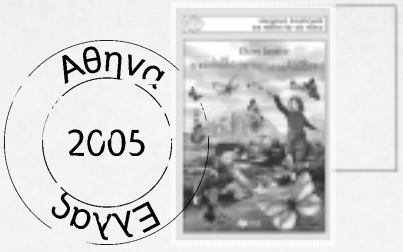
EYEWITNESS BOOKS: CHEMISTRY

London and New York: DK Inc 2005 72pp
ISBN 075661385X
(nonfiction, 8+)

In the not so distant future, through the little screen of their parents' personal communication device, two 12-year-olds, Zois and Kora, by chance discover a strange place, an area with short trees, plants with wide bright green leaves and some odd flying insects with transparent wings. Kora and Zois, excited with their finding and without thinking about the possible dangers of their idea, decide to find out whether this magical place really exists. In order to do so, they need to get out from under the transparent roof that protects their city and wander in the deserts of an old lake that has been drained.

This novel takes the reader to a future world. It reminds us of the fact that even as we enjoy technological achievements, there are things that people should not ignore or arrogantly dismiss, such as the power of nature and the need of people to communicate with each other.

Vassiliki Nika



ELENI DIKEOU

I KILADA ME TIS PETALOUDES
[The valley with the butterflies]

Athens: Papasotiriou 2005 272pp
ISBN 960161527X
(science fiction, 9+)

Harry Potter and The Mahabharatha

India has an astonishingly rich repertoire of folk stories and mythology, and for an Indian reader, any reading of literature, Indian or Western, is measured against these great Indian mythologies. In this paper, two Indian scholars read JK Rowling's Harry Potter series in the light of the Mahabharatha

by V CHELLAMMAL
and SK CHITRA LAKSHIMI

V Chellammal is professor of English at Anna University in Chennai, India

SK Chitra Lakshimi lectures in English at the Government College of Engineering in Salem, India

Every country can lay claim to its own storehouse of mythology and legends, and India has an astonishingly rich repertoire of stories that is known in every house and village in the country. Two of the most important and beloved epic tales of India are the **Mahabharatha** and the **Ramayana**, stories that have stood the test of time and have etched themselves into the lives of every Indian. The two mythologies have made ingress into the psyche of every Indian and there is nothing he or she does that is not judged according to the parameters set by these epics.

The Mahabharatha describes the mother of all battlefields – the lining up of the powers of good, represented by the Pandavas, and evil, represented by the Kauvravas, at Kurukshetra. The ensuing battle promises victory for whoever has conquered his fears, doubts and ego. It holds out the vision of true name, fame and glory for one who holds faith in himself and yet conquers his self for the sake of the good of mankind.

The **Bhagavad Gita** is an essential part of the Mahabharatha. Written in the 'deva-bhashya' (language of the gods), it is an epic poem of seven hundred verses in eighteen chapters. This poem

The Mahabharatha describes the mother of all battlefields – the lining up of the powers of good and evil

The battlefield

comprises a series of conversations between **Arjuna**, the warrior of the (good) Pandava clan, and **Sri Krishna**, the divine incarnate. These conversations highlight the dilemma that Arjuna faces when he has to fight his enemies and the wisdom of Sri Krishna who exhorts him to do his duty in a spirit of detachment and dedication.

The children's literature phenomenon that is JK Rowling's series of 'Harry Potter' stories, which so far comprises six volumes (one more volume is planned to complete the series), like the Mahabharatha, is essentially a powerful tale of retribution and justice and the epic battle between good and evil. The focal point of each of the six books published so far is a battle between Harry and the villain, Voldemort. Here is how Rowling describes a battle between Harry and Voldemort in *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*:

> *He sent another killing curse at Dumbledore but missed, instead hitting the security guard's desk, which burst into flame. Dumbledore flicked his own wand; the force of the spell that emanated from it was such that Harry, though shielded by his golden guard, felt his hair stand on end as it passed and this time Voldemort was forced to conjure a shining silver shield out of thin air to deflect it. The spell, whatever it was, caused no visible damage to the shield, though a deep, gong-like note reverberated from it – an oddly chilling sound.*

The war between the Pandavas and Kauvravas in the Mahabharatha is fought with celestial weapons called 'astras', weapons that are as potent and powerful as the weapons that Harry uses against Voldemort. The Mahabharatha describes how these deadly weapons are used by the power of mantras, which is the power of thought.

The war between the adversaries in the Mahabharatha rages for eighteen years; the battle between Harry Potter and Voldemort runs for eighteen years too – if one takes into consideration the fact that Harry's battle begins from the time of his birth when he loses his parents, and adds this to the seven years of actual encounter with the Evil One.

The focal point of each of the six Harry Potter books published so far is a battle between Harry and Voldemort

The battles in both the books see some emotional moments for the brave fighters – both Arjuna and Harry are faced with the dilemma of having to fight violent battles without having the desire or inclination to do so. In *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*, for example, after the battle with Voldemort, Harry is filled with anger at the injustice of the encounter and the fact that Dumbledore has made him go through it. He cries out in agony, 'I DON'T CARE … I'VE HAD ENOUGH, I'VE SEEN ENOUGH, I WANT OUT, I WANT IT TO END, I DON'T CARE ANYMORE…' Harry does not understand the purpose of it all. He only understands that for him there is no meaning in what is

happening. This is similar to Arjuna's question, 'O Janardhana … why dost thou enjoin on me this terrible action [of engagement in war]?' which arises in frustration during the course of the battle when he loses his beloved kith and kin in the battle.

Sri Krishna and Arjuna at the battlefield

The battle in Harry Potter, like the battle in the Mahabharatha, is not just one between two individuals, each trying to establish his might and gain authority over the world of living beings. It is a battle whose outcome will decide the fate of the world. If Voldemort wins, it will establish asuric powers, which will see the end of the world as it is now – a place fit for human beings and filled with love and happiness. If Harry Potter wins, there is hope and salvation, not only for the wizarding world, but also for the world of Muggles.

It is also a war between the hero's own dual natures. According to Indian thinking, every human being possesses competing instincts and what is important is which of the two instincts will establish itself. The moment when the Sorting Hat is placed on Harry's head in *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* is a moment of revelation for him. He undergoes a battle against temptation and he chooses to be in Gryffindor House as against Slytherin House, where he is promised greatness. The Sorting Hat asks him,

The battle in Harry Potter is not just one between two individuals but one whose outcome will decide the fate of the world

> *'Are you sure? You could be great, you know, it's all here in your head, and Slytherin will help you on the way to greatness, no doubt about that – no? Well, if you are sure – better be GRYFFINDOR!'*

Both the Mahabharatha and the Harry Potter series also delineate the loving and trusting relationship between the teacher and the taught. According to Katherine Grimes (2003),

> *Dumbledore is the idealized father, the dream of every child – the father who is godlike: omnipotent, omniscient, and benevolent, always on the side of good. Dumbledore is to Harry what God is to Jesus, what Zeus is to Hercules, what Mars is to Romulus and Remus, perhaps not literally, but figuratively.*

One could add that Dumbledore is to Harry what Sri Krishna is to Arjuna, for Dumbledore is the mentor, the role model and the natural leader among the elders, which is similar to the role played in the Mahabharatha by Sri Krishna, the god among mortals who

Dumbledore is to Harry what Sri Krishna is to Arjuna

Sri Krishna advises Arjuna

assists the Pandavas, symbolising the powers of goodness in their fight against the Hundred Sons of the Kauvrava House. Dumbledore imparts his wisdom to Harry, clears the fog of doubts and helps him achieve that elusive sense of peace and harmony that Arjuna sought from Sri Krishna.

Arjuna receives the best of training as a warrior with the world's greatest mentor, Dhronacharya, in his childhood. During his 'gurukulavasa', which is a residential training that a student receives at the mentor's hermitage, Arjuna undergoes the most rigorous training in learning numerous divine combat skills and is bestowed with myriad benedictions from bounteous gods through meditation till he attains adulthood.

Dumbledore keeps Harry in the custody of Harry's aunt at Privet Drive till he is eleven years old and ready for school. Harry's 'gurukulavasa' is Hogwarts school, for there the boy will receive instruction from the best of teachers who will train him in specific techniques to become a professional wizard.

Dumbledore, it is apparent, imparts to Harry precious knowledge in magic, to annihilate the powers of evil. In the Gita, Sri Krishna assures Arjuna, 'Whenever there is a decline of Dharma and ascendance of Adharma, then, O Scion of the Bharata race! I manifest [incarnate] Myself in a body.' He informs Arjuna, 'For the protection of the good, for the destruction of the wicked, and for the establishment of Dharma, I am born from age to age.' Harry – though not a god or a godlike figure – is informed that he is the one chosen to combat Voldemort, for in him are the powers of his goodness and the protective armour of his mother's love. Whenever the power of evil forces is in the ascendancy, there will come to save the human race and to uphold goodness (or Dharma) a good and pure soul; and that one person capable of overpowering evil is Harry, who has the protection of his mother's love.

In the first year, Harry rises magnificently to face Voldemort and comes out as the victor. In the second year at Hogwarts, Harry meets 'challenges even grown wizards have never faced'. In the third year, he repels the Dementors and rescues Sirius Black. In the fourth year, he watches Cedric Diggory die and escapes narrowly from death. In the fifth year, after a torturous battle and the death of Sirius Black, Voldemort is vanquished.

Sri Krishna tells Arjuna that he has to kill with detachment

Dumbledore too has a battle to fight. He realises that detachment, which is necessary to win a battle, is a quality that he has not nurtured in himself. In *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*, he confesses that there is a flaw in his design to kill Voldemort:

I cared about you too much … I cared more for your happiness than your knowing the truth, more for your peace of mind than my plan, more for your life than the lives that might be lost if the plan failed … What did I care if numbers of nameless and faceless people and creatures were slaughtered in the vague future, if in the here and now you were alive, and well, and happy? …

Dumbledore has realised what the Gita has laid down as a truth of life: that eternal peace, happiness, discriminating intelligence and concentration can be realised only by freeing the mind from sensory perceptions.

Sri Krishna tells Arjuna that he has to kill, even his relatives, with detachment, if Dharma is to emerge the victor. Dumbledore helps Harry to realise that some day in the future he would have to kill to establish goodness. Dumbledore tells Harry that one day he will have to accept the fact that he will be a killer – though of the evil and demonic Voldemort – or face the prospect of himself being killed in a battle. In *The Order of the Phoenix* Harry wonders,'… so does that mean that … one of us has got to kill the other one … in the end?' and Dumbledore replies that it does. In the same book, Harry goes through the turmoil of considering the prospect of killing Voldemort. He almost achieves that sense of detachment that Sri Krishna is always advising Arjuna to aim at.

Srimad Bhagavad Gita

*An invisible barrier separated him from the rest of the world. He was – he had always been – a marked man. It was just that he had never really understood what that meant … And yet sitting here on the edge of the lake, with the terrible weight of grief dragging at him, with the loss of Sirius so raw and fresh inside, he could not muster any great sense of fear. It was sunny, and the grounds around him were full of laughing people and even though he felt as distant from them as though he belonged to a different race, it was still very hard to believe as he sat here that his life must include, or end in, murder … (***The Order of the Phoenix***).*

Book VI, *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*, sets the stage for the ultimate encounter between Harry and Voldemort. In this book, Harry faces more battles within himself and conquers his instincts and it is a certainty that he will emerge a victor, like Arjuna, who conquers himself before he conquers his enemies. Harry's battles with his choices and actions are about to help him become a warrior who will establish the reign of goodness on earth.

Harry has to choose between the pleasures of spending time with Ginny, revelling in the joy of finding love and happiness in her company, and renouncing all this for the time being to fulfil his duty to kill Voldemort. Duty wins over desire. He tells Ginny, 'Ginny, listen … I can't be involved with you anymore. We've got to stop seeing each other. We can't be together.' He foregoes the

Sri Krishna, the charioteer

pleasures of a new-found love in his life to fight a lonely battle against Voldemort, without the support of Dumbledore. Like a true yogi, Harry sets out on a path of selfless action. Sri Krishna assures Arjuna in the course of his conversation with him on the battlefield, 'He who, controlling all sense organs (by the power of his will) and becoming non-attached, lives a life of communion through dedicated action, such a person excels.' Harry sacrifices his desires and concentrates on one purpose and one action – that of destroying Voldemort. He manifests at sixteen years of age the sense of dedication and action of a yogi.

Sri Krishna prepares Arjuna to mentally gird himself for the battlefield and for the violence that always accompanies wars. Dumbledore in a similar fashion prepares Harry Potter for the ultimate battle by fitting in the jigsaw pieces of Voldemort's life and of Harry Potter's role in vanquishing Voldemort. However, in this book, Harry Potter suffers the biggest setback of all – the loss of Dumbledore. This abrupt and unexpected loss shocks Harry into the realisation that the battlefield is ready and that the battle is to be fought by him alone. Harry must now rely on his own magical skills, the support of his two friends and the purity and selflessness of the love that Dumbledore assures Harry he has immense reserves of. A true warrior to the core, he is ready to take on Voldemort. At this point, the decision to kill Voldemort is made voluntarily and dispassionately. In short, the warrior is mentally and physically ready for the battle. His mentor may not be there to guide him in person, but Dumbledore resides deep inside Harry's heart and mind. Dumbledore is the teacher who knows the past, present and sometimes the future too. Dumbledore becomes the Sri Krishna who declares, 'O Arjuna! I am the Self residing in the heart of every being. I am their beginning, their lifespan and their end.'

Harry must now rely on his own magical skills

Dumbledore has been Harry Potter's beginning and his lifespan. In spurring Harry to the ultimate battle, will Dumbledore become Harry's end? Only the next book will tell. Detachment is the mark of a true warrior and as Harry achieves it in the sixth book, the reader may expect the ultimate battle against Voldemort in the last book of the series. Book VI gives readers a sample of Harry's acceptance of his life's mission to kill Voldemort, but we can't be sure if Harry will act with the determination and perseverance of one who has to take tough decisions in the battle against evil; but the grand finale will surely see Harry going beyond the limited beliefs that he has about himself, his life and the lives of those around him. Harry will face intense moments of doubts, and will have to face enemies within and without, but JK Rowling has already initiated the process of Harry coming to peace with death and mortality. She has

made Harry see loss, destruction and grief in his personal life and given him the equanimity to accept them. She has given Harry the power to find ways to quell his anxieties and fears and experience peace within the challenge he will be faced with. This will carry him forward to fulfil his duties in a true Arjuna-like fashion in the battlefield with the guidance and sagely wisdom of his guru, Dumbledore, piloting him through dark moments.

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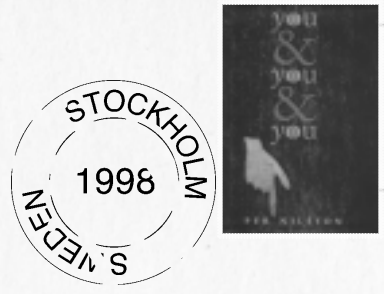
Per Nilsson's award-winning novel, HEART'S DELIGHT, was the first of his many books for young people to be published in the United States. In addition to novels, this prolific author writes the script for a family series on Swedish television. His well-crafted novels deal primarily with relationships. Nilsson sees his books as letters to young adults about what matters most to them: their hopes for the future, their lives and loves. His perspective is unexpected and, as in YOU & YOU & YOU, frank and provocative.

The lives of three different young people, Anon, 12, Nils, 20, and Zarah, 17, are intertwined in a carefully constructed plot that gradually reveals the important, life-changing connections among them. With great originality of thought, YOU & YOU & YOU invites reflection about the course and meaning of life. It asks the reader to consider: Do you think there are turning points in life? Do you think you can look back and say that's exactly when my life changed?

Glenna Sloan



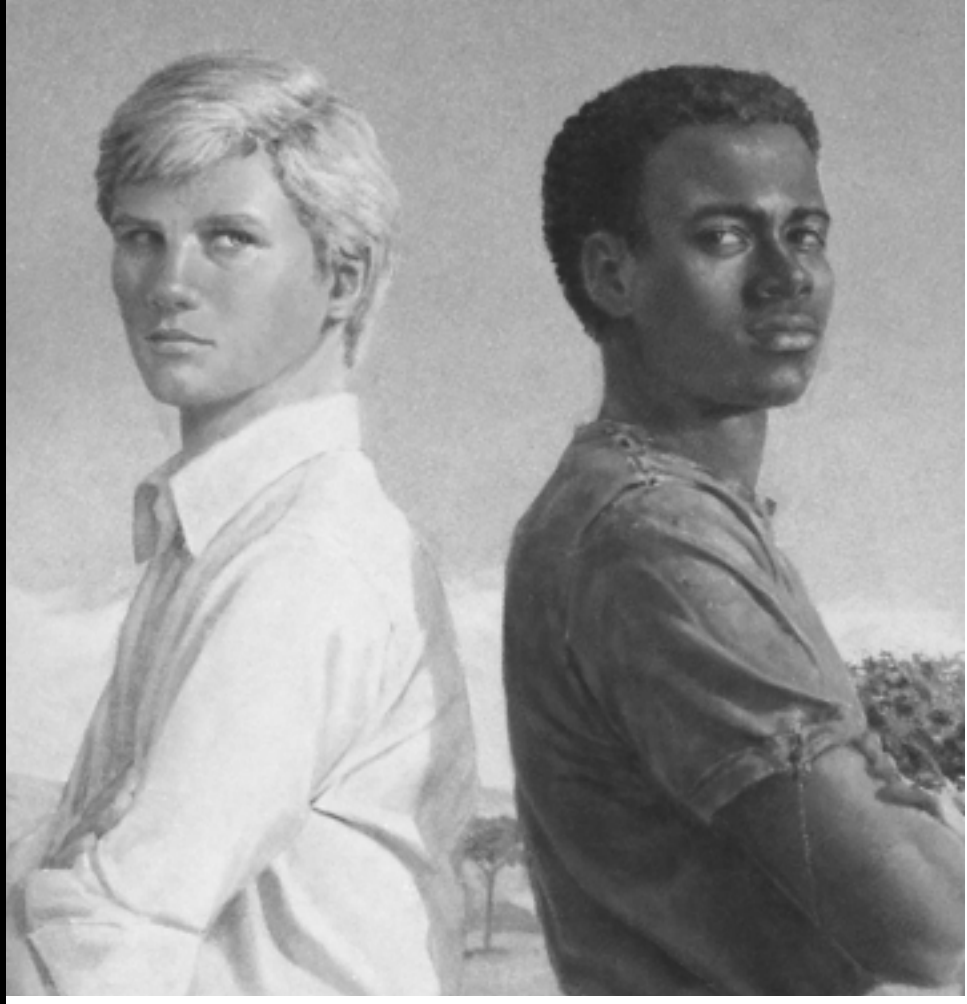
PER NILSSON (Tara Chace trans)

DU & DU & DU/YOU & YOU & YOU

Stockholm: Rabén & Sjögren 1998
Asheville, NC: Front Street 2005 304pp
ISBN 1932425195
(fiction, 12 to adult)

African Novels in Canadian Schools

Access, Reception and Cultural Mediation



This paper discusses contemporary English-language young adult novels – and some novels aimed mainly at adults but accessible to mature teenaged readers – set in sub-Saharan Africa, and how these are read in classrooms in Canadian schools. Only novels published (or republished) in North America (and therefore available to young Canadians) are considered

by INGRID JOHNSTON

Ingrid Johnston is an associate professor in the Department of Secondary Education at the University of Alberta, Canada. She is the author of Re-mapping Literary Worlds: Postcolonial Pedagogy in Practice *(Peter Lang 2003; Chinese edition from Education Science Publishing House 2006)*

In Canada today, most schools are very multicultural. Many students are immigrants themselves or are first-generation Canadians whose parents immigrated from countries in Asia, Africa, the Middle East and South America, and there are increasing numbers of students of Aboriginal ancestry. Despite this diversity, students in grades 7 to 12 (ages 13–18) have traditionally been offered novels written predominantly by American and British writers, most of which have white

characters. Even in popular novels that do have black characters, such as Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird* (1960), all the action is focalised through white characters, and the African-Americans remain shadowy figures.

In the past decades, there have been changes in the canon of school literature, with an increasing number of Canadian novels introduced into schools across Canada and slightly more attention paid to international perspectives in literary texts. Most Canadian novels selected by teachers still present Eurocentric perspectives, reflecting Canada's master narratives of two founding peoples – English and French – and promoting what Arun Mukherjee (1998) has described as 'the settler-colonial view of Canada', which produced essentialised Canadian characters obsessed with survival in a hostile landscape of ice and snow. In the past few years, however, students have been offered more novels written by immigrant Canadian writers of colour and some English teachers, particularly in the final two years of high school, have selected some literature set in non-western countries.

Most Canadian novels selected by teachers still present Eurocentric perspectives

Over the past decades, at both the senior-high-school level and in the first year of college, many teachers considered Chinua Achebe's novel *Things Fall Apart* to be the quintessential African text, offering readers a counterpoint to the colonial views of Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* and illuminating the horrors and paradoxes of colonialism on traditional Ibo life in Nigeria. While this novel continues to hold its own in many educational institutions, its popularity has waned somewhat in the 21st century. In its place, teachers are now beginning to introduce novels such JM Coetzee's *Disgrace*, with its ironic and cutting portrayal of dysfunctional post-apartheid South Africa. Focalised through a white perspective, this novel brilliantly articulates the complexities of South Africa's evolving rainbow nation and teachers consider that this text offers mature adolescents a valuable literary and contemporary political reading experience.

***Teachers are now beginning to introduce novels such JM Coetzee's* Disgrace**

For younger Canadian students, there are often very few novels set in Africa available for whole-class or independent reading. In the province of Alberta, for example, the provincial government body with jurisdiction over the curriculum recently updated its recommended novels and non-fiction list for grades 7 to 12. Teachers are not required to choose texts from this list, but they often do. Approximately twenty books are recommended for each grade, and out of the entire list, only two are set in Africa: *Waiting for the Rain* (1987) by Sheila Gordon, recommended for grade 10, and *The Ear, the*

For younger Canadian students, there are often very few novels set in Africa available

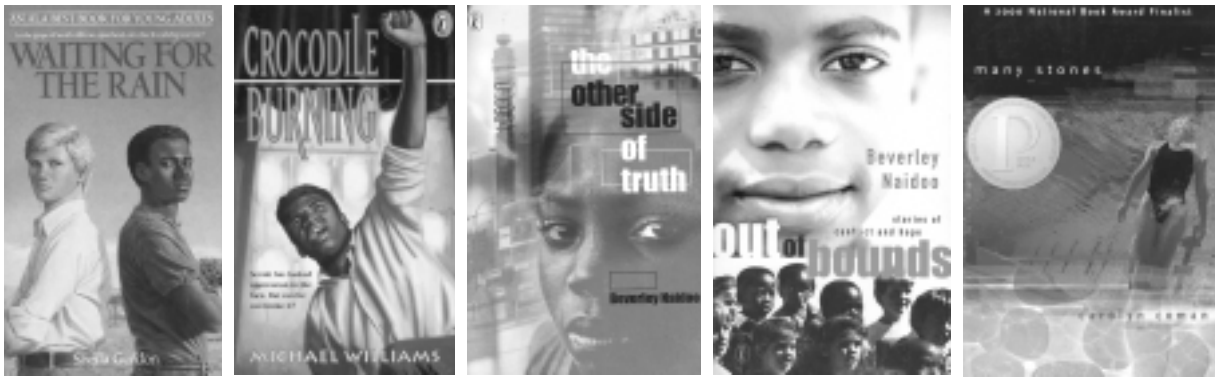
Eye, and the Arm (1994) by Nancy Farmer, recommended for grade 9. The authors of both novels are white and lived in Africa in their youth before emigrating to the United States. *Waiting for the Rain,* set in South Africa during the apartheid era, describes the relationship between a young white and a young black boy who are friends through their childhood until the laws of apartheid force them apart. This young adult book has been widely taught in various grade levels across Alberta over the past twelve years and remains popular with teachers. Its fairly simple theme and characterisation offer a straightforward critique of the apartheid system from what is now a historical perspective, without probing any of the more complex issues in the country. While the book does offer some insights into apartheid from both a white and a black perspective, its main focus is on the experiences of the white boy.

For the majority of Canadian students, novels set in Africa but focalised through a white perspective are the ones they are most likely to encounter

Farmer's more sophisticated novel, a science fiction story set in Zimbabwe of the future, is a newer addition to the recommended list. An award-winning American writer for adolescents, Farmer frequently sets her books in sub-Saharan Africa, drawing on her own experiences to act as a cultural mediator for western readers. This novel, widely recognised as one of her most accomplished, humorously and ironically describes an imagined Zimbabwean society in the year 2194. The three young protagonists have spent their childhood locked in their technologically perfect fortress home, with their every physical need catered to by servant robots. One day, when they leave the house in search of adventure, they are captured and sent into slavery in the plastic mines under the rule of the malevolent She Elephant. There they await rescue by the three unlikely detective heroes of the title. While this novel and Farmer's other young adult fiction set in Africa have received many accolades, Farmer has also been criticised for a tendency to show readers western culture as the norm against which all other cultures are judged (see Brock-Servais 2001; Mangat and Johnston 2000).

For the majority of students in Canadian schools these novels (or similar ones) set in Africa but focalised through a white perspective are the ones they are likely to encounter in their classrooms. Canadian senior-high-school students may have heard about black African writers such as Chinua Achebe, Ngugi wa Th'ongo or Bessie Head, but they are much more likely to be familiar with the names of white writers from Africa such as Nadine Gordimer, André Brink and JM Coetzee; and the African books they are most likely to have read in school are those written by white writers such as Alan Paton's famous *Cry, the Beloved Country* (1948), which portrays the anguish of a conscientious white man in reconciling himself with a corrupt system of government in apartheid South Africa, or Bryce Courtney's *The Power of One* (1989), the memoir of an English boy's lonely childhood in South Africa during WW II.

Adolescent students in younger grades may have had their familiarity with African novels extended through independent reading, both inside the classroom and at home. For example, teachers and librarians that I know have offered their students a wider range of novels set in Africa, for example: *Crocodile Burning* (1992) by Michael Williams, the story of a young black actor set in Soweto and on Broadway; *Song of Be* by Lesley Beake (1995) which evocatively portrays the changing lifestyle of the Bushmen in Namibia; and several recent books that explore contemporary issues of terrorism, traumas of



exile, and the devastation of AIDS, including Beverley Naidoo's *The Other Side of Truth* (2001), a story of terrorism and emigration set in Nigeria and England, and her collection of stories of traumas suffered by South African children in successive decades, entitled *Out of Bounds – Stories of Conflict and Hope* (2002). In *Many Stones* by Carolyn Coman (2002), an American family comes to terms with the murder of their daughter in a township; and in *Chanda's Secrets* by Allan Stratton (2004) and *The Heaven Shop* by Deborah Ellis (2005), the young protagonists suffer the devastating consequences of dealing with AIDS.

Most of these books are sensitive and empathetic portrayals of the experiences of both white and black people in Africa and they offer Canadian students valuable and imaginative insights into life in contemporary Africa. All of them, however, are written by white writers. And while I categorically agree that the power of imagination is the most essential ingredient in writing fiction, I still do believe there are issues of power and control related to the lack of access in Canadian schools to books by black writers. However valuable it is to have books written by white writers about Africa, it is also crucial for North American readers to have access to books written by black African writers about their own experiences.

There are issues of power and control related to the lack of access in Canadian schools to books by black writers

This situation, of course, is not limited to North America. As Maddy and MacCann (1998) point out,

> *The power of position determines who will be allowed to speak, and White power still rules in the world of South African education and children's literature. Whites dominate the media, and their voices are welcomed into the United States and Great Britain by publishers, critics, and librarians.*

Jenkins (1998) agrees that the 'authentic voice of Black authors is still scarce'.

Over the past few years, a new series of books set in Africa has swept across the western world, reinforcing this dilemma of white power even further. For many adolescents in Canadian schools today, Alexander McCall Smith's detective series, beginning with *The No. 1 Ladies' Detective Agency* (1998) is their most likely encounter with African novels. Although intended for adults, these novels are appealing to readers as young as 12. In the many glowing reviews of these books the words 'charming', 'honest', 'hilarious' and 'life-affirming' frequently appear.

For many adolescents, The No. 1 Ladies' Detective Agency series is their most likely encounter with African novels

Set in modern Botswana, the novels revolve around the amusing exploits of Mma Precious Ramotswe, Botwana's only female private detective. Precious is described as 'a woman of traditional build', who is 'fat and contented'. She is a mix of the modern and traditional. On the surface she appears to be a feminist heroine confidently building her own business, but she also brings to her profession an innate respect for men, a confidence in the powers of goodness, courage and humility and a deep love for Botswana and for tradition. Presented as a kind of contemporary 'mother earth' combined with 'Miss Marples', Precious appears to have won the hearts and minds of a vast reading public. In 2003, the novels sold more than a million copies in the United States alone and over five million worldwide. At that time, the books had been translated into 26 languages with plans for a film adaptation by Anthony Minghella, director of *The English Patient* and *Cold Mountain*, and the series has continued to increase in popularity since then. The author is an Edinburgh law professor who lived in Botswana in the early 1980s, when he helped to set up a law school in Gabarone. He trades in making the books as delightful as possible, seeking to create an Africa of innocence and beauty with characters of high moral virtue.

Anecdotal comments from students in grade 9 in a Western Canadian junior high school suggest that the novel series is making an impact in schools and that it is raising some questions about elements of Botswanan life. One girl commented:

> *The chief reason I have enjoyed reading this series so much is because of the main character, Precious Ramotswe … She is courteous, intelligent, determined and responsible and is comfortable about being a 'traditional Botswana lady' in all respects. I get a sense of a culture that is very different from ours, where people truly care for others in need and look after them as if they were close family members. Although the books are very easy and pleasant to read, the author does not hesitate to talk about serious issues such as dangerous and illegal witchcraft practices.*

Another girl explained:

> *I really enjoyed this book. We haven't read anything like this before. The setting of the story made it interesting, it showed Botswana modernising with American ideas. But Botswana still has old-fashioned ways too. Like Mr Charlie Gotso who buys muti from a witch doctor. I don't understand why someone would want to buy muti. Killing someone to have their bones and their skin to make you powerful doesn't make sense. Medicine is supposed to help you. Murdering someone doesn't help anyone.*

Despite the books' obvious appeal to readers young and old, McCall Smith is beginning to receive some criticism. Dr Roberta Hammett, a Canadian education professor at Memorial University in Newfoundland, and Dr Joyce Mgombelo, originally from Tanzania and now at Brock University in Ontario, whom I interviewed recently, both agreed that *The No. 1 Ladies' Detective Agency* is entertaining and provides escape reading, but they also felt that beneath a benevolent exterior, it creates problematic stereotypes of Botswanan life, and attempts to universalise the experiences of black people in Botswana. Precious offers readers a comfortable persona of a woman with a superficial feminist stance who allows herself to be victimised and moves forward smiling and happy. The novel, they suggested, is very appealing to white readers, making them feel comfortable about the earth mother figure of Africa and allowing them to laugh at rather than with the characters' naïve understandings and traditional African beliefs. This liberal humanist perspective conceals the colonial view of Africa that is perpetuated through the

Despite the books' obvious appeal to readers young and old, McCall Smith is beginning to receive some criticism

The liberal humanist perspective conceals the colonial view of Africa that is perpetuated through the novel

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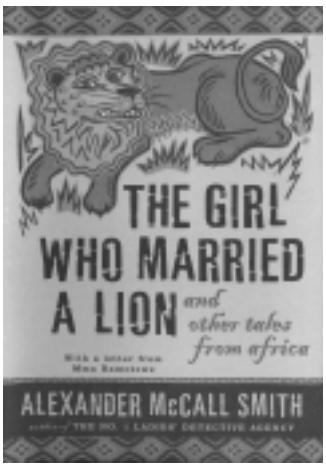
novel, pretending to view indigenous life and knowledge as pure and untouched, while concealing or making light of the horrors of life in the mines suffered by Precious's father – a job that eventually killed him. The book exists in a depoliticised, ahistorical context and offers a mirage of a semi-rural Africa that is comforting and pleasant. As Richard Bartlett (2003) has commented:

> *In condensing the beauty of Botswana into the efforts of one 'traditional' African woman, who is an ideal African citizen, McCall Smith allows readers who view Africa as an homogeneous place to affirm their own ideals of what Africanness is. This concept of Africa through which Mma Ramotswe takes us is not threatening, it is not a place of myriad ethnicities and countries and religions and dilemmas and poverty and diseases … it is the Africa of western idealism.*



Pat Rodriguez (2005), drawing on personal correspondence with McCall Smith and personal contacts with a bookstore in Botswana, explains further:

> *[I]t seems clear that McCall Smith has a non-Botswanan, even non-African, readership in mind for the novels: the narrative explains much more about the culture than would be necessary for a native readership; furthermore, McCall Smith has said he believes it exceptional for Africans to read novels; according to Gaborone's most established bookshop, the Botswana Book Centre, black customers have not shown great interest in the series.*

One of McCall Smith's recently published books, aimed more specifically at younger readers, offers more subtle representations of sub-Saharan Africa. In a collection of 33 African folktales, retold and republished by McCall Smith under the title *The Girl Who Married a Lion and Other Tales from Africa*, animals can speak and disguise themselves as humans and evil spirits separate the weak from the strong and brave. The allegorical nature of the stories honours oral traditions of the past without any pretence that these stories represent the Africa of today. The publisher draws on the success of McCall Smith's earlier books by introducing the tales with a 'letter' from Mma Ramotswe from the detective series, expounding on the virtues of the traditional stories in the collection.

Outside the current popularity of McCall Smith's books, there are contemporary white African writers such as JM Coetzee, Nadine Gordimer and Damon Galgut who offer mature teenaged Canadian

readers a more complex and sophisticated approach to African cultures and politics and successfully resist a mimetic representation of black characters; while white writers of young adult novels, such as Beverley Naidoo and Deborah Ellis offer in-depth and imaginative novels about contemporary African life for younger readers. Authenticity is a thorny issue in writing, and there is no reason not to praise the many exciting African novels written by white writers that are available for Canadian students today, but these same students will have far richer reading experiences of African literature once publishers and teachers in the west provide access to African novels by writers from all backgrounds and experiences.

A version of this paper was presented at the IBBY conference in Cape Town, South Africa, in September, 2004.

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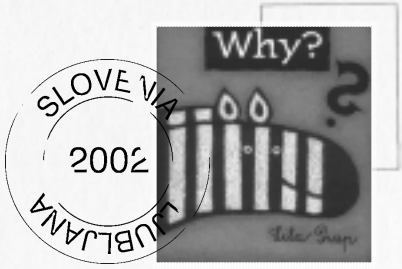
Designed to delight playfully and instruct simply, WHY? cautions curious readers in an introductory note to this book of questions that 'some of the answers to the questions are silly, some are sensible and some are scientific (marked by an asterisk)'. Read creatively, says the author, 'feel free to make up some questions, some answers and some animals of your own. They can be silly or serious … whichever you like.'

Large, stylised pictures of animals are rendered in earth tones and surrounded by questions and answers in a variety of interesting fonts. Young children may recognise some of the questions and even the answers as their own: Why do kangaroos have pouches? To hide their bellybuttons. Why do hyenas laugh? Because they're childish. Why do hippos yawn? So the doctor can check their tonsils. Readers are put right on every two-page spread, however, with a pithy but concise scientific answer to each question. Only 35 words are used to explain why camels have humps. (To store fat for times when food is scarce, in case you're curious.)

Glenna Sloan



LILA PRAP (Lili Potpara trans)

ZAKAJ?/WHY?

Ljubljana: Mladinska knjiga Založba 2002 32pp

ISBN 8611165470

La Jolla, CA: Kane/Miller 2005 32pp

ISBN 1929132808

(picturebook, 4–8)

Children's Magazines in Multilingual Spain

before and after Franco

by XOSÉ ANTONIO NEIRA CRUZ

(translated by Roberta Astroff)

Xosé Antonio Neira Cruz is professor of communication sciences at the University of Santiago de Compostela in Spain

This essay traces the history of magazine publishing for children and young people in three of Spain's official languages: Catalan, Galician and Basque. An account of similar publishing in Castilian (the majority language of Spain) appeared in the last issue of Bookbird

Any presentation and analysis of cultural production in Spain must take into account the linguistic configuration of the Spanish state, which has shaped the existence of parallel but unevenly developed paths for literary and journalistic production in Spanish (Castilian) and in the three other co-official languages of the historic nations of Catalonia, Galicia and the Basque country.

The signs of cultural identity of these distinct nations and cultures have been overshadowed or even censored for centuries by a centralist state, and certainly by the cultural predominance of Castile and Castilian. Moreover, the Franco regime (1936–75) increased its control by adding messianic connotations to the centralism and legislative rigidity with which a suffocating Spanish nationalism tried to smother any cultural expression seen as a threat to unity.

Catalonia

Catalonian culture is marked by an awareness of the importance of children's and young adult publishing as a medium for communicating the culture to the next generation. This began during the Catalan *Renaixença* (renaissance) of the 19th century, and despite the

harsh interruptions of the civil war and Francoism, the enthusiasm for producing magazines for young readers never disappeared.

The signs of cultural identity of these distinct nations and cultures have been overshadowed or even censored for centuries by a centralist state

En patufet, the first children's magazine published in Catalan, whose printrun reached 65,000 copies, was founded as an initiative of the political and cultural movement *Foment Autonomista Catalá* in 1903 and it carried out very important work in favour of 'Catalanisation', until its closure some 34 years later with the revolt of Franco's fascist troops and the eruption of the civil war.

The new political situation meant the disappearance of the Catalan-language children's publishing industry. Once the prohibition of Catalan-language children's newspapers and magazines was in place, the new overseers of public life in Spain put into effect a strategy designed to substitute similar publications in Castilian. To give more authority to this substitution, well-known people who had been committed to Catalan activism were obligated to get involved with a Spanish-language Catalan press. Josep Maria Folch i Torres, for example, an ardent Catalan nationalist who had been in exile in France for his political views, directed *En patufet*; when it was closed, he took over the directorship of *Páginas vividas*, a weekly that promoted the Hispanisation of Catalan cultural life. It produced 168 issues between 1943 and 1947.

Well-known people who had been committed to Catalan activism were obligated to get involved with a Spanish-language Catalan press

It was not until the mid-1940s that timid attempts were made to recuperate a Catalan children's press. An underground magazine, *Baloo*, was published by the religious organisation *Mare de Déu de Montserrat* and produced by stencil machine, but it was quickly banned. Something similar happened with *Gerundin*, the children's supplement to the magazine *Gerunda*, and with *L'infantil*, which was sponsored by the seminary of the Diocese of Solsona. It is easy to recognise the presence of groups related to the Catholic church behind these efforts, and at times the church hierarchy itself protected the emerging children's press in Catalan. This close relationship between children's magazines and the church could also be seen in the publications, since they all combined devotion to the language and to the signs of Catalan identity with the Roman Catholic faith.

At times the church hierarchy protected the emerging children's press in Catalan

In 1961 a magazine was launched that marked the return of Catalan publications for children and young adults. This was *Cavall fort*, a publication produced through the efforts of Catalan activists and intellectuals (Ricard Tusell, Joaquim Ramis, Josep Tremoleda, Llucià

Caricatura de Josendo (Virolet, 1923).

Navarro, Anna Pàmies, Ramon Fuster, Josep Espar, among others) and which had the direct support of the bishops of Vic and Girona. Aimed at 10–14-year-olds, *Cavall fort* defined itself from the beginning as a magazine that would interest not only young children but their families as well, as a way of creating a subscription base and of establishing it as a communications medium that would bring together Catalan identity and religious belief. Larreula (1985) has produced a well-informed picture of the achieved goals that converted the *Cavall fort* into an institution of Catalan culture:

> *In fact* **Cavall fort** *was aimed at an elite audience. The strong high-culture tendency of the magazine functions as a filter that permits the passage of those few who are sufficiently prepared to be able to participate. Thus, since the beginning, the readers of* **Cavall fort** *were mostly the children of middle-class Catalan families, with standard religious beliefs, though it is also possible to find diverse ideological positions; boys and girls who went to private schools that went as far as possible in returning to a pre-war Catalanism, schools that would organize later around the* **Rosa Sensat**, *and even later around the* **Col.lectiu d'escoles per l'escola publica Catalana (CEPEPC)**.

from the Catalan Virolet

Cavall fort published the work of Catalan illustrators and international artists such as Joan Miró, Antoni Tàpies, Andreu Alfaro, Josep Maria Subirachs and Tharrats.

A parallel history to that of *Cavall fort* could be written for the other great Catalan children's magazine that signalled the early beginnings of the transition to democratic freedoms. *Tretzevents*, founded in 1963, took advantage of a previous ecclesiastic licence for the publication of *L'infantil*. Among the founders of this new project were a group of Catalan nationalists linked to the Marists who had organised the so-called Academy of the Catalan Language in 1953. An offer from the Solsona seminary to take charge of the magazine created a perfect opportunity to obtain a publishing licence that otherwise would have been very difficult to get from the Francoist authorities, considering that *Cavall fort* already existed.

cover of the Catalan Virolet, *illustration by Serra Massana*

Ramón Batlle, Francesc de Paula Estrada, Francesc Morel, Xavier Polo, Joan Sisquella, the brothers Miquel Angel and Manuel Sayrach and Eduard Subirá form part of this group that worked toward the development of *L'infantil* and its later conversion to *Tretzevents.* Under the editorial sponsorship of the Abbey of Monserrat (a true cultural emporium under the protection of a Benedictine monastery strongly implicated in the cultural and national identity of Catalonia), the

magazine assumed its current name with issue number 174. Larreula acknowledges the enormous effort made by the editorial staff of these publications, who worked without pay and staked their own money for the cultural project they were defending.

Alongside *Cavall fort* and *Tretzevents* were, for example, such initiatives as *El ganxet*, a monthly that began publication in December 1976 in Reus and which focused on promoting cultural and leisure activities to small children; and *TBO*, a short-lived special Catalan-language edition of the well-known Spanish-language comic that, under the direction of Albert Viña, began in 1976. The daily children's newspaper *Rodamón* was published from 1978 to 1988 and offered its readers high-quality content, including news and current affairs told in a language and style that appealed to very young readers.

Galicia

The development of children's and young adults' publishing in Galician was slow and unstable.

As Roladas was the only monolingual Galician-language initiative for young readers before the transition. It was a four-page newsletter, headed by the poet Ramon Cabanillas and illustrated by Castelao (one of the great artists of the time in Spain and a Galician nationalist thinker and politician) and by the modernist architect Antonio Palacios. This short-lived enterprise, which began in May 1922, was highly idealistic and devoted to communicating a love for Galicia and its culture. One of the founders of this magazine was Manuel Portela Valladares, Minister of the Interior for the Spanish Republic, who was asked by President Alcalá Zamora, in 1935, to form an interim government as a prelude to new elections.

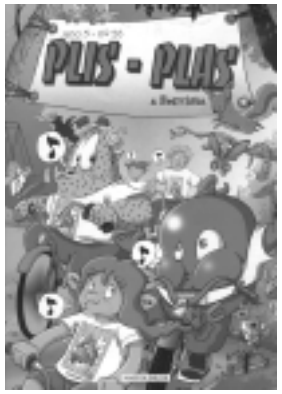
The development of children's and young adults' publishing in Galician was slow and unstable

This 'Folla dos rapaciños galegos' ('The journal of Galician children') was intended to be a path toward the creation of a network of children's groups throughout Galicia that the magazine called *roladas* (hatcheries, or nests of chicks, in Galician). This enthusiastic initiative was poorly developed from a business standpoint and it soon ended.

It was not until the transition from the Franco regime to democratic government that the Galician-language children's press was reborn, on the eve of Franco's death, with *Axóuxere*. This was a time of change and renovation, when there was an expectation of the recovery of a democratic system that coincided with the search for tools and channels for the promotion and normalisation of Galician culture. The conditions of these years have been described by Agustín Fernández Paz (1989), a protagonist in and witness to the role of educators in this crucially important stage in Galicia's recent history.

The primary moving force behind this second initiative at Galician children's publishing was Paco Martin, who, as a teacher himself, was well aware of the lack of Galician-language materials in the schools. He was assisted in the job of producing the magazine by two important illustrators, Xoán Balboa and Ulises L Sarry, who produced some of the first examples of original comics in Galician. Among *Axóuxere*'s major achievements was the organisation of campaigns to read in Galician and literary contests for Galician children.

In its 28 issues, published between July 1974 and January 1975, the shadow of censorship or self-censorship could still be seen, since conditions in the last months of the ever-weakening dictatorship in Spain still included somewhat underhanded reprisals.



Vagalume *cover*

A new publication, *Vagalume*, was born in the same month and year *Axóuxere* ceased publication. Produced in Santiago de Compostela, this 20-page, two-colour biweekly had a four-colour cover and central insert, and constituted one of the most interesting examples of children's publishing in Spain of its time. Directed by Marta Isabel García de Leániz and Xosé Fortes Bouzán, *Vagalume* stood out as much for its defence of monolingual Galician options – of considerable importance in the social context of that time – as well as for its ability to draw attention to and some support for publications for children in the local language. This magazine was a dynamic, diverse and interesting children's publication that never gave in to the temptation to condense or infantilise its material. It covered current events and issues, some of them controversial. Despite its obvious quality and interest, the magazine ceased publication in May 1978, after 46 issues, due to economic difficulties.

The vacuum left by the closing of *Vagalume* was filled only partially in the following years by the beginnings of children's publishing by Galician newspapers, such as *Bulebule* (from the weekly *A Nosa Terra*), *La voz de la escuela* (a supplement to the newspaper *La voz de Galicia*, which has been increasing the presence of Galician in its pages), or *O pizarrín* (the children's supplement to *A pizarra*, which was itself an educational supplement to the newspaper *Faro de vigo*, a leading Spanish publication).

In the past decade, the Galician-language children's periodical press has stagnated, but children's literature in Galician has become the vigorous and brilliant standard in Spanish book publishing. Galician authors can be found throughout the lists of the major Spanish publishers, with almost automatic translation of their works into Castilian, other languages of Spain, French and Portuguese, and who have repeatedly won the most famous prizes in Spain for children's and young adult literature originally written in Galician.

Recently, the Galician-language children's periodical press has stagnated, but Galician literature has become the standard in children's book publishing

In contrast, the Galician children's periodical press seems a wasteland interrupted only by interesting but short-lived efforts, such as *O esquío darío*, a magazine started in 1995 by Editorial Galaxia, a publisher with a long tradition in Galician literature, and directed by teacher and writer Rosa Luengo. The magazine's short but brilliant trajectory demonstrated the viability of a project that linked a children's publication with the promotion of reading through a fresh use of colour, design and layout. Without being overly ambitious or pretentious, *O esquío darío* filled a gap left by Galician newspapers and knew how to reach its audience effectively. In the end its irregular publication schedule and the excessive commercial enthusiasm that motivated its appearance worked against its survival and led to its premature close.

In 1999, the other major Galician publishing house, Edicións Xerais de Galicia, started what could be considered the boldest and most professional enterprise in Galician children's publishing. The monthly *Golfiño*, directed by Miguel Vásquez Freire, published the work of the best contemporary writers and illustrators in 16 full-colour pages. The criteria for organising and selecting materials, and the editorial line of the publication were, in the words of its director, 'aesthetic quality and the ability to communicate with children'.

The most recent children's press venture in Galician is the magazine *Plis-Plas*, a publication closely related to the radio programme of the same name, broadcast weekly by Radio Galega on Saturday mornings. In fact, the team that produces the programme also comprises the editorial staff of the magazine. This is the first case in Galicia of a project in children's publishing that was begun by relying on the impact and popularity of another medium, a pattern seen more frequently in other European countries.

The 'Green Detective Agency' members report on local ecological threats

In addition to its own content and characters, *Plis-Plas* makes contact with potential readers through an association with a club known as the 'Green Detectives'. Each 'Green Detective Agency' is based in a particular school. The club members are the Green Detectives, and they report on local ecological threats and, under the supervision of a teacher, take on small local environmental projects. Through this singular channel, *Plis-Plas* has created a network of young members, contributors and correspondents that, by the end of December 2000, included approximately 4000 boys and girls across Galicia in 64 agencies in as many schools.

The Basque country

The roots of Basque-language children's publications can be found at the height of Francoism, in 1959, when *Umeen Deia* started publishing. This started out as a four-page magazine created by Felipe de Murieta and supported by the Navarre cultural institution Príncipe de Viana. It published for six years, until the death of its founder, producing 65 issues, all with a strong religious content, much of it submitted by its readers.

In the 1960s, *Zeruko Argia*, a magazine aimed at adults, included a children's supplement titled *Pan-Pin*, heavily influenced by comics or illustrated stories.

In 1966, when Francoism started to experiment with more openness, the Basque children's magazine *Kili-Kili* was started by José Antonio Retolaza. Publication was suspended as soon as the first issue appeared on the streets,

but in 1979, when democratic freedoms returned and the system of decentralisation began, *Kili-Kili* was reborn as a monthly magazine that presented in Basque comics featuring Astérix, Tintín, the brothers Zipi and Zape, Mortadelo and Filemón and other characters from the Castilian *TBO*.

In addition to its role in spreading the Basque language, *Kili-Kili* has also published articles in various news genres, such as interviews with Basque personalities of interest to young people (for example, members of the Basque soccer teams).

In 1966 Francoism started to experiment with openness, and* Kili-Kili *was started

Kili-Kili had printruns of 5000 copies, of which 4600 were distributed until recently via subscription. Currently, the magazine is in the middle of a reorganisation; it now seems that it will be under the direction of the *Federación de Ikastolas* (an organisation comprising all monolingual Basque-language schools), a change that will not only favour a greater presence of the magazine in schools but will also affect its content, probably through the production of more content of its own.

Ipurbeltz, a monthly children's magazine, began publishing in 1980 at about the same time *Kili-Kili* made its reappearance. There are clear differences between the two magazines in conception and style, as noted by Xabier Etxaniz Erle (2000):

> *While* **Kili-Kili** *is an individual project and is clearly dependent on translations (…),* **Ipurbeltz** *is published by* **Editorial Erein**, *which is a platform for a large number of illustrators, as well as the publisher of various comics collections.*

In September 1992 *Xirrixta* started publication, produced by the French editorial group Milan and distributed initially in the Iparralde zone (the Basque country in France). The French magazines *Tupo* and *Toboggan,* produced by the same group, formed the starting point for this publication and were the fundamental source for its content. In 1995 they added articles and stories by Basque writers such as Bernardo Atxaga, Mariasun Landa, Patxi Zubizarreta and Juan Kruz Igerabide, among others. After 61 issues, *Xirrixta* stopped publication in April 1998 due to financial difficulties.

Kometa, which published eight issues between 1996 and 1998, was also produced by the Milan editorial group and was supported by the *Euskal Kultur Erakundea*, an organisation that promotes the Basque language in France. Targeted at readers over eight, *Kometa* dedicated 42 of its 52 pages to the publication of literary narrative. Each issue also contained the

comics of Mikel Valverde, a children's recipe, games and reviews of Basque-language children's books.

Nanai is the most recent Basque-language children's magazine and is aimed at beginning readers. It is published by the *Asociación de Padres Ikas-Bi*, with support from the Acquitaine regional government (France) and the Autonomous Government of Euskadi (Spain), in collaboration with the French editorial group Milan. The first issue of *Nanai* appeared in January 2001.

Pluralism, multilingualism and having to take minorities into account – here in the history of children's magazine publishing in Spain, we see an image of a country of countries, a culture of cultures. This is how Spain is, how Spanish society is.

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Chess works out of two countries, dividing her time between Connecticut in the United States and France. She has illustrated over a hundred books for children. The Costume Party is one where both story and pictures are her own creations. The story, illustrative of her fanciful, mischievous sense of humour, is enlivened delightfully by her trademark illustrations of animal characters: detailed, humorous and brightly coloured.

Madame Coco's family of five dogs of an indeterminate but endearing breed are bored, unable to play outside because of a series of rainy days. Remembering the childhood costume parties she and her cousins staged in similar circumstances, Madame sets Nico, Fanny, Claude, Daisy and Rose to planning their own. The account – in both words and gaily coloured pictures – of the planning, the party and the special prize is crammed with playful fun. A book certain to engage lap sitters, there is plenty in it for adult and child to exclaim over, giggle at together and chat about in a spirit of pure delight.
Glenna Sloan

VICTORIA CHESS

UN SI BEAU BAL/THE COSTUME PARTY

Paris: Seuil 2005 ISBN 2020787970

La Jolla, CA: Kane/Miller 2005 22pp
ISBN 1929132875
(picturebook, 4–7)

The Emperor's New Clothes?

Higher Education, Conferences and the Real World

by PETER HUNT

Peter Hunt is emeritus professor of children's literature at Cardiff University, UK

The well-known academic and critic of children's literature, Peter Hunt, challenges – in a most entertaining way – some academic norms, and makes the radical suggestion that it might be good actually to confer *at conferences*

Over the past thirty years, discussion of children's books in universities and colleges has changed beyond recognition in many parts of the world. Thirty years ago, Francelia Butler, still honoured as the foremother of academic children's book work in the West, could write that in the USA,

> *If a state legislature forces a chairman of an English Department to add children's literature to the curriculum, he generally looks about for someone he regards as too incompetent to teach any other course. And male chauvinism being what it is, this someone is most often a middle-aged woman ('fair, fat, fifty, female, finished') (Butler 1973)*

Now, although something of that attitude still lingers, most academics in the field don't need to apologise for their subject. We have all the respectable trappings of academia: we have books and papers and articles – at a conservative estimate, an academic article on children's literature is published somewhere in the world every hour – and the bewildering number of children's book courses around the world probably produce an essay every five minutes. And we have conferences: in 2005, the International Research Society for Children's Literature held a highly successful international conference in Dublin, the Children's Literature Association met in Winnipeg, and there are children's literature panels at the largest meeting of humanities scholars in the world, the annual convention of the Modern Languages Association (MLA). Part of this 'success' has been because what is thought of as worthy of study in higher education in very many places (but not all) has vastly expanded, and children's literature has 'been carried along in this rising tide of new acceptability' (Griswold 2002). More than that: children's literature can be seen as the paradigm for 21st-century academic disciplines. It is internationalist, cross-cultural, interdisciplinary. In its eclectic approach and its huge scope – this is a subject that ranges from playgrounds to national archives – it can be everything that a humanities discipline can be: inclusive, radical, accessible. Also, within children's literature, there is a

general willingness for the huge diversity of disciplines involved, from bibliographers to primary-school teachers, storytellers to theorists, to live together in peace (although perhaps with tolerant incomprehension). But …

At a conservative estimate, an academic article on children's literature is published somewhere in the world every hour

Because children's literature academics have tended to follow established academic models in order to establish their academic credentials, it seems to me that a dangerous gap is opening up between academic insiders and outsiders. It is *not* that the preoccupations of the readers of *Bookbird* or *School Librarian* are incompatible with those of the readers of, say, *Children's Literature* or *MLA Proceedings* – rather that the ways in which academics seem to be deviating from the norms of the real world might well create that illusion.

Take all those articles I mentioned. There was, perhaps, a time when articles sprang out of the wish to share original ideas and insights that had been generated through debate and interaction. But is that true now? As Wendell Harris has pointed out, sardonically, about publications in the humanities:

> *If the only questionable result of the flood of publication … were the difficulty of finding the grain amidst the chaff, it might be ungrateful to complain, especially if one were to take the excessively optimistic view that the amount of grain increases at the same rate as the chaff … The increase, one must recognise, is in no small measure the result of vita-dressing* … What the ordinary intelligent … academic must seek to stay in the game is the 'MPI', the minimal publishable idea, or … the 'LPU', the least publishable unit. (Harris 1996)*

* This means improving one's curriculum vitae.

A few years ago, the editor of a famous science journal wondered what would happen if, in future, articles were published *without names attached*. Would people then be so keen to add to the avalanche of papers? Are all these articles actually necessary, or are they only there to help careers? Obviously, nobody took up his suggestion, and it might be impractical to totally change a system that seems to rely as much upon quantity as quality – but it seems to me that the system is potentially damaging to children's literature. Self-seeking specialisation does not encourage inclusiveness or accessibility.

Even if we must publish, must we publish in dialect?

Even if we must publish, must we publish in dialect? Given that academics can be assumed to be intelligent, it is ironic that many of them seem to subscribe to unintelligent axioms, such as that 'If you can say it simply, it can't be important.' Therefore, if I read sentences such as 'mediates the character through the locus of control that is the text' or 'provides a ludic

space for readers to escape their material positions', can I be forgiven for thinking that here are simple ideas (or hardly ideas at all) dressed up pretentiously, or should I sympathise with the writers who feel pressurised to produce them? More importantly, this inflated language *excludes* (as it may be intending to do) and it also *alienates*. Such writers (probably) have something worthwhile to say – but quite a lot of readers won't bother, not because they are antipathetic to theory or criticism, or whatever it may be, but because they are impatient with wilful obscurantism.

At conferences, academics take total leave of their senses and become embroiled in eccentric ritual

But it is the conferences that trouble me most, because here it seems to me that academics take total leave of their senses and become embroiled in eccentric ritual. At conferences all over the world, academics write papers and then read them out, apparently oblivious of the difference between oral texts and written texts. They don't *give* or *present* or *interpret* or *share* ideas: they *read*; the vast majority write 5000-word papers intended for publication and then try to read them in twenty minutes. Even the most accomplished performer would be hard pressed to read more than 2000 words in that time, and there are two results that would be funny if they were not so serious. The first is that the readers – who are very often nervous graduate students – read quickly, in an incomprehensible monotone, cut sections when they run out of time, try to summarise when they run over time, and generally show not the slightest consideration for their listeners. The second is what we might call The Emperor's New Clothes Effect. The audience, generally far too polite to object to the way they are being treated, sit there pretending that they see what they are supposed to see, and come away from the sessions very little wiser than when they sat down.

The Emperor's New Clothes Effect: the audience sit there pretending that they see what they are supposed to see, and come away from the sessions very little wiser than when they sat down

Am I exaggerating? And are things not even worse at international conferences whether or not there is simultaneous translation? This highly curious behaviour, based on an inappropriate teacher-pupil teaching model, leads to confrontation or compliance rather than to discussion, and seems to me to be quite out of keeping with the spirit of children's literature as an interactive, democratic, tolerant field.

Of course, all of this would be hardly worth saying if such behaviour were confined to the academic end of the spectrum, but there are two clear dangers. The first is that, like the dialect, it drives a wedge between the 'initiates' and the 'outsiders', and devalues the work of the 'initiates'. Worse (perhaps because of the prestige of academia), such behaviour is seen as the way things *should* be done, and non-academic conferences end up taking the same artificial, formal, and ultimately incomprehensible forms.

So: what could be done to change the pattern, and to stop it spreading? The answer might be to go back to first principles – why are we getting together at conferences? The answer should be, to network: to exchange ideas: to push the discipline (or some part of it) forward. If so, have we reached the stage where the real work goes on in between the scheduled sessions, where what we go for is to meet and *exchange* ideas? Why inflict

read-out papers on both reader and audience alike? I have been told that we can't all be confident performers, and that reading-out is the only option if we are going to get ideas across coherently, especially for those working in a second or third or fourth language: but there is a much more radical and common-sense approach. Get rid of the papers.

Have we reached the stage where the real work of conferences goes on in between the scheduled sessions?

This is a positively revolutionary suggestion for the North American system where 'reading a paper' is necessary for present funding and future promotion (even if the reader leaves the conference immediately afterwards). But, in our electronic age, why not issue all the papers before the conference on the net (they have then been 'read'), with hard copies going to those who do not have electronic access? Then everyone could read the papers beforehand – perhaps even read the books that the papers are about – and so arrive for the sessions they choose, informed and ready for debate, able to add ideas and to move the subject on – rather than trying to catch ideas as they fly by, or to form questions without time for reflection. The writers of papers would then not be forced to perform, but would be members of conversations. If there is still a language problem, then questions and debating points could be supplied by participants in advance. We would, in short, *confer* at conferences.

To be fair, conference organisers are increasingly making abstracts of papers available in advance, and extending discussion times. At the Children's Literature Association meeting in 2005 at Winnipeg, for example, senior members of the profession were asked to summarise the panels, and presenters of papers were encouraged to present rather than to read. These are steps in the right direction – steps back from the rituals of academia and towards what Richard Flynn (1997) has called a 'better, more visible, more inclusive network'. Children's literature has come a long way in the academic world: we need to make sure that it follows the best, most useful and accessible models, so that it can connect most usefully with the rest of the children's book world.

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Rigoberta Menchú is a winner of the Nobel Peace prize, and this book, written with her friend Dante Liano, tells the gentle story of Menchú's family history and her growing-up years in a small mountain village in Guatemala. She gives a romantic account of her grandfather sweeping his bride onto his horse and eloping with her. She recounts childhood adventures shared with her brother, and for good measure includes a pourquoi tale that tells how the rabbit and mouse got their tails. The recurring phrase 'when I was a little girl in Chimel' becomes a poetic refrain.

Her pastoral and loving childhood stands in stark contrast to the occasional allusions to 'the dark time' of death and destruction when her beautiful river 'turned away from what it witnessed in the village and disappeared underground'.

The pocket-sized Acorn edition, translated from the Spanish by Chris Mulhern, begins with an informative introduction that provides important historical background for Guatemala and Menchú herself. Other editions of her story are from Mexico (Alfaquara Infantil 2002 &2003) and Canada (Groundwood 2005).

Patricia L Bloem

RIGOBERTA MENCHÚ and DANTE LIANO

LI M'IN, UNA NINA DE CHIMEL/
THE GIRL FROM CHIMEL

Buenos Aires: Sudamericana 2001 ISBN: 9500721317
Tadworth, UK: Acorn, 2004 90pp ISBN 0953420574
(autobiography, 9+)

With lightness and vivacity, Gianni Rodari's classic tells a story with relevance for the present day. Imagine a gigantic shadow suddenly covering the sky over more than a quarter of Rome. Everybody is sure that the huge round hovering object is an alien spaceship. Public officials and politicians immediately consider how to protect the citizens and arrange the defence. One general proposes to 'receive' the aliens with gunshots. Only the children are able to look at the situation from a different point of view, discovering in the end that the thing is indeed nothing but a gigantic pie, the result of a mistake in the process of creating a terrible bomb.

Rodari's book deals fancifully with current fears of impending terror as he explores the evergreen hopeful idea that the salvation of a doomed world lies with children. Through the adventures of the children in Rome – though they could live in almost any different city – the world's wish for a science working for not against mankind receives expression as does the utopian hope that someday gigantic pies will indeed replace bombs.

Francesca Califano

GIANNI RODARI

(Francesco Altan illus; English trans Patrick Creagh, AR Whitear trans)

LA TORTA IN CIELO/A PIE IN THE SKY

Trieste: Elle 1995 104pp ISBN 8879261940
London: Dent 1971 (out of print)
(fantasy fiction, 6-10)

The Americas Award

In this article, Patricia Bloem sings the praises of an award that crosses boundaries of all types and celebrates a culture rather than a nationality

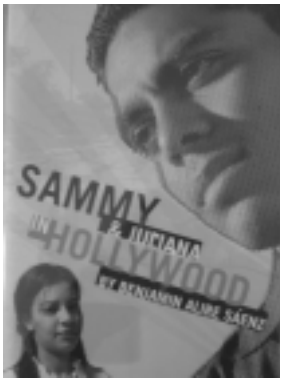
by PATRICIA L BLOEM

Patricia Bloem is an associate professor of English at Grand Valley State University in Michigan, US

The Americas Award is an unusual children's book award. It is not given for the best work of national literature, as are, for example, the New Zealand Post Children's Book Awards and the Namibian Children's Book Awards. Nor is it given for a wonderful piece of regional literature, as is, for example, the Simke Kloosterman Award for Frisian books (van den Weg 2005). Rather, the Americas Award is for Latino literature, and since the Latino cultures transcend national borders, the award too exemplifies the rich and complex and sometimes messy cultural crossings of national and linguistic borders.

Thirteen years ago a group of insightful scholars, teachers and librarians realised that one way to promote Latino (Latin American) literature for children and get it into the hands of more readers would be to create an award for the best-quality Latino writing set anywhere in the Americas. The Consortium of Latin American Studies Programs (CLASP) gave a committee of six a mandate to recognise quality, authentic Latino literature written for any age child, from readers of picturebooks to readers of meaty young adult novels (see www.uwm.edu/Dept/CLACS). Their charge was unusual in several ways. First, the books can be written in English or Spanish, which in turn means that the readership is diverse. Second, culture, rather than geography, is a primary criterion, which means that the authors can be from anywhere, and the settings could be from anywhere in the Americas – from Latin America, from the Caribbean, or from the United States. And indeed, the award winners are set in a remarkable diversity of countries and places: Argentina, a barrio in New Mexico, Haiti, Puerto Rico, New York City, Venezuela, Mexico. Then also the award recognises a variety of genres, including fiction, nonfiction, poetry, and folklore, another kind of border crossing. Furthermore, since many of those books tell tales of immigration and displacement, or of second-generation immigrants working to hold on to their culture while not allowing themselves to be marginalised, or even of second-generation immigrants returning to the land of their family, the award list represents a huge variety of ways that one can be Latino.

The annual award lists three categories: the winners – usually a picturebook and a young adult novel – the honourable mentions and



The award list represents a huge variety of ways that one can be Latino

the commended books. The number of books that have already been recognised is quite large because often the committee names five or more commended books. One of the aims of CLASP, an organisation housed at the University of Wisconsin Milwaukee, is to get the books into the hands of schoolchildren, teachers and school librarians and have the books used in classrooms. This is certainly a laudable goal, since in many countries, such as Guatemala, children simply do not have enough books where they can find themselves and their own stories, while in others, such as the United States, there is such an influx of immigration that by necessity teachers must infuse their curricula with good Latino literature. What is delightful for scholars is that the awards committee has side-stepped the festering debate about authenticity linked to an author's own ethnicity – these books don't have to be penned or illustrated by Latinos or Latinas – and instead has focused on authenticity of the cultural representation. That means that books like Frances Temple's *Tonight, by Sea* and Irene Holtwijk's *Asphalt Angels* are able to win well-deserved awards, despite the fact that both authors were writing about settings they loved but were not born into.

Many of these books tell stories of oppression and poverty through the eyes of children. One of the most powerful on the list is the Venezuelan Skarmeta's *The Composition*, set in an unidentified country, implying that this story could take place in many locations throughout the Americas. Pedro, a young boy, is told to write a composition about what his family does at night, which he knows is a trap by the authorities to trick children into informing on their parents' illegal activities, such as listening to the radio. Within the confines of a picturebook, Skarmeta allows us into the uncertain world of a child trying to negotiate mental as well as a physical survival. In contrast to Skarmeta's book, some of the titles are rooted in one specific location and evoke very specific times and places. Carling's autobiographical *Mama and Papa Have a Store*, a winner from 1998, is a good example of the cultural mix that marked Guatemala City in the 1960s, while Delacre's *Vejigante Masquerader* evokes Puerto Rican ways of celebrating the Carnival parade.

In the case of several books on the Americas Awards list, it is the message rather than the art of telling a good story that has prompted the author to write. Youme's picturebook *Selavi: A Haitian Story of Hope* begins with the compelling first sentence:

> *Not so long ago and not so far away, people with guns could take a family, burn a house and disappear, leaving a small child alone in the world.*

Youme brings to life recent political events in Haiti by considering those children who are left behind, writing about what it means to live on the streets, and how some of them have been rescued. The graphic art, often bleak and disquieting, is a fitting accompaniment to the words, and the afterword by Edwidge Danticot adds to readers' understanding of Haiti. Although the art

of writing a good story has taken a back seat to propagate a message, this is still a book that deserves a reading audience. Similarly, a perfect young adult companion book to *Selavi* is the disturbing novel *Asphalt Angels* (Holtwijk), another story of children living on the streets until they are finally offered respite. In this case, a Dutch journalist who spent years working in South America has written a story of just one of the hundreds of teenagers attempting to stay alive on the streets of Rio de Janeiro.

The real gems on the list are those with the message and the storytelling so interwoven that the reader cannot pull the threads apart

But the real gems on the list are those with the message and the storytelling so interwoven that the reader cannot pull the threads apart. The slim novel by Lynn Joseph, *The Color of my Words*, set in the Dominican Republic, is a book that surprises and delights the reader with beautiful island images while involving them in a young girl's determination to become a writer and speak out against injustice. *The Color of my Words* is a wonderfully teachable book for children of ages 9–14, especially by teachers who want to inspire their students to write well, and who want them to comprehend the power that they hold to change their worlds through the written word. Lynn Joseph, born in Trinidad, who moved to the United States at the age of nine and now lives in both New York City and the Dominican Republic, is a good example of how the Latino culture has migrated throughout the Americas, and her books, some set in English-speaking Trinidad, some set in the Spanish-speaking Dominican Republic, exemplify those linguistic and cultural riches. Cynthia James (2005) suggests that Joseph's writing and her life reflect a cultural crossing of borders; by extension she is a good recipient for an award that also epitomises those border crossings.

Another fine title on the list is Saenz's *Sammy and Juliana in Hollywood*. Set in the late 1960s in a poor barrio of a small New Mexican town – the name Hollywood is ironic – this powerful young adult novel is an example both of quality writing and of linguistic mixing. The teenage boy Sammy, nicknamed the Librarian, is a sympathetic character. Growing up with the destruction of drugs and poverty and the pall of the Vietnam War in his consciousness, Sammy faces loss after loss. The language of the book is tough and coarse, totally in keeping with the plot and the characters. But it is the interplay of Spanish with English, the way the characters pepper their speech with Spanish phrases and sentences, never trying to be tidy with words but letting their Spanish infuse their English with voice and passion, that marks this book as a linguistic delight, worthy of being an Americas Award winner.

The Americas Awards committee needs to reach teachers and school librarians and to spread the word to South and Central American publishers

In one respect the Americas Award has a long way to go: making readers aware that their award exists. To do that, of course, the Americas Awards committee needs to reach teachers and school librarians and to spread the word to South and Central American publishers. Currently, even in areas of the US with heavy immigrant populations from Latino countries and books available in the classrooms, the Americas Award as a label does not register in most people's consciousness.

Americas Winners

1993 *Vejigante Masquerader*, Lulu Delacre (Scholastic)
1994 *The Mermaid's Twin Sister*, Lynn Joseph (Clarion)
1995 *Tonight, by Sea*, Frances Temple (Orchard)
1996 *In My Family/En mi Familia*, Carmen Lomas Garza (Children's Book Press)
Parrot in the Oven, Mi Vida, Victor Martinez (HarperCollins)
1997 *The Face at the Window*, Regina Hansen (Clarion)
The Circuit: Stories from the Life of a Migrant Child, Francisco Jimenez (University of New Mexico Press)
1998 *Barrio: Jose's Neighborhood*, George Ancona (Harcourt Brace)
Mama and Papa Have a Store, Amelia Lou Carling (Dial)
1999 *Crashboomlove*, Juan Felipe Herrera (University of New Mexico Press)
2000 *The Composition*, Antonio Skármeta (Groundwood)
The Color of My Words, Lynn Joseph (HarperCollins).
2001 *A Movie in my Pillow*, Jorge Argueta (Children's Book Press)
Breaking Through, Francisco Jimenez (Houghton Mifflin)
2002 *Before We Were Free*, Julia Alvarez (Knopf)
2003 *Just a Minute: A Trickster Tale and Counting Book (*Yuyi Morales Chronicle)
The Meaning of Consuelo, Judith Ortiz Cofer (Farrar, Straus, & Giroux)
2004 *My Name is Celia/Me llamo Celia*, Monica Brown (Luna Rising)
Sammy and Juliana in Hollywood, Benjamin Alire Saenz (Cinco Puntos Press)

Other books mentioned

1999 honourable mention *Asphalt Angels*, Ineke Holtwijk (Front Street Press)
2000 honourable mention *Esperanza Rising,* Pam Muñoz Ryan (Scholastic)
2004 commended title *Becoming Naomi Leon*, Pam Muñoz Ryan (Scholastic)
commended title *Selavi, That is Life: A Haitian Story of Hope,* Youme (Cinco Punto Press)

Some individual titles are known because of aggressive marketing by the publishing companies, for example Pam Muñoz Ryan's *Esperanza Rising* and *Becoming Naomi Leon*, which have been pushed into the book-club market by Scholastic. Some titles are known because the books have won other, better publicised awards. On one hand, what matters is that the books are known, not the award itself. On the other, given the fact that the Americas Award committee's mandate goes beyond national boundaries to emphasise Latino culture in all its variations, the books on the Americas list deserve to be known as Americas winners. Clearly there is a need for more publicity. Still, as the world gets more complicated and complex because of immigration, language diversity and mobility, how good and important it is to have a major award such as the Americas that focuses on cultural rather than national boundaries!

References

James, Cynthia (2004) 'Lynn Joseph's Diverse Representations of Childhood in the Caribbean' *Sankota*

van der Weg, Jant (2005) 'Friesland: Awards and Quality' *Bookbird* 43 (3): 41–5

Submission Guidelines for *Bookbird*

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

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

Length: Up to 3000 words

Language: Articles are published in English, but where authors have no translation facilities, we can accept contributions in most major European languages. Please contact us first if you have a translation problem.

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

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

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

Contact details: Please send two copies: one to bookbirdsp@oldtown.ie AND one to bookbirdvc@oldtown.ie
NB: Please put **Bookbird submission** followed by your initials in the subject line.

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

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

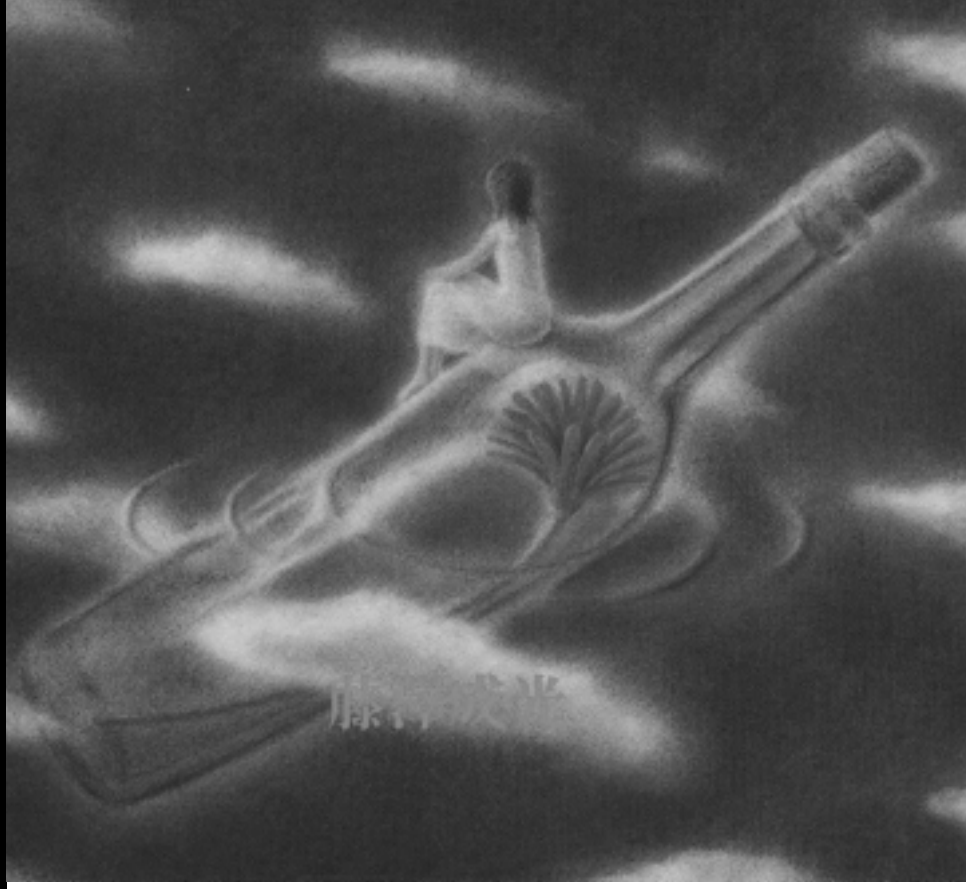
Notices on international children's books, distributed throughout **Bookbird**, *are compiled from sources around the world by Glenna Sloan, who teaches children's literature at Queens College, City University of New York.*

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

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

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

Books on Books



Books from Finland, Japan and the US on folk- and fairy tales. Books on illustration from Hungary, Israel and Slovakia. A study of children's literature as an academic discipline from the UK (via Germany). And a book on films based on Astrid Lindgren's work, from Sweden

edited and compiled by

BARBARA SCHARIOTH

(translations by Nikola von Merveldt)

Barbara Scharioth is director of the Internationale Jugendbibliothek (International Youth Library) in Munich

FINLAND

HANS-JÖRG UTHER

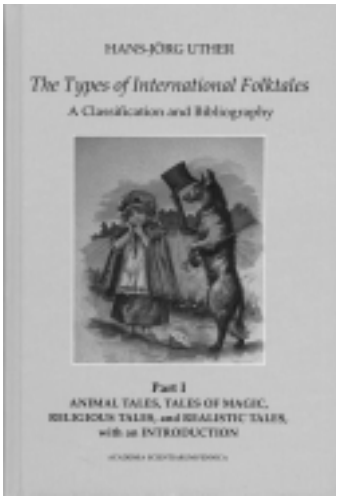
The Types of International Folktales. A Classification and Bibliography: Based on the System of Antti Aarne and Stith Thompson

(Series: FF communications 284–6) Vol. 1: Animal Tales, Tales of Magic, Religious Tales, and Realistic Tales; Vol. 2: Tales of the Stupid Ogre, Anecdotes and Jokes, and Formula Tales; Vol. 3: Appendices

Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedeakatemia 2004 619pp/536pp/285pp

ISBN 9514109635/-554/-619 €55/€45/€30 (hardback);

ISBN 9514109562/-627/-98643 €50/€40/€27 (paperback)



For many years, the well-known fairy-tale typology of Aarne/Thompson was the main reference for scholars in the field. With the ATU (Aarne/Thompson/Uther), Hans-Jörg Uther, professor at the University of Duisburg-Essen (Germany), presents an entirely revised and reworked edition. This in itself is a tremendous contribution! A revision had long been necessary, because fairy-tale scholarship has evolved considerably since the pioneering days of the Finnish scholar Antti Aarne (first edition 1910) and the first revision by the American Stith Thompson (1928, 1961).

Uther has eliminated or mitigated many faults. The descriptions of the tale types are completely rewritten, based on the latest research up to 2003. The bibliographical information for each tale type includes extensive documentation of each type's international distribution. More than 250 new types have been added, creating a total of more than 2000. This called for a re-numbering and in future these new numbers will have to be used in references. The genre-based structure of the Aarne/Thompson catalogue, which proved unsuitable over the years, has also been completely revised.

The first two volumes of the revised edition offer the descriptions of the various types; and the third volume includes bibliographical references and a subject index. However, the index is not likely to be of much help for specific tales, since the entries are by type and not by title. If you are looking for, let's say, 'The Frog King', you will eventually come upon the entry 'Frog fetches ball out of well' and be referred to type number 440: 'The Frog King or Iron Henry'.

Andreas Bode

Submissions of recent books and book announcements for inclusion in this section are welcome. Please cite titles in the original language as well as in English, and give ISBN, price and other ordering information if available. Brief annotations may also be sent, but please no extensive reviews.

Send submissions to Barbara Scharioth, Internationale Jugendbibliothek, Schloss Blutenburg, D-81247 München, Germany.

HUNGARY

KRISZTINA WIDENGÅRD (ED)
Réber album
Budapest: Holnap Kaidó 2004 111pp ISBN 9633466482
HUF 4900.00

The Hungarian caricaturist and illustrator László Réber died in 2001 at the age of eighty-one. In his home country, he helped shape post-war illustration history. But apart from a few publications, notably in East Germany, his original work was virtually unknown in other countries.

In his home country, Réber helped shape post-war illustration history

In 1992, the International Youth Library in Munich hosted the first individual exhibition of his work outside Hungary. This Réber album, published in English and edited by his daughter, features a thoughtful selection of illustrations and allows us an insight into Réber's subtle art of caricature, his strictly linear illustrations and his experimental work with paper and cardboard. His illustrations for the popular children's books by Éva Janikovszky enjoyed great success. The long and close co-operation between Réber and the well-known author resulted in a unique blend of text and image.
Andreas Bode

ISRAEL

AYALA GORDON
Iyyûrî 'ivriyyîm. Has-sefer ha-'ivrî ham-me ûyyār l-îlādîm. Hā-'îddān hab-bênle' ûmmî 1900–1925 / [ôseret hat-ta' arûkā: Ayyala Gôrdôn]
[Hebrew illustrations. Illustrated Hebrew children's books. The International Period 1900–1925]
Tel-Āvîv: Mûzê`ôn Nahûm Gûţman 2005 191pp
no ISBN US$ 30.00

This volume offers an extensive documentation of Hebrew children's literature from 1900 to 1925. It opens with a short but informative introduction to the origins of Hebrew text- and children's books designed to teach Hebrew in the late 19th century. Around 1900 there was a strong demand for Hebrew books, but since there were no publishing houses specialising in literature for children, many contemporary Russian and German children's books were simply translated into Hebrew. Even though Jewish religious tradition did not tolerate imagery, there was general agreement that children's books needed illustrations – especially if they served the worthy cause of revitalising the Hebrew language. This accounts for the large number of picturebooks translated during the early years. Ayala Gordon calls this the 'international phase' of Hebrew children's literature. It includes well-known illustrators such as Gertrud Caspari, Else Wenz-Vietor, Ernst Kutzer and I. Gleitsmann. Tom Seidmann-Freud, who was of the Jewish faith, supported the translation of their books into Hebrew. A few pre-World-War-I picturebooks by famous Russian illustrators such as Dmitrij

Isidorovič Mitrochin and Georgij Ivanovič Narbut were published in Hebrew only after the war. But it was around this time that a first generation of Jewish artists began to create illustrations directly for Hebrew children's books including Ephraim Mose Lilien, Mark Chagall, El Lisickij, Nathan Altmann, Jakob Apter, Moisej Davidovič Mutzelmacher, Saul Raskin and Jossl Kotler.

This monograph accompanied the exhibition of illustrated Hebrew children's books in the Tel Aviv Gutman Museum in the summer of 2005. The author Ayala Gordon was also the curator of this show. A sequel, taking the history of Hebrew illustrated books beyond 1925, is planned.

Andreas Bode

JAPAN

SHIGEMITSU FUJISAWA

Kokoro ga orinasu fantajī: Awa Naoko no ryōiki [The soul's web of fantasies: The literary space of Naoko Awa]

Kawasaki: Terainku 2004 355pp ISBN 4925108573 ¥2300

During her short life, Naoko Awa (1943–93) created around 270 literary fairy tales comparable to the European tradition. Both children, who also read them in their textbooks, and adults appreciate these tales for their extraordinary beauty. There are even professional readers who specialise in her work. Awa's delicate, nostalgic and uncanny fairy-tale world resonates with painful encounters between humans, animals and fantasy creatures.

The author of this study groups the fairy tales together according to key words and makes a quantitative analysis, noting the frequency with which characters, motifs and themes occur in the various tales. He uses these numbers to try to unlock the fairy tales' secret and reveal the innermost soul of the author. This first monograph was published in the same year as the seven-volume edition of Awa's works (Awa Naoko Collection Vol 1–7 Tokyo: Kaiseisha), which includes 71 major literary texts and more than 40 essays and comes with a complete bibliography of her work. Both publications are sure to inspire further Awa scholarship.

Fumiko Ganzenmüller

SLOVAKIA

BARBARA BRATHOVÁ (ED)

20 Bienále Ilustrácií Bratislava = Biennial of Illustrations Bratislava: 09.09.–31.10.2005

Bratislava: Bibiana 2005 456pp ISBN 8089154093 €25

The BIB, the Biennial of Illustrations Bratislava, first began in 1967. From early September until late October 2005, it celebrated its 20th exhibition with almost 3000 children's book illustrations from around the world. Those who could not make it to the Slovak capital during the exhibition can consult the bilingual catalogue (Slovak-English). It features 410 artists from 48 countries with large-format colour illustrations, a short biography and bibliography and contact information.

The BIB's rules are simple: every artist may submit up to five illustrations from no more than

two books; for each country, a maximum of 20 artists is allowed to participate. The books must have been published the year of the BIB or the year before and should be part of the exhibition. The selection is usually prepared by the various national IBBY-branches. In some cases individual submissions are accepted.

This twentieth and to date largest catalogue is a wonderful reference tool. Browsing the pages gives a keen sense of the cultural embeddedness of the artists' styles as well as of the wide range of quality standards. The eleven awards announced on 9 September in Bratislava (not noted in the catalogue, since it was printed earlier) also reflect this broad spectrum (see panel).

Barbara Scharioth

Winners of the 2005 BIB

Grand Prix

Iran – Ali Reza Goldouzian

Golden Apples

Denmark – Lilian Brøgger
France – Sara
Korea – Byoung-Ho Han
Poland – Pawel Pawlak
Slovakia – L'uboslav Pal'o

Plaques

Belgium – Carll Cneut
Canada – Pierre Pratt
France – Alain Gauthier
Japan – Komako Sakai
Spain – Pablo Amargo

SWEDEN

PETTER KARLSSON AND JOHAN ERSÉUS
Från snickerboa till Villa Villekulla. Astrid Lindgrens filmvärld
[From the carpenter's shed to Villa Villekulla. Astrid Lindgren's film world] (Series: Vissa i färg)
Stockholm: Forum 2004 223pp ISBN 9137123653
SEK 300.00

This volume, put together by two journalists, is richly illustrated with stills and documentary material of the films based on Astrid Lindgren's books. It invites readers to leaf through pictures from films and their production and to learn more about the movies. Beyond this visual pleasure it gives detailed information about the production process, the background and the most important directors and actors. The journalistic touch is evident in the fluent style and the many quotes from people who took part in the movies or from their descendants. The book begins with the first movies shot in 1947 by the production company Artfilm (*Mästerdetektiven Blomkvist* [*Bill Bergson, Master Detective*]), continues with a biographical sketch of Olle Hellblom, the most important Lindgren director, and closes with Hellblom's direction of *Bröderna Lejonhjärta* (1977) (*The Brothers Lionheart*). The movie *Ronja rövardotter* (*Ronia, the Robber's Daughter*) directed by Tage Danielsson (1984) is also included. Thanks to a map with all the film locations and an extensive name index, the volume can also serve as a handy reference work.

Andreas Bode

UNITED KINGDOM

EMER O'SULLIVAN (Anthea Bell trans)
Comparative Children's Literature
London: Routledge 2005 viii+256pp ISBN 0415305519 £60.00

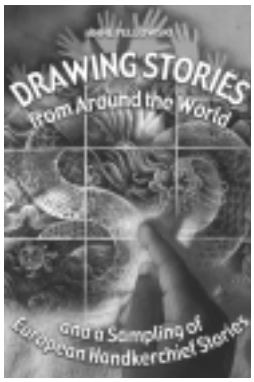
Based on *Kinderliterarische Komparatistik* Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag C. Winter 2000 (Series: Probleme der Dichtung 28) 549pp ISBN 3825310396 €59.00

Originally published in German, Emer O'Sullivan's groundbreaking treatise won the IRSCL Award for Outstanding Research in 2001. Now also available in English, the book offers a comprehensive overview of the interesting new field of comparative children's literature studies.

In the first two parts, the author delineates the history of this discipline from the 'enthusiastic internationalism' and its idea of a 'world republic of children's literature' in the 1950s to comparative criticism today and outlines the fields she wishes to address, including comparative historiography, comparative genre studies, intertextuality and image studies. At the same time, she discusses the basic concepts and the underlying questions of general children's literature studies versus a comparative children's literature theory. The main part of her study focuses on the unique problems and issues arising when translating children's literature. Using various examples from *Pippi Longstocking* to *Winnie the Pooh* and *Pinocchio*, she stresses the importance of cultural norms and codes for the translation of books for children. (The insightful in-depth analysis of various German translations of Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland* has been omitted from the English edition of the book because it is mainly of interest to a German-speaking audience.) An extensive bibliography rounds off this innovative study.
Claudia Söffner

UNITED STATES

ANNE PELLOWSKI
Drawing Stories from around the World and a Sampling of European Handkerchief Stories
Westport, CT: Libraries Unlimited 2005 ix+259pp ISBN 1591582229 US $28.00

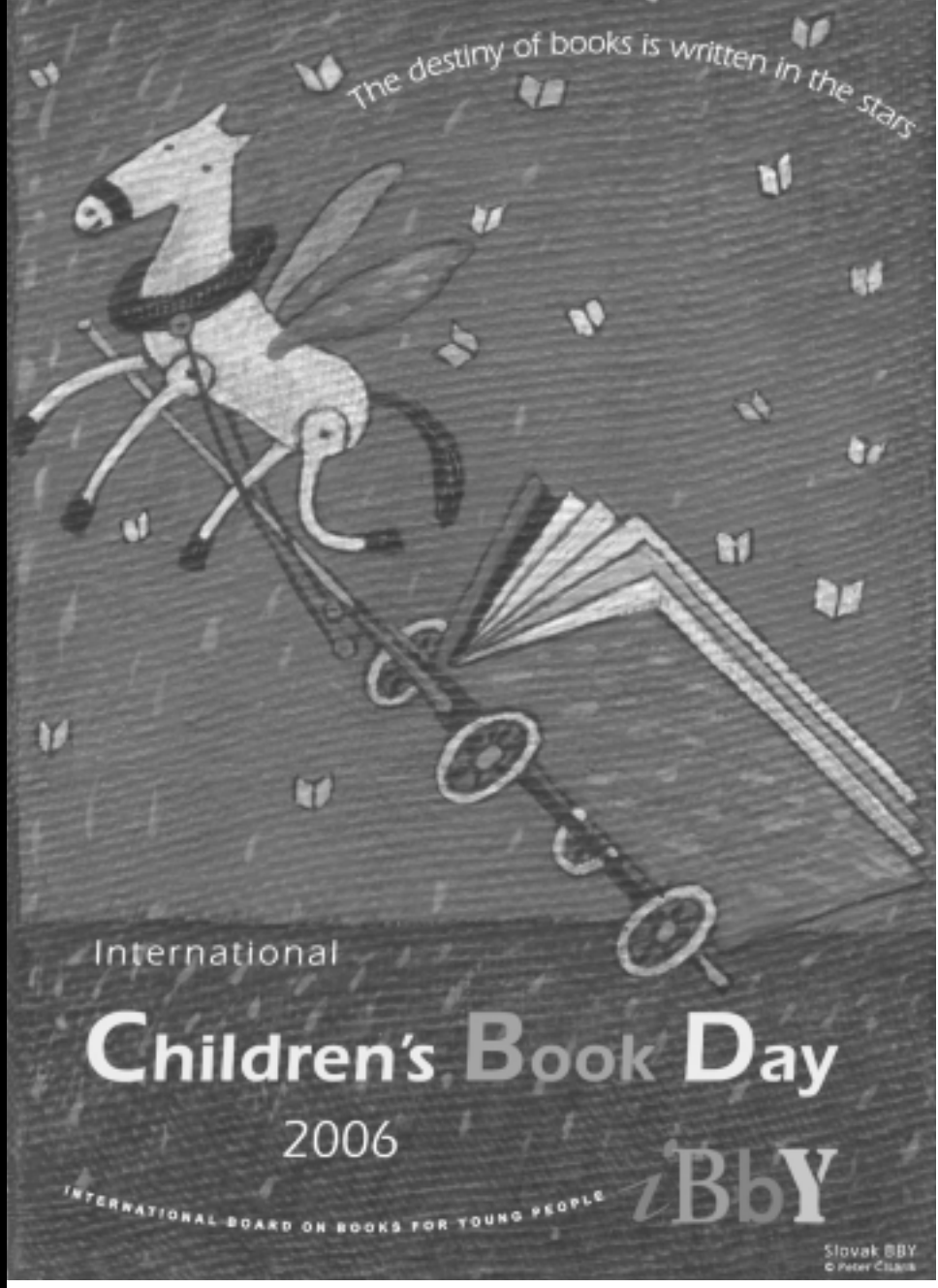


Around the late 1950s, Anne Pellowski was charged with the story-telling programme for children at the New York Public Library. The young librarian was soon enthralled with the project and began to collect stories from around the world for her multicultural public. Her books such as *A World of Children's Stories* (New York 1993) and *The Family Storytelling Handbook* (New York 1987) have become classics.

In this new book she adds valuable practical advice on the art of storytelling, techniques she has put to the test in workshops around the world. The 'drawing stories' are accompanied by lines traced in the sand or drawn on paper; these stories play with the simultaneity of word and image. Each story unfolds according to its own intrinsic rhythm, closely linked to the rhythm of the drawing.

The author also reveals her sources and shares her experience of decades of research in many different countries, from Japan to Australia, from Europe to Africa and China. The collection closes with five European handkerchief stories (hanky panky). This amusing guide to the art of storytelling is a must-read for every storyteller.
Barbara Scharioth

Focus IBBY



Compiled by
MARÍA CANDELARÍA POSADA

Edited by
ELIZABETH PAGE

María Candelaría Posada is IBBY's director of communications and project development

Elizabeth Page is IBBY's director of administration

A message and a poster for International Children's Book Day; IBBY's work in Africa and Afghanistan; and the HCA nominees

The 2006 sponsor of ICBD is the Slovakian Section of IBBY. The author Ján Uličiansky was the Slovak nominee for the 2004 Hans Christian Andersen Award. He is currently president of IBBY Slovakia. Peter Čisárik who designed the poster was nominated for the 2004 Andersen Award for illustration.
For further information and orders please contact
Slovak IBBY, Bibiana, Panská 41, SK-815 39 Bratislava, Slovakia
bibiana@bibiana.sk; www.bibiana.sk

'The destiny of books is written in the stars'

A Message for International Children's Book Day

Grown-ups often ask what will happen to books when children stop reading them. Perhaps this is one answer: 'We'll load them all onto huge space ships and send them to the stars.' Wow!

Books really are like stars in a night sky. There are so many that they cannot be counted and they are often so far from us that we do not dare to reach out for them. But just imagine how dark it would be if one day all the books, those comets in our cerebral universe, should go out and cease to give forth that boundless energy of human knowledge and imagination. Oh, dear!

You say children cannot understand such science fiction? Very well then, I shall come back down to earth and allow myself to remember the books of my own childhood. This is anyway what came to my mind when I was gazing at the Plough, the constellation we Slovaks call the 'Big Cart', because my most precious books came to me on a cart. That is, not to me first, but to my mother. It was during the war.

She was standing at the roadside one day, when a cart came rattling along – a hay wagon piled high with books and drawn by a team of horses. The driver told my mother that he was taking the books from the town library to a safe place, to prevent them from being destroyed. At that time my mother was still a little girl eager to read and at the sight of that sea of books her eyes lit up like stars. Until then she had only seen carts full of hay, straw or perhaps manure. For her a cart full of books was like something out of a fairy tale. She plucked up the courage to ask, 'Please, couldn't you give me at least one book from that big pile?'

The man smiled, nodded, jumped down from the cart and unfastened one side with the words, 'You can take home as many as are left lying in the road.'

The books tumbled noisily out of the cart onto the dusty road and in a short while that strange wagon had disappeared round a bend. My mother gathered them up, her heart beating loud with excitement. When she had dusted them down, she found that among them, quite by chance, there was a complete edition of the tales of Hans Christian Andersen. In the five volumes of various colours there was not a single illustration, but in a miraculous way those books lit up the nights my mother so dreaded, because she had lost her own mother during the war. When she read those tales in the evening, each of them gave her a little ray of hope and with a quiet picture in her heart, painted with half-closed eye-lashes, she could calmly fall asleep, at least for a while.

The years passed and these books found their way to me. I always carry them with me along the dusty roads of my life. What dust am I talking about, you ask? Ah! Maybe I was thinking of the star dust which settles on our eyes when we sit reading in a chair on a dark night. If, that is, we are reading a book. After all, we can read all kinds of things. A human face, the lines on a palm, and the stars ...

The stars are books in a night sky and they light up the darkness. Whenever I doubt whether it is worth writing another book, I gaze up at the sky and tell myself that the universe really is boundless and that there must still be room for my little star.

Ján Uličiansky

Translated from the Slovakian by Heather Trebatická

IBBY and Africa in 2006: Life after Cape Town

In 2004 IBBY's international congress took place in Cape Town and was a very successful event – even financially! – and it attracted over 500 participants. Following the IBBY regulations for congress organisers, the profit was divided between South African IBBY (SACBF) and IBBY. The Executive Committee voted to use the money for a project for Africa. Thus, it has become the seed capital for a virtual exhibition of African children's books. The exhibition, **Books for Africa, Books from Africa**, will be presented as work in progress at Bologna Children's Book Fair in March 2006, and the actual books will be exhibited in Beijing at IBBY's 30th international congress in September 2006, and later at the IBBY stand at the Bologna Children's Book Fair in 2007. The virtual exhibition will be available for viewing at IBBY's website.

Learning with children's literature

The new Bakame building

Continuing with the focus on Africa, IBBY, together with Editions Bakame, is organising a workshop in Kigali (the capital of Rwanda): **Bringing Children's Books to the Classroom**. Addressed to educators, librarians and cultural leaders from Rwanda, Uganda, Kenya, Congo, Tanzania and Burundi, the workshop is scheduled to take place in July 2006.

In the context of Africa this theme can be approached from many different angles. It's important to remember that in Africa the written culture has only recently come to prominence, whereas its oral culture goes back to the beginning of time. This is not only a figure of speech: human beings

Children enjoying the IBBY Honour List exhibition at the opening of the new Bakame building in June 2005

originated in Africa, and there is a linguistic theory that human language also originated there.

Empowerment of African languages

A great number of languages are spoken in Africa. According to Mr Adama Samassekou, the president of Acalan (the African Academy of Languages) 'the estimates go from 700 to 3000 languages and dialects. Such a big number is a good indication of the high degree of isolation in which all these communities have developed their languages.'

For many years African linguists and cultural leaders have been working towards the empowerment of African languages

For many years African linguists and cultural leaders have been working towards the empowerment of African languages, as opposed to the colonial languages of English, French, Spanish and Portuguese. The movement for empowering African languages is in a very strong position considering the pervasive effect of the colonial languages in numerous aspects of African lives. 'Many speakers of (South) African languages undervalue their own first or home languages ("mother tongues"). There is a myth that only a few languages are capable of use for high status functions, for example in higher education, the formal economy and scientific, technological, political and philosophical discourse.' This statement was made by the Project for the Study of Alternative Education in South Africa (PRAESA) based in the University of Cape Town, founded in 1992 as a result of opposition against apartheid education and currently directed by Neville Alexander. IBBY has invited the director of the Early Childhood Development Division, Carole Bloch, to address the workshop in Kigali on the very interesting issue of literacy in the mother tongue.

Feeling what you read

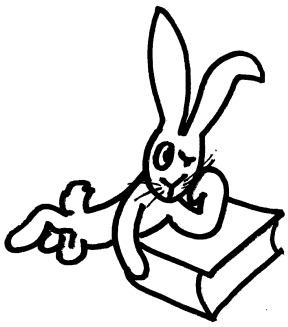
Children who learn to read in the language they speak at home, which reflects the most meaningful aspects of their lives, have a better chance of developing good language skills and going on to become readers. This goes back to the fundamental and indisputable link between affection and words. Lullabies, nursery rhymes, soft words whispered with love, are doing much more than helping a baby be at ease. They are forming the child's world, giving her the tools to name and recognise her surroundings and her emotions: her reality. Furthermore, these little poems, songs and nonsensical rhymes are a child's first exposure to literature – to the symbolic use of words.

In Africa, many schools teach in the 'official' language of the country and many countries have more than one official language. Teachers are faced with groups of children who speak and understand several different languages. Carole Bloch advocates what she calls 'additive bilinguism'. It is not a rejection of the colonial languages, but an introduction to literacy through the use of the local mother tongue. Even though it requires total commitment on the teacher's part, the results are more than gratifying for children, teachers, parents and the whole country.

And the books?

This leads us to another aspect of the workshop: the books. And how to find the books for this bilingual approach? And what kind of books?

Meaningful reading material calls for a comprehensive publishing industry that is lacking in many African countries, even though more publishers are producing books in African languages. Editions



Bakame

Bakame is a good example of a local publisher producing books in the local language. But in many cases teachers have to develop their own materials, especially if the language they want to use is not an official language. This calls for training that starts with the concept of reading for enjoyment – leading naturally to children's literature books coming to the foreground.

In Europe or America, the idea is well established. Despite the recent emphasis on learning reading skills in the classroom, reading for pleasure remains the most powerful idea to encourage book reading. But in many countries, not only in Africa, the notion of didacticism through stories still remains. Oral tradition took on the function, among others, of cohesion and balance in a social group; from there to the belief that stories must always teach something is only a step. But what will capture the small reader's attention is precisely what is near to her affection. If reading is perceived as an imposed task it will never be approached willingly.

The virtual exhibition and the workshop programme are the first tangible expressions of IBBY's commitment to encouraging the publication and distribution of quality children's books as part of **The Child's Right to Become a Reader – IBBY's Books for Children Everywhere campaign**.

María Candelaría Posada

Books for Children in Afghanistan

The Khaas Kitaab Foundation (KKF) was founded by IBBY India's secretary general and well-known writer Ms Manorama Jafa. With support from IBBY Japan, the foundation has produced the first picturebooks for children in Afghanistan after the war. Contributions were also received from friends in Norway, Spain, the United States, as well as from India. KKF also made a sizeable contribution from own funds.

Afghanistan is a war-ravaged country where people have grown up in

left: Children at the Ministry of Education, Kabul, 21 July 2005
right: Manorama Jafa visiting a village near Kabul

an environment of guns and bombs for the past two decades. This initiative not only provides good-quality picturebooks for children in a war-torn country, but also spreads the message of peace and brotherhood, as well as promoting universal values in the minds of very young children at a time when they are most receptive to ideas. The children take the books home and, like children the world over, expect the adults to read the books to them over and over again and, thus, their family or carers are also exposed to the ideas and values promoted by the stories.

Manorama Jafa presenting books to Abdul Ghafoor Ghaznawi, Deputy Minister of Education, 21 July 2005

With the help of the Afghan embassy in India, an Afghan national living in Delhi was identified to provide the Pushto text. As soon as three picturebooks in Pushto were ready the first step was to show them to the officials at the Afghan embassy in New Delhi. Mr Masood Khalili, ambassador for Afghanistan in India, liked the initiative so much that he encouraged KKF to enlarge the project so that each child in Afghanistan would receive one or two books to keep. In July 2005 while Dr Abdullah Abdullah, the Foreign Minister of Afghanistan, was visiting New Delhi, he met KKF representatives who informed him about the project and he was also suitably impressed with the work being done.

Children at the Ministry of Education, Kabul, 21 July 2005

With the help of India's ambassador in Kabul, an appointment was made with the Afghan Minister of Education to present the books. Accordingly, on 21 July 2005, Manorama Jafa presented 1,500 books to Mr Abdul Ghafoor Ghaznawi, Deputy Minister of Education, in his office. During the presentation, Manorama Jafa described how the project had begun and about the many contributions made by different individuals and organisations.

Mr Ghaznawi was very happy to receive the books. He also explained that there is need for many more books, not only in Pushto, but also in Dari (Afghan Persian). There is a growing interest in learning English and, therefore, books in English are also needed. During her visit, Manorama Jafa presented some of the books to schoolchildren: each of them received one book in Pushto and a box of crayons. The children loved having their own books to read and gave Ms Jafa some of their drawings.

The foundation gratefully acknowledges the support of Indian Airlines for the two courtesy tickets for the flight to Kabul, together with an extra baggage allowance for carrying the 1500 books.

KKF plans to enlarge the project. The first step proposed is that libraries will be established in 200 schools in southern Afghanistan in the area surrounding the city of Kandahar. Each library will receive 100 picturebooks in Pushto and 25 in English. The teachers will be urged to encourage the children to read for pleasure and thus promote the universal values of peace and tolerance.

Peter Schneck

Nominees for the Hans Christian Andersen Awards 2006

The Hans Christian Andersen Awards are presented every two years to an author and an illustrator whose complete works have made an important and lasting contribution to children's literature. IBBY National Sections from 28 countries have made their selections, submitting the following 26 authors and 25 illustrators as candidates for the 2006 awards:

- Argentina: Author: **Ema Wolf**; Illustrator: **Isol Misenta**
- Austria: Author: **Adelheid Dahiméne**; Illustrator: **Heide Stöllinger**
- Belgium: Author: **Pierre Coran**; Illustrator: **Klaas Verplancke**
- Brazil: Author: **Joel Rufino dos Santos**; Illustrator: **Rui de Oliveira**
- Canada: Author: **Jean Little**; Illustrator: **Michèle Lemieux**
- China: Author: **Zhang Zhilu**; Illustrator: **Tao Wenjie**
- Croatia: Author: **Joza Horvat**
- Denmark: Author: **Josefine Ottesen**; Illustrator: **Lilian Brøgger**
- Finland: Author: **Hannele Huovi**; Illustrator: **Virpi Talvitie**
- France: Author: **Pierre-Marie Beaude**; Illustrator: **Grégoire Solotareff**
- Germany: Author: **Peter Härtling**; Illustrator: **Wolf Erlbruch**
- Greece: Author: **Eugene Trivizas**; Illustrator: **Vasso Psaraki**
- Iran: Author: **Mohammad Hadi Mohammadi**
- Ireland: Illustrator: **PJ Lynch**
- Italy: Author: **Angela Nanetti**; Illustrator: **Emanuele Luzzati**
- Japan: Author: **Toshiko Kanzawa**; Illustrator: **Daihachi Ohta**
- Netherlands: Author: **Toon Tellegen**; Illustrator: **Annemarie van Haeringen**
- New Zealand: Author: **Margaret Mahy**
- Norway: Author: **Jon Ewo**; Illustrator: **Svein Nyhus**
- Portugal: Author: **Matilde Rosa Araújo**; Illustrator: **Alain Corbel**
- Russia: Author: **Sergey Kozlov**; Illustrator: **GAV Traugot**
- Slovak Republic: Author: **L'ubomír Feldek**; Illustrator: **Martin Kellenberger**
- Slovenia: Illustrator: **Lila Prap**
- Spain: Author: **Jordi Sierra i Fabra**; Illustrator: **Javier Serrano**
- Sweden: **Barbro Lindgren**; Illustrator: **Eva Eriksson**
- Switzerland: Author: **Hanna Johansen**; Illustrator: **Etienne Delessert**
- United Kingdom: Author: **Philip Pullman**; Illustrator: **David McKee**
- USA: Author: **E L Konigsburg**; Illustrator: **Ashley Bryan**

The International Hans Christian Andersen Award Jury, under the chairmanship of Jeffrey Garrett (USA) and with members from Finland, France, Iran, Italy, New Zealand, Russia, Slovenia, South Africa, the USA and Venezuela, will meet in March 2006 to select from among these nominations the winners of the 2006 Andersen Awards. The results will be made public at the Bologna Children's Book Fair, Monday, 27 March 2006 and the awards will be presented to the winners at the 30th IBBY congress in Beijing, China, 20 September 2006.

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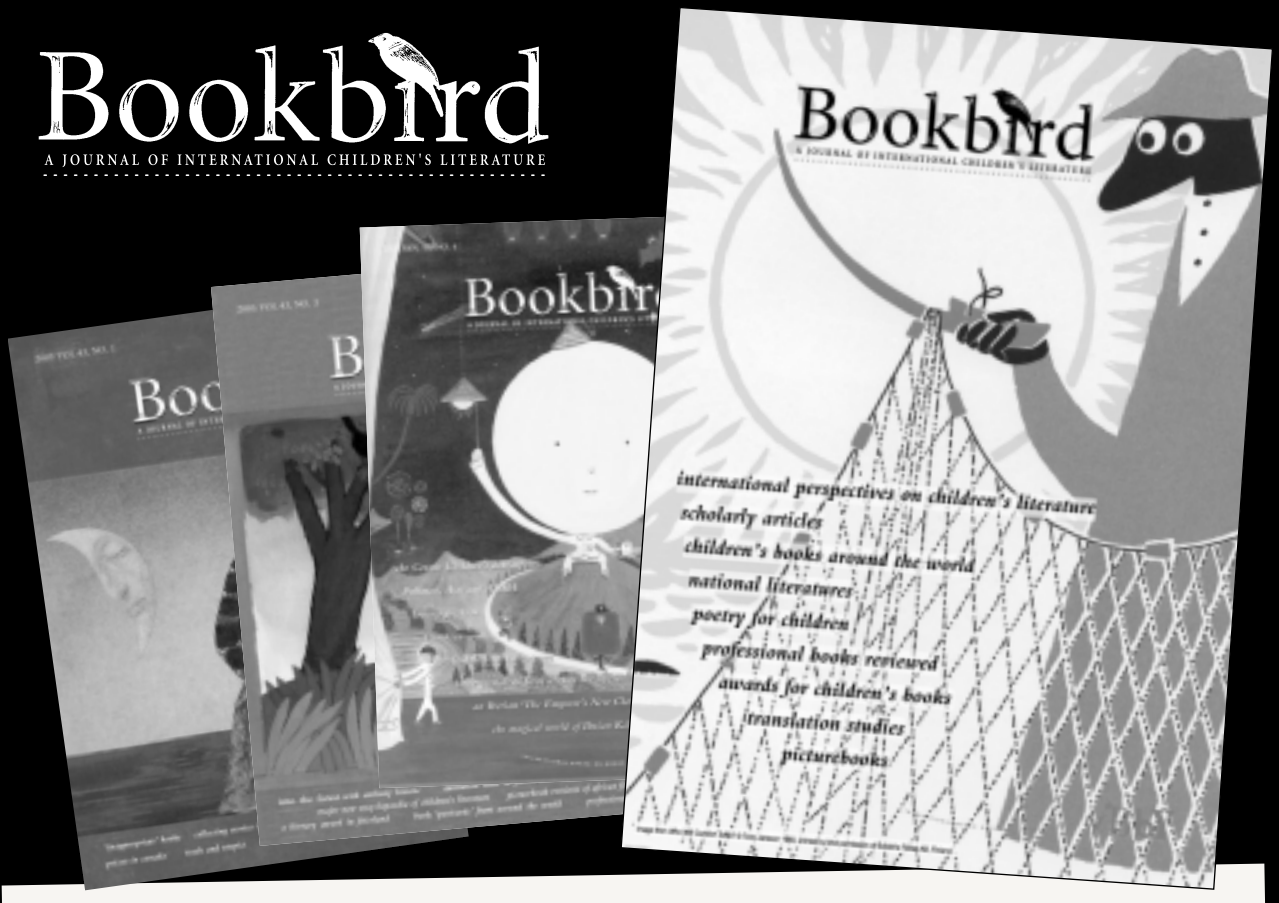

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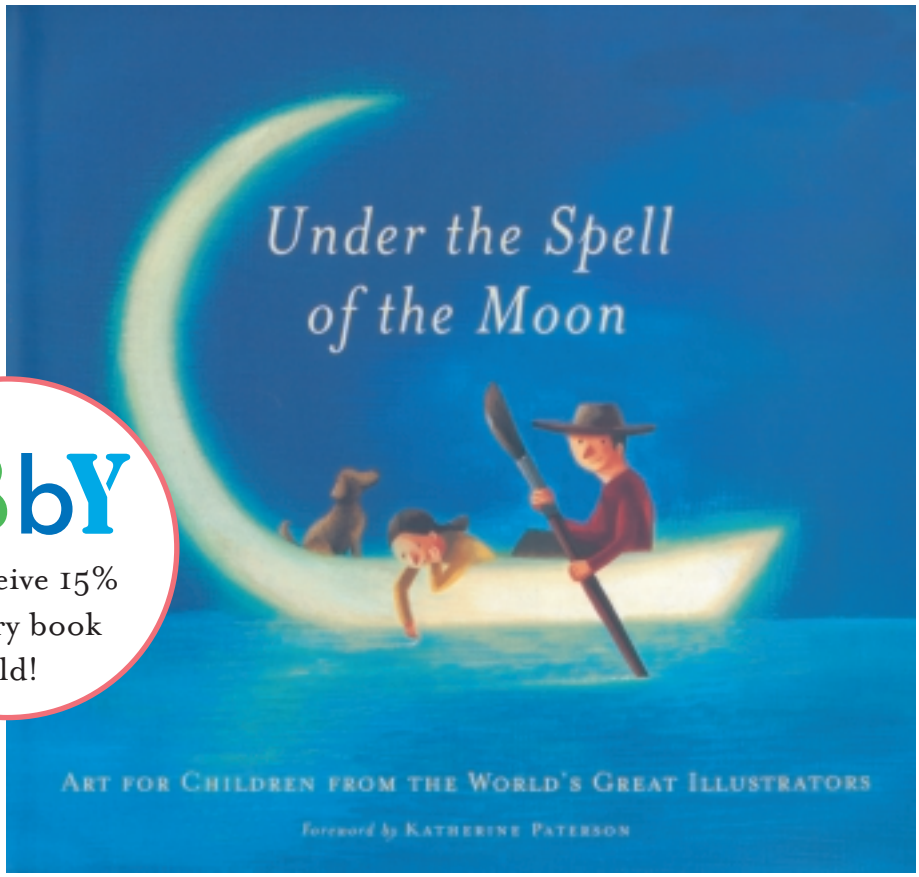

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