

Hans Christian Andersen Award 2026



Franz Hohler

Author

Candidate for the Swiss section of IBBY

Table of Contents

1.	Biographical Information_____	p. 3
2.	Reasons for Nominating Franz Hohler_____	p. 4
3.	Appreciative Interview and Article_____	p. 7
	3.1. Interview: "When I write for children, I don't wear overalls." Franz Hohler in conversation with Ute Wegmann_____	p. 7
	3.2. Article: „Writing for children – writing for adults. Franz Hohler as a crosswriter“ by Jana Mikota_____	p. 12
4.	Awards and Other Distinctions_____	p. 22
5.	Bibliography of Children's Books by Franz Hohler_____	p. 23
6.	Bibliography of Translated Booksby Franz Hohler_____	p. 27
7.	Ten of the Most Important Titles byFranz Hohler _____	p. 30
8.	Five Representative Books in Reviews _____	p. 31
	8.1. Der Weltuntergang (The End of the World)_____	p. 31
	8.2. Tschipo _____	p. 32
	8.3 Wenn ich mir etwas wünschen könnte (If I Had a Wish)_____	p. 33
	8.4. Das grosse Buch (The Big Book) _____	p. 34
	8.5. Es war einmal ein Igel (There Once Was a Hedgehog)_____	p. 36
9.	Translations from French and English Children's Books into German and Swiss German by Franz Hohler _____	p. 38
10.	Catalogue_____	p. 38

1. Biographical Information

Franz Hohler was born in Biel in 1943. Both his parents were teachers. At the age of 16 he published his first short story in a local newspaper. After graduating from high school, he began studying German and Romance languages and literature at the University of Zurich. At the same time, he presented his first cabaret programme, *Pizzicato*, in 1965.

His success on stage led Franz Hohler to give up his studies and from then on devote himself entirely to artistic creation and to “live from fantasy”, as the author put on record in an interview in 1989. In 1967, his first short story collection *Das verlorene Gähnen und andere nutzlose Geschichten* (*The Lost Yawn and Other Useless Stories*) was published, which was quickly followed by further publications, cabaret programmes and television programmes for children.

With the fantastic children's novel *Tschipo*, Hohler published his first children's book in 1978. The book received numerous awards and was nominated for the German Youth Literature Prize.

Since then, Franz Hohler wrote over 50 novels, volumes of stories and poetry and over 20 children's books. He has written scripts for feature films and thrilled German-speaking audiences with his cabaret programmes. He is not only one of the most versatile Swiss artists – who often accompanies himself on stage with a cello – he also intervenes time and again in political debates, takes a stand in debates such as those on climate destruction or the treatment of refugees in Switzerland. This is how Franz Hohler has become a Swiss institution – as an artist, children's book author and citizen.

Franz Hohler is married to the psychologist Ursula Nagel. The couple has two sons and has lived in Zurich Oerlikon for 45 years.



Franz Hohler in 1974

(photo: Hans Witschi).

2. Reasons for Nominating Franz Hohler

Franz Hohler's extensive oeuvre stands alone in contemporary German-language children's literature. Since the appearance of his first book, *Tschipo*, in 1978, the author shapes German-language children's literature with his poems and stories and encourages with his readings entire young audiences to try their own hand at storytelling and versifying. Telling stories just seems to be his vocation, a calling that manifested itself in his life.

From the very beginning Franz Hohler's trademark is his fantastic-realist narrative style. He typically begins with a real-life situation, to which he adds the most varied palette of peculiar and surreal elements, distorting reality and rendering it strange enough to make his readers view their surroundings for a moment through entirely new eyes. In this way, the madness of normality becomes absurd and the supposedly crazy fantasy worlds of his children's characters appear as a sensual reality.

Time and again, Hohler's texts thus shore up a principle of appropriation of the world that belongs profoundly to the child's experience. Playful, enigmatic, poetic, humorous, humane, radical – these are just a few attributes that make his oeuvre unmistakably his own.

For Hohler, there has never been a strict division between the stories he writes for adults and those he writes for children. Some of his stories have therefore over the course of their lives changed sides, beginning as miniatures for "grownups" only to find themselves collected in a volume of stories for "little ones" (such as *Die Riesen im Parkhaus* (*The Giants in the Car Park*¹).

What all his stories have in common, however, is a basic narrative principle grounded in fantasy and the author's confidence in human fantasy in general and in that of children in particular. Hohler's books for children are like keys to another reality, and their readers not only enter the author's poetic worlds, they also find themselves unexpectedly confronted by their own fantasy.

But Hohler also never loses sight of the circumstances of his readers' present-day lives. On the contrary, his radical focus on fundamental problems of society allows him to provide his fictional worlds with a compelling social level and thus create a striking mixture of virtuoso diction, fantasy and social critique that is probably unique in children's and young people's literature in the German-speaking world.

¹ In: *Das grosse Buch* (*The Big Book*). Munich: Hanser 2009, p. 53.



Children write to Franz Hohler.

As a storyteller, Franz Hohler is as polyvalent as he is at home in all media: he tells his stories in the form of songs, poems, narratives, micro-stories, novels, plays and a wide range of hybrids; and he presents them to his audience – both adults and children – as books, cabaret programmes, radio and television shows, readings and even films.

Notably, there are also texts that stem from his cabaret programmes that have and continue to impress generations of Swiss children in particular with their powerful, imaginative use of language. To name only two examples: *S Totemügerli* tells a spooky story in a Swiss-German dialect with an abundance of made-up words that sound right but do not exist (the term Totemügerli ist made up, but can be roughly translated as “little ghost”), and this play with language always applies a new to children. With *Der Weltuntergang* (*The End of the World*), written in 1973 and presented on TV² underlined with rhythmic tapping, Hohler has proven himself to be a spoken-word artist avant la lettre. The text, as relevant today as when it was written, has captivated numerous pupils and students and has not lost any of its appeal.

Despite his advanced age, Franz Hohler still stands on the stage with his texts and visits numerous schools – he manages to appeal to young people and establish a connection with them, he inspires them not only with his texts, but also with his humble, humorous personality. It is not presumptuous to describe Franz Hohler as a Swiss cultural asset. Meanwhile his children's books have also been translated in no less than 25 languages.

² https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kUFttt_Uk8Q

In his astonishingly diverse work, Hohler proves to be a gifted storyteller. His unbridled imagination and his mischievous delight in astonishing plot twists and paradoxes, but also in fabulating at random have remained unbroken into old age.

This is demonstrated not only by the volumes of children's poetry he has published in recent years, but also by his picture book *Das kleine Wildschwein und die Krähen* (*The Little Wild Boar and the Crows*), published in 2023, a heart-warming story about family, friendship, the small and the big world. A story that once again shows that Franz Hohler knows how to create the world out of the alphabet, time after time.



Franz Hohler surrounded by young readers and listeners.

3. Appreciative Interview and Article

3.1. Interview: "When I write for children, I don't wear overalls."

Franz Hohler in conversation with Ute Wegmann³

Ute Wegmann: Whoever did not recognize him immediately, my guest comes from Switzerland: I warmly welcome Franz Hohler, cabaret artist, writer, poet, narrator for young people, narrator for all people. Born on 1 March 1943 in Biel, he grew up in Olten, graduated from high school in Aarau, studied German and Romance languages in Zurich, albeit not to the bitter end – how much of a world did you already know that you wanted to become a cabaret artist so young?

Hohler: Actually, I hadn't got to know much of the world by then. The decision to leave university was connected with getting to know more of the world. I grew up as the son of a couple of teachers who had strong cultural interests, my father was very much interested in literature, he played the theatre. As a little toddler I was allowed to go on stage, in the Dramatische Gesellschaft Olten, where I played the son of the Valiant Little Tailor. My father was the Valiant Little Tailor. I grew up normal, there were no bigger journeys. And I had the feeling at university that I had to do too many things that I didn't want to do. I always had the

desire to do something of my own and to go out into the world with it.

You have won many prizes, performed 14 solo programmes on the cabaret stage alone, achieved many successes in the various fields, but once in your life you were unfit for service: you did not have to go to the military. Was that a gift?

It was for me. If you had to fill out the form when you were enlisted, you could indicate which type of weapon you would like to go to. I wasn't ready to refuse service, but I applied to the ambulance, although I have some difficulty seeing blood. But as a child I had a serious illness, the origin of which was never really clarified, and I received a certificate from the doctors who had treated me in the children's hospital: It was probably wiser not to bring me into contact with rifle, fat and other military substances, otherwise I could have become a serious case for military insurance. That was the gift to me. Yes!

Now I have said that you were born in 1943. The 1960s, especially 1968, the rebellion against silence about the Nazi

³ https://www.deutschlandfunk.de/kabarettist-und-schriftsteller-franz-hohler-wenn-ich-fuer.1202.de.html?dram:article_id=412691 (17/1/23)

past, the rebellion against old-fashioned learning content at universities, against the Vietnam War and nuclear armament - all this was a big topic in Germany, how did you experience the time of the student revolts in Switzerland?

It all spread to Switzerland too. I think it was a movement, it was a wave of globalisation. There were strong protests in France as well. Always for different motives, but the common denominator was the unease about what was then. So in Switzerland one still lived in the times of the so-called intellectual national defence with a very strict world view. The enemy image of National Socialism was seamlessly re-placed by the enemy image of Com-munism. One of our best-known cabaret artists made a trip to China at that time and was immediately punished by the cancellation of guest performances, his radio show was also cancelled. And not to forget: In Switzerland there was no right to vote for women, which in retrospect is a monstrosity. Also the whole marriage law. A woman was not allowed to have her own bank account or work without her husband's signature. If you tell young women that today, they hardly believe it.

Went young Franz Hohler also demonstrating?

Hohler: Yes, I was also on the street - I was once at a big protest march. I have the feeling that the restlessness of the youth back then was looking for motives. There was also a great lack of understanding in Switzerland at that time about what the Swiss youth had to protest. You could understand the

Germans, they had the old Nazis, who held high offices everywhere. But what is wrong with us? At the station bridge there was a makeshift where the old department store, the Globus, was, because it had been rebuilt at the original place, that was called the Globus makeshift, and there, when the Globus went to its place of origin, a youth centre was to be built there. There was a big demonstration, I was there too. You were splashed by the water cannons of the brave police, I swivelled a rose and sang the song: "L'importance est la rose". The rose was washed down violently, and so was I. And the Zurich police commander stood on a balcony of the restaurant "Du Nord" and shouted at us: please dissolve, so please dissolve! And this request already seemed very absurd to me back then. For me it was a linguistic symbol for the contrast between old and young.

I'm just trying to remember that women's suffrage was only introduced at the end of the 1970s.

At the beginning of the 70s, I have to say in honour of the Swiss men. 1971, but to a certain extent you are still right, because cantonal electoral law was only introduced in the canton of Appenzell in 1991.

A novel is a park

More than 20 books have been published, with poems or short stories, but also novels. Most recently the volume of poems "Alt?" and the novel "Das Päckchen". What appeals to you about the short form? What about the long one?

The short form is like a spotlight that highlights a motif from the semi-darkness, describes this motif and omits everything around it. This is a form that has always appealed to me. Long writing, writing a novel, means illuminating a larger landscape if we stick to the image of the spotlight. Or you could also say that a novel is a park in which you invite your readers to take a walk, sit down on the small bench among these bushes or trees, admire the view, meet people who come unexpectedly along the way. And the short story, it would just linger on the bench where someone sits and someone else comes along and it comes to an encounter. Both are very attractive forms for me. When a motif comes to my mind, I think to myself: Is it a motif for a short story or is it at best a motif for a long story? And I don't have that many motifs for a long story.

We know about the importance of editing, to leave the importance of something behind, to reconsider. Does that have the same amount of work with the short and the long form? You rarely have something like a first draft.

I often have a first draft.

Then I didn't say anything.

But when the first draft arrives, I always print it out. I print out every page, even a novel, then I look at it until I know every word personally and can say it: That's how it has to be, that's how I want it to be, that's how I think it's coherent. And that's the same process with a short story as with a novel.

No cute verses for the poor limited little ones

Very early on, at the end of the 1970s, you wrote your first children's story, you even had a series on the Swiss children's television. This was followed by the Tschipo series, then story volumes such as Der Riese und die Erdbeerkonfitüre, Die Spaghettifrau, much more and finally Es war einmal ein Igel, poems illustrated by Katrin Schärer. When I read your stories or poems for children, I hardly see any difference in your attitude compared to the adult stories.

Let's put it this way: When I write for children, I don't wear overalls. Instead, I sit down in the same clothes. The only thing I like to think about is that I don't overburden them with vocabulary. When I write for adults, I don't take any account of comprehensibility, for children I make sure that I have few foreign words with me, or so that I think they can ask their parents, because I don't want to underchallenge them either, and I don't want to make cute verses for the poor limited little ones, but those that work. The search for the simple expression, which should not be banal or trivial, is something interesting. In my large story collection The Big Book, there are 90 stories in it and at least a third of them I didn't originally write for children. But I have noticed that children enjoy it. And then I sometimes see if I could simplify them. There are also several creation stories from me.

The back and forth stories definitely belongs to the short form – Aller Anfang (All Beginning) of the titles – written in

alternation with the wonderful Swiss writer Jürg Schubiger, who died in 2014. How did your writing together look like?

Well, we knew each other since our student days, he was older. He struck me as one of the few people who knew why they were studying. Most of them did it just like that. So did I. This became a friendship. We followed each other's work. He actually studied in order to take over his father's educational publishing house with an academic degree, but he also always wrote. We always read our stories to each other, he also visited my stage programmes. And we made our remarks, each of us also tolerated the criticism of the other. And one day the idea came, and it came from Jürg, that we could write stories that would shake hands. I write a story, and you answer with a motif that you see in my story. And I answer again with a motif from your answer story and so there should be a literary chain. That's how the back and forth stories came about. Later we also did a radio play. With the same method. And then the creation stories All Beginning: The back and forth stories were stories for adults, the creation stories for children. Or they still are.

You both ask the question about the origin of the world. Was there a big bang or a magician, a box of peas or a god? What does Franz Hohler believe in?

Yes, if you really ask me. I am an agnostic. I don't know, that's why I don't believe either. For me, creation is one of the great mysteries of this world. I cannot explain it to myself. Even if I consider that balance, that nature constantly strives

for, all the sub-tleties of creation, then I actually get dizzy.

„Actually, I'm more interested in the things I don't know“

Is this dizziness perhaps the view that you make possible for us again and again through your stories of reality? The gaze, which is always also oblique, cheerful, absurd, sometimes even evil?

I'm more interested in the things I don't know than in the things I know. I also think stories come more out of the curiosity to explore something unknown or to tell an aspect that you think is worth telling, that perhaps doesn't correspond to the usual view and experience. The invention, the fantasy, it belongs to the feeling of becoming dizzy.

You'll also find a lot of amusing and informative stuff on Franz Hohler's website www.franzhohler.ch, one of the funniest websites I've ever seen: black and white, minimalist to zero design, depressive photo booth pictures and the worst reviews are gathered there, until at some point you approach something positive after all. How does Franz Hohler deal with criticism?

Yes, well, by always being curious as to whether there's any bad criticism, and then I put it on the website. This is a game with the critics and as a counterpole to websites where there are always only the best critiques, they then become unbelievable at some point. But of course one rather has good critiques than bad ones, that applies to me as well. But the criticism with which I can do something,

it should not demand something from me, which I cannot do, but it should start with what I can do, what my field is. My wife is a very good critic and also a connoisseur, who knows what can be asked of me. That is what I call constructive criticism, which challenges me. Jürg Schubiger and I also criticized each other because we knew each other's strengths and weaknesses.

Many famous artists have contributed pictures to your stories: Katrin Schärer, Klaus Ensikat, Jacky Gleich, Das grosse Buch by Nikolaus Heidelbach, All Beginning by Jutta Bauer. Is it important that the illustrator has a kind of affinity with you, shares your humour, your view of the world? What is the prerequisite for a successful cooperation?

I do believe that someone who illustrates my stories, who has to enjoy them, has to be happy to do so. And that also means that he or she has a similar sense of humour, irony, playfulness or the lightness of the text. A good illustration doesn't illustrate, but extends the text.

"I open the coat to the universe"

Your last volume of poetry is called Alt (Old). Poems that deal with growing old, with farewells, with death. The poem that gives the title is very long: "And why does the dark suit – in the wardrobe – no longer want to move to the back? Or: "Will the energy-saving lamp that you screw into the toilet that lasts 10,000 hours last longer than you? - "... what do times matter to you that you will hardly live to see?", but then the granddaughter's gaze

and the turning point. Here we get to know a very thoughtful, not so sharp, weird, funny Franz Hohler.

That's a part of me too. Even the cheerful people are not always cheerful. I like to write about the whole state of being, i.e. "about the swing of life that oscillates between laughing and crying", that's what Morgenstern wrote.

The Austrian writer Heimito von Doderer says: "You have to pull the cloak of concrete activity tighter around your shoulders in old age in order to survive the approaching cold of space". How does Franz Hohler prepare himself for old age?

I open my coat to the universe, I don't even want to protect myself from what is coming, from what is about to happen. I think that every day you live is worth living, I am happy as long as you can get up without immediately buckling. I am also happy about the weather. When I sit inside as I do today, and I see the wind driving the snowflakes horizontally through the Gugelstrasse, where I live, then I am happy about it. But of course you are surrounded by goodbye, the dark suit never moves far back. And every farewell that comes up to you reminds you of your own farewell. I've been dealing with death since my youth.

3.2. Article: „Writing for children – writing for adults. Franz Hohler as a crosswriter“ by Jana Mikota

Mikota, Jana (2016). *Schreiben für Kinder – Schreiben für Erwachsene. Der Crosswriter Franz Hohler*. In: Pecher, C., Franz, K., Burkard, M. (eds). Was die weißen Raben haben. Gedichte für Kinder und Jugendliche von 1945 bis heute. Schriftenreihe der Deutschen Akademie für Kinder- und Jugendliteratur Nr. 46, Hohengehren, Schneider, S. 177-191.

Franz Hohler is one of those authors who write poems, stories and longer texts for both children and adults. He began as an author for adults with short stories, and since 1978 he has also written regularly for children with "the same seriousness" with which he also publishes texts for adults (Gien 2003, p. 4). When asked whether he writes differently for children and adults, the writer and satirist Franz Hohler (born 1943) answers as follows:

*The difference isn't so big. In the story collection *The Big Book*, that's about 90 stories for children and there are at least 30 which were originally not for children, but just written. First I read it to the adults and then I noticed that it is also good for children. The only thing I pay more attention to, is that when I write for children I don't overtax. But I don't want to chum up the language either. I then have to find a language with which I am satisfied. (Wegmann 2014, no page)*

For adult readers, Hohler mainly writes short prose, while in his children's literary work he makes use of various forms: picture books, poems, theatre, short prose and novels.

The following article will focus on the lyrical work of the author, whereby his prose cannot be completely ignored. Similarities and differences in writing for children and adults are to be indicated. Hohler's statements on children's and youth literature are also reminiscent of another crosswriter of German-language literature who, however, is largely perceived in the context of adult literature. The author is Bertolt Brecht, who wrote poems for children with his collection of children's songs (1934/1937) and also thought about children's literature. Franz Hohler's collection *Es war einmal Igel (Once There Was a Hedgehog)*, 2011) can be read in this tradition (see also Payrhuber 2012), because Hohler is also less concerned with a literature specific to addressees than with literature that can be read with pleasure by both children and adults.

The article focuses on the phenomenon of crosswriting and approaches the question as follows: The aspect of intertextuality and multiple addressing is presented as an important feature of crosswriting and shows how Hohler uses these aspects as a matter of course in his children's literary work, thus

designing the texts for both child and adult readers.

Crosswriting – Crossover

The phenomenon of crosswriting is not a new trend in (children's and youth) literature, but looks back on a longer tradition. In research, this term stands along-side terms such as 'crossover', 'multiple addressing' or 'ambiguous literature' (cf. Blümer). Since the publication of the first Harry Potter volume (1997), the terms have been experiencing a blossoming and one reads "more and more frequently about 'crosswriting', 'crossover' and 'all-age' literature" (cf. Blümer). Kümmerling-Meibauer distinguishes between three forms:

In relation to children's literature, the term [crosswriting] can be used to mean three things: First, the fact that many authors of children's books have also written works for adults; secondly, the phenomenon that a first conceived as a book for adults by the same author as an or vice versa; thirdly, a recipient of the book. Comprehensive writing, i.e. a literary text for children, in this case addresses both child and adult readers. (Kümmerling-Meibauer 2003, p. 248)

However, in children's and youth literature research, in literary criticism and in the publishing world, the term is primarily narrowed to the third aspect (cf. also Blümer). Hohler's literary work can be examined under the second and third phenomena, because his children's literary work can be described as ambiguous and is, despite its supposed simplicity, characterized by a high

degree of complexity. In particular, the aspect of intertextuality plays a decisive role. Intertextuality initially refers to the relationship between texts and means that texts enter into a dialogue with each other (cf. Kristeva, Bakhtin and others). Following Pfister's explanations, the present contribution here limits intertextuality to the "process of a more or less conscious reference to individual pretexts" (Pfister 1985, p. 15, cf. also Wicke 2014).

Wicke divides the pretexts relevant to children's and youth literature into the following groups: Such from the field of children's literature, biblical and mythological texts, works of adult literature and invented pretexts". (Vetch 2014, p. 14)

Children's and young people's literature research concentrates primarily on narrative literature, but also on children's lyrical texts, which, as is still shown in Hohler's work, are characterised by numerous intertextual aspects. Here we find references to individual texts, but also to systems such as genres or myths. According to Kurt Franz in his volume *Kinderlyrik*, intertextuality is a more recent trend in children's poetry. Hohler himself does not think in terms of children's, youth or adult literature:

I don't believe in a clear separation between children's and adult literature. Very often I see children reacting to texts that are actually written for adults. Good children's literature is always good literature for adults. If something only pleases children, then I suspect an ingratiation of an adult author behind it. (Quote from Gien 2003, p. 19)

Nevertheless, he believes that children have their own "world view" (Gien 2003, p. 19), and in many of his "narratives he illuminates only excerpts of reality as with a searchlight" (Gien 2003, p. 19). He vehemently rejects the pedagogical index finger, and above all his poems and stories resist orders and rules. Bertolt Brecht also deals with ideas of children's literature. His children's songs take up themes similar to those of his poems for adults but are distinguished by their performance.

All of Brecht's children's songs show that the "adult themes" are also for children; "childlike" alone their presentation must take place, that is, the themes must be presented linguistically in such a way that children can realize them in their imagination. The art is not to speak primitively, but simply. Simplicity is the result of what is difficult and difficult to do. (Button 2006, p.97)

In contrast to Brecht, however, Hohler's children's literary texts differ thematically and linguistically from his adult poetry. They lack the political, which is inherent in Brecht's poems and which also characterises Hohler's adult poetry.

Of fairies and animals: Double meaning in Hohler's literary work for children

Fairy tales and legends are an important part of Hohler's work. The title of his collection *Es war einmal ein Igel* (Once there was a hedgehog, 2011) already refers to fairy tales. But the beginning, at least for the adult reader, does not only mean a conclusion about the fairy tales of the Brothers Grimm, but also refers to a possible tradition: Christian Morgen-

stern, Joachim Ringelnatz and Bertolt Brecht also chose the beginning "Once upon a time" in their poems.

*Once upon a time there was a gnu
That buys a shoe.
The shoe was too small for him.
It gave it to a pig.
The pig says: Thank you very much.
And puts him in the closet.
He would rather have four shoes
But it doesn't talk about it.
(Hohler 2011, p. 10, rough translation)*

Hohler's poems have an ending rhyme and live from repetitions. The stanzaic form varies, the length varies between two and five verses. The structure of the poems is identical: according to the initial formula, the object or living being is introduced, followed by an incident that ends in a witty, quirky punch line. His poems are dominated by animals who are confronted with different and for them



Aus: Hohler, Franz: *Es war einmal ein Igel*. Ill. by Kathrin Schärer. Hanser 2011.

contradictory situations. Characteristic is the nonsense moment, which possibly irritates, takes up everyday situations and designs them in incompatible situations.

Literary studies use the term nonsense to approach a form of text in which the connections "are not based on wit, humour, comedy or irony, but on mere absurdity and illogicality. Connection of paradoxical ideas" (Wilpert 1989, p. 625). Stylistic devices include puns, imitations of sounds, or breakthroughs in reading expectations. Well-known representatives of nonsense poetry are Christian Morgenstern and Joachim Ringelnatz, and they are linked with Hohler's poetry. According to Kurt Franz, nonsense has long been an essential element in children's poetry ([http://epub.uni-regensburg.de/257821 | lubrl2888 ocr.pdf](http://epub.uni-regensburg.de/257821/lubrl2888ocr.pdf)).

Hohler's poems initially demand no understanding from their readers; the focus is, among other things, on the sound of language and on playing with words. The poem *Es war einmal ein Gnu* (*Once upon a time there was a Gnu*) already quoted creates a paradoxical situation and contains what characterizes Hohler's poems in the collection: They are puns, the end rhymes seem to combine indiscriminately to form a story, and the joke lies above all in the last verse and, as will be shown, also in the illustration. But the poem also reveals courtesies and possibly questions patterns of behaviour.

Other poems describe problems or worries and at first seem to deal with them in a playful way.

*Once upon a time there was a hat.
He had no dad.
He cried a hundred times.
Now he doesn't care.
(Hohler 2011, p. 40)*

They are poems that children grasp in their wit, while adults sometimes truncate the accuracy and subject matter. One review says that the adult reader needs a "nanosecond for head processing program" (Lövenberg 2011). However, while in the poetry collection *Es war einmal ein Igel* nonsense dominates, readers encounter dogs without mouths and lakes in love, Hohler's poetry for adults is more serious and far more critical, without losing its humorous tone.

In his poems for adults, however, Hohler works more with irony and sarcasm, which are not always accessible to the child reader.

The poems from the collection *Vom richtigen Gebrauch der Zeit* (*The Right Use of Time*, 2006) will serve as an example. The request to the cameraman says:

*Could you
cameraman
next time
if you film the hunger
and zoom in on the flies
on the eyes of the Ethiopian child
could you then
lower your camera
and instead
drive the flies away?
Thank you
(Hohler 2006, p. 15, rough translation)*

Here Hohler presents himself as a precise observer of his environment. The poem, written in the you-form, directly criticises the behaviour of television people, poses a supposedly simple question and thus inspires reflection. It is an examination of the media and the form of reporting.

Hohler uses a simple language in his poetry for both children and adults, but nonsense and playing with words dominate in his children's literary poems, while his poems for adults are socially and socially critical and full of irony. Linguistically, Hohler takes both target groups seriously, while his thematic focus is different.

The children's poetry, however, reveals other special features of the author. On the one hand some of the poems from the poetry collection can be classified in the tradition of animal poems, on the other hand it takes the beginning of the fairy tale, which children are probably familiar with. Animal poems, but also animal stories look back on a long tradition. Bamberger and Haas even see "one of the most important genres of the youth book" in the "Animal Book" (Haas 1996, p. 1), but exclude the animal poem, and also a look at the database of youth literature of the Frankfurt Youth Book Institute shows that keywords such as animal lyricism or animal poetry have been little researched. This may come as a surprise because animal poems have already been included in the collection *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* (see also Payrhuber 2015) and animal poems also enjoy great popularity in everyday school life. In his collection, Franz Hohler uses animal poems from different traditions, and it is above all Brecht's children's

poems that can serve as pretexts in addition to the aforementioned influence of the Ringelnatz and Morgenstern:

*Two ants lived in Hamburg,
who wanted to go to Australia.
Near Altona, on the Chaussee,
their legs hurt,
and there they wisely renounced
then to the last part of the journey.
(Ringelnatz 1933, p. 32, rough
translation)*

Roland Stark emphasizes that Ringelnatz, like „no other German writer of the 20th century [...] dominated the nonsense verse]" (Stark 2001, p. 1), is thus tying to old traditions and modernizing them. Similar to Hohler, he creates a contradictory situation, showing ants who have taken on a task. Ants who embody diligence and work have not failed in the poem, but their abandonment is accepted as "wise". In the figurative sense, the poem can also be seen as an invitation not to stubbornly push things forward, but also to admit failure.

Hohler's poems from the collection *Once upon a time there was a hedgehog* follow this strand on the one hand, but on the other hand there are also signs of proximity to Brecht's animal verses. Bertolt Brecht wrote poems for children in the 1920s.

According to Kaulen, these are mainly parodies of older literary originals (Kaulen 1994, p. 27). Brecht's children's songs were written between 1934 and 1937 and were intended for private use. In his children's songs *Lieder für Steff* he wrote 14 animal verses in which eagles, ravens, hedgehogs, woodlogs, dogs, pigs,

chickens, camels, horses, elephants, mice, eels, goats and snakes cavort and are integrated into the political context of the 1930s.

The animal figures reflect social conditions and are presented to readers in encrypted form. (...) (cf. Knopf 1996, p. 97).

Therefore, Brecht naturally draws on the themes that he also uses in his other works. Brecht's poems thus aim to enlighten and comment on the political situation. They adapt themselves linguistically to the childlike addresses. His verses begin with the familiar opening formula "Once upon a time", which Hohler also uses in his poems. In both poetry collections, the introduction creates a unity between the individual poems. The words "Once upon a time" are to be understood parodistically, at least in Brecht's poems, just as Ringelnatz uses them in his poems. Hohler's poems, on the other hand, are more interested in language, in playing with language and nonsense. This is illustrated by two poems.

*There once was a hedgehog
He suddenly grew wings.
He flew, you hardly believe it
On a tree.
There he jumps up and down and sings
the most beautiful songs.
Only in the morning when he wakes up.
There he feels his thorns.
(Hohler 2011, p. 20, rough translation)*

*Once upon a time there was a
hedgehog
He fell into a crucible.
With rancid salad oil and
It softened the spines.
Then he entered the League of Nations.*

*From a blind tiger
He was then passed around as a
converted warrior.
(Brecht 1967, p. 508, rough translation)*

According to Kaulen, Brecht's animal poems are reminiscent of the vers fables of the Enlightenment, which [narrate] exemplary events in "model-like shortening in order to initiate processes of cognition in the reader" (cf. Kaulen 2001, p. 268). Brecht's poem can be read as a pacifist poem on the one hand, but also as a critical view of the League of Nations on the other. The hedgehog's spines are involuntarily oiled, he no longer appears dangerous and joins the League of Nations in order to be protected. Here he is cared for by a blind tiger who also needs the protection of the League of Nations and who introduces the hedgehog as a "converted warrior". But the hedgehog has not voluntarily become a pacifist. Brecht uses a simple expression in his poems to draw attention to complex situations and to create a problem awareness.

Hohler's poem of the hedgehog plays on different levels with the meaning of the spines, which can also have sexual connotations. The child reader laughs at the paradoxical situation of the singing hedgehog, who may be pricked by pine needles in the morning, while the adult reader discovers a meta-level that is not common in children's literary texts. Hohler's poems play with contrasts, tell the contradictory and describe absurd situations. The focus is on linguistic design. He presents his readers with something that can be done with language and focuses not on teaching, but on creativity.

But: Kaulen rightly points out that Brecht's animal verses should not be reduced "one-sidedly to their didactic and didactic tendencies" (Kaulen 2001, p. 268). In addition to political teaching poems, Brecht also writes nonsense verses, which are characterized above all by the joy of language and the deconstruction of an everyday order (cf. Kaulen 2001, p. 268).

These include, among others:

*Once upon a time there was a pig
It only had one leg.
Once it was in a hurry
And then it slipped on the back.
Into the violet bed:
It was a right pig.
(Brecht 1962 p. 509, rough translation)*

In other words, both Brecht and Hohler take on situations in their poems that were long considered taboo in children's literature, such as the hedgehog waking up in the morning, the pig drinking red wine or the fart that was too short. Hohler, however, does not dispense with these themes; he presents them differently to child readers and makes it possible for them to understand the text differently from adult readers. Brecht's poems also show an honourable tendency.

Hohler wants to tell "about life as a whole" and encourage readers to play the language:

*I am happy when I can support their
imagination or creativity. I always get
stories written by children in my
children's stories. Entire school classes
send me stories. Also on the poems.
And the children say: We can do that
too. And I almost envy them. An 8-year-*

*old sent me a verse once: Once upon a
time there was a raven who had a gift.
He could fly backwards, even lying
down. For me, these are dream
experiences when you see that you get
something going with your readers. And
not admiration or reverence, but my own
creativity. And that they say: 'Come, we
can do that too. Now we make a brittle
story and then we send it to him' and I
have to read it and answer it. (Wegmann
2014)*

Such statements document how readers work with his texts, implement them creatively and understand the play with sounds. But that's not all: Hohler attaches great importance to linguistic accuracy and repeatedly mocks colloquial language as in the poem *Sprachlicher Rückstand (Linguistic Backwardness)*:

*Still
we call
what's happening in the morning
the sun rises
although we know since Copernicus
the sun stays still
and
the world's coming to an end.
(Hohler 2000/2015, p. 143, rough
translation)*

But his poems show even more in the context of the questions of intertextuality: they enter into an "open" discourse with Brecht and Ringelnatz (cf. Payrhuber 2012), for "the "simple" children's poem is not self-contained, but is also determined by what was written before it and has flowed into it consciously or unconsciously" (ibid., p. 77).

But it is not only Bertolt Brecht who can be regarded as a model for Hohler's childlike lyrical work. He also takes up Swiss legends in his poems. Fairies appear in his poems, but seemingly without a deeper meaning, if they say so:

*Once upon a time there was a lake
who loved a fairy.
He always liked her better.
He ended up slopping over.
(Hohler 2011, p. 13, rough translation)*

Unlike his poems for adults, however, Hohler's children's poetry must be perceived in conjunction with the illustrations, as poems for children are usually illustrated. Gelberg pointed out in 2005 that the connection between images and lyrical language as well as colours and language had been largely ignored in research so far (cf. Gelberg 2005). In current research, Franz-Josef Payrhuber examines the significance of illustrations in selected anthologies and thus opens up a new approach to poetry for children. Illustrations have different functions in picture and children's books:

- 1) Symmetrical relationship: text and image convey approximately the same information.
2. Complementary relationship: text and image complement each other "by filling mutual spaces".
3. Enrichment: information is acquired by the other sign system.
4. Counterpoint: picture and writing contain different information, tell a story together.
5. Contradiction: information in picture and text are mutually exclusive (according to Staiger 2014, p. 19 f.).

The illustrations by Kathrin Schärer in Hohler's collection *Es war einmal ein Igel* (*There Once Was a Hedgehog*) are also characterised by blank spaces and thus complement the text.

The illustration to the already circulated poem *Es war einmal ein Igel* shows a hedgehog sitting between two birds and injuring them with his spines. The facial expression of the birds makes their pain clear and thus takes up another reading of the text. Image and text thus contain different information and set different emphases. However, the ambiguity of the poem is removed, because now one concentrates only on birds and hedgehogs. The information is extended – the hedgehog can be seen between the two birds – on the one hand, and shortened on the other, since the reader is offered a meaning that is, however, opposite to the end of the poem. I.e. text and illustration work with contradictions.

The following poem, on the other hand, shows an illustration that adds a moment to the text that is not mentioned in the poem.

*Once upon a time there was a fish
He was sitting at my table.*

*And panted through the gills.
Until I pulled myself together*

*And threw it quickly back into the water.
Now he's feeling better again.
(Hohler 2011, p. 16, rough translation)*

The drawing shows, however, a carp which is not lying at the table but on it and is to be eaten. He looks anxious, and thus

the illustration reinforces and focuses on the situation told in the poem. It provides a reading and supplements the poem, because at least the text leaves it open why the fish is sitting at the table. Text and illustration thus provide different information and complement each other to form a story.

The drawings in the volume always take up individual passages from the text, illustrating, supplementing, commenting on and extending the conclusion. They provide new perspectives on what is happening, and the tension that arises from text and illustration in turn offers new reasons for speech and thought. But Hohler not only makes use of inter-textual aspects in his lyrical texts, but also in his prose. His picture book *If I had a Wish* (2000), illustrated by Rotraut Susanne Berner, takes up fairy tale elements. The picture book tells the story of the girl Barbara, who is full of self-doubt.

She thinks she can't do anything that is important: "She couldn't count well, she couldn't read well, she couldn't write well." (Hohler 2000, p. 6)

Again and again she thinks the saying "If I could wish for something" (Hohler 2000, p. 6) and thinks about what she would wish for. Then a fairy actually shows up and Barbara is so excited that she wants the wrong thing three times. Nevertheless, Barbara changes and it remains open whether it is the objects that help her to a new self. Similar to his poems, Franz Hohler also picks up familiar motifs in his picture book and partly reverses them. His play with language and his penchant for nonsense also characterise the picture book. In his short prose, Hohler also deals with

different genres, varies them and offers his child readers innovative possibilities. In *The Three Sons*, the question of winners and losers is taken up. The narrator complains that in fairy tales it is always the third child who is rewarded. Therefore, the fairy tale *The Three Sons* is a text in which the first and second born win. Again and again Hohler plays with fairy tale elements, reverses them and even renounces the usual happy ending. Here, too, there are signs of a certain nonsense character and the play with language that already characterise Hohler's poems.

Conclusion: Writing for Children - Writing for Adults

If you look at Hohler's varied work, you can see that there are differences between poems for adults and for children, but also similarities: The differences can be found above all in the repertoire of figures, especially in his prose, and in the subject matter.

The staff differs in Hohler's work. In his short stories for adults, they are "pseudo-kauzige Männer" (Wegmann 2014), tyrannical children or married men. In his stories for children, however, Hohler tells of giants, spaghetti women, animals, gardeners, and so on. Some of them are fantastic worlds which he designs and which describe another world. Thematically, his poems for adults are socially critical and take up political/social aspects that are missing at least in the collection *There Once was a Hedgehog*.

In his children's literary work, Franz Hohler leaves children's readers room for imagination and their own ideas without

a direct pedagogical index finger. His poems and stories are not socialisation literature but are above all intended to arouse interest in language and the play with language. This is where the common ground lies in writing, because Hohler takes both groups of readers seriously. In his texts for adults Hohler works with satirical elements and exposes social grievances; in his children's poetry it is nonsense and contradiction. In his poems, Hohler picks up on what children might be familiar with and takes up their love and fun in puns.

All in all, it can be said that Hohler operates quite naturally with figures from the world of fairy tales, legends and myths and shows them in situations that contradict the actual perception. His poems are anchored in various traditions and intertextuality is an integral part of his children's literary work, which, however, is likely to be recognised above all by adult readers. His texts are thus addressed several times. At the same time Hohler takes all his readers seriously and can be described as a crosswriter.

Primary Literature

- Brecht, Bertolt: Gesammelte Werke. Band 9: Gedichte. Frankfurt/M.: Suhrkamp 1967.
- Hohler, Franz: Wenn ich mir etwas wünschen könnte. Mit Illustrationen von Rotraut Susanne Berner. München: Carl Hanser 2000.
- Sprachlicher Rückstand. In: Gelberg, Hans-Joachim (Hrsg.): Großer Ozean. Gedichte für alle. Weinheim: Beltz & Gelberg 2000/2015, S. 143.
- Vom richtigen Gebrauch der Zeit. Gedichte. 2. Aufl. München: Sammlung Luchterhand 2006.

Das große Buch. Geschichten für Kinder. Mit Illustrationen von Nikolaus Heidelbach. München: Carl Hanser 2009.

Es war einmal ein Igel. Mit Bildern von Kathrin Schärer. München: C. Hanser 2011.

Die Nacht des Kometen. Mit Illustrationen von Kathrin Schärer. München: C. Hanser 2015.

Ringelnatz, Joachim: Die Ameisen. In: Ders.: 103 Gedichte. Berlin: Rowohlt 1933, S. 32.

Secondary Literature

- Eggenberger, Elisabeth: Unwahrscheinliches wahrscheinlich erzählen. Gespräch mit Franz Hohler. In: Buch & Maus 2015, H. 3, S. 18-20.
- Franz, Kurt: Kinderlyrik. Geschichte - Formen - Rezeption. Baltmannsweiler: Schneider 2016.
- Franz, Kurt/Lange, Günter/Payrhuber, Franz-Josef (Hrsg.): Kinder- und Jugendliteratur - Ein Lexikon. Loseblatt-Ausgabe. Meitingen: Corian 1995 ff.
- Gelberg, Hans-Joachim: Das grosse A liegt auf dem Tisch. Lyrik für Erwachsene - Lyrik für Kinder. In: Beiträge Jugendliteratur und Medien 2005. H. 1, S. 14-19.
- Gien, Gabriele: Franz Hohler. In: Franz/Lange/Payrhuber 1995 ff.; 19. Erg.-Lfg. Oktober 2003. S. 1-28.
- Haas, Gerhard: Das Tierbuch. In: Franz/Lange/Payrhuber 1995 ff.; 2. Erg.-Lfg. September 1996, S. 1-26.
- Kaulen, Heinrich: Kleine Lieder für Steff. In: Knopf, Jan (Hrsg.): Brecht-Handbuch, Band 2: Gedichte. Stuttgart: Metzler 2001. S. 267-270.
- Knopf, Jan: Brecht-Handbuch. Lyrik, Prosa, Schriften. Stuttgart: Metzler 1996
- Kümmerling-Meibauer, Bettina: Kinderliteratur, Kanonbildung und literarische Wertung. Stuttgart: Metzler 2003.
- Maar, Paul: Vom Lesen und Schreiben. Reden und Aufsätze zur Kinderliteratur. Hamburg: Oetinger 2007.

- Payrhuber, Franz-Josef: Bertolt Brecht. In: Frantz/Lange/Payrhuber 1995ff.; 6. Erg.-Lfg. September 1998. S. 1-21.
- „...und durch Interpretation die Freude am Text mehren" (Reiner Kunze). Zur (Kinder-)Lyrik und Poetik von Bertolt Brecht, Peter Hacks und Reiner Kunze. In: Franz, Kurt/Payrhuber Franz-Josef (Hrsg.): "Und dann und wann ein weißer Elefant.." Alles Lyrik – historisch, didaktisch, medial. Baltmannsweiler:Schneider 2012, S. 63-86.
- Gedichte entdecken. Wege zu Gedichten in der ersten bis sechsten Klasse. Baltmannsweiler: Schneider 2015.
- Pfister, Manfred: Konzepte der Intertextualität. In: Broich, Ulrich/Pfister, Manfred: Intertextualität. Formen, Funktionen, anglistische Fallstudien. Tübingen: Max Niemeyer 1985, S. 1-30.
- Rutschmann, Verena: Natur und Zivilisation oder Fortschritt und Heimweh in der Schweizer Kinder und Jugendliteratur. In: Nassen, Ulrich (Hrsg): Naturkind, Landkind, Stadtkind, Literarische Bilderwelten kindlicher Umwelt. Wilhelm Fink Verlag: München 1995. S. 25-44.
- Schulz, Gudrun: Anmut und Mühe: Brechts Neue Kinderlieder. In: Cromme, Gabriele/Lange, Günter (Hrsg): Kinder- und Jugendliteratur. Lesen – Verstehen – Vermitteln. Baltmannsweiler Schneider 2001. S. 188-199.
- Staiger, Michael: Erzählen mit Bild-Schrifttext-Kombinationen. Ein fünfdimensionales Modell der Bilderbuchanalyse. In: Knopf, Julia/Abraham, Ulf (Hrsg.): BilderBücher. Theorie. Baltmannsweiler: Schneider 2014. S. 12-23.
- Stark, Roland: Joachim Ringelnatz. In: Franz/Lange/Payrhuber 1995ff. 12. Erg.-Lfg. Juni 2001, S. 1-6.
- Wicke, Andreas : Intertextualität. In: Franz / Lange / Payrhuber 1995 ff.; 52. Erg.-Lfg. Juli 2014, S. 1-24.
- Wilpert, Gero von: Sachwörterbuch der Literatur. 7., verb. u. erw. Aufl. Stuttgart: Alfred Kröner 1989.
- Internet Sources (accessed 2021/01/20)
- Blümer, Agnes: Crossover/All-Age-Literatur. In: <http://www.kinderundjugendmedien.de/index.php/begriffe-und-termini/494-crossoverall-age-literatur>
- Franz, Kurt: https://epub.uni-regensburg.de/25782/1/ubr12888_ocr.pdf
- Löwenberg, Felicitas von (2011): Scherz und Terz, direkt ins Herz. In: <https://www.faz.net/aktuell/feuilleton/buecher/rezensionen/kinderbuch/neue-kinderreime-von-franz-hohler-scherz-und-terz-direkt-ins-herz-1592936.html>
- Wegmann, Ute: Meister der Kurzgeschichte. In: https://www.deutschlandfunk.de/meister-der-kurzgeschichte-der-schweizer-schriftsteller-und.1202.de.html?dram:article_id=28206

4. Awards and Other Distinctions (Selection)

- 1968 Preis der C.F. Meyer Stiftung (Award of the C.F. Meyer Foundation)
- 1973 Deutscher Kleinkunstpreis (German cabaret award)
- 1978 Oldenburger Kinderbuchpreis (children's book award by the German city of Oldenburg)
- 1983 Solothurner Kunstpreis (Solothurn Art Award)
- 1988 First nomination for the Hans Christian Andersen Award
- 1990 Swiss Cabarat Award Cornichon
- 1991 Award of the Swiss Schiller Foundation
- 1994 Swiss Children's Book Award
- 1995 Premio mundial "José Martí" de literatura infantil
- 2000 Cultural Award of the City of Aarau (also for his children's book)
- 2005 Cultural Award of the City of Zurich (also for his children's book)
- 2009 Dr. h.c. University of Fribourg, Switzerland
- 2011 "Heidelberger Leander" (Award by the German city of Heidelberg for the book *There Once Was a Hedgehog*)
- 2013 Solothurner Literaturpreis (Cultural Award of the City of Solothurn for his oeuvre)
- 2014 Johann-Peter-Hebel-Preis (Award of the Ministry of Science, Baden-Württemberg)
- 2021 Grosser Preis der Deutschen Akademie für Kinder- und Jugendliteratur (Award of the German Academy for Children's and Youth Literatur)
- 2023 Dreitannen-Ehrenpreis (Literary Honour Award, Book Festival in the Swiss City of Olten)
- 2023 Kunstmuseum Olten: Ausstellung "Franz Hohler: Hallo. Guten Tag. Oder gute Nacht" (Art Museum Olten: Exhibition "Franz Hohler: Hello. Good Day. Or Good Evening").
- 2024 Goldene Ehrenmedaille des Kantons Zürich (Cultural Award of the Swiss canton of Zurich)
- 2024 The picture book *The Little Porcupine and the Crows* is recommended by the jury of the Hans Christian Andersen Award

5. Bibliography of Children's Books by Franz Hohler

Tschipo *

Illustrated by Arthur Loosli. Darmstadt: Luchterhand 1978 (pocket book: dtv Reihe Hanser 62293).

Sprachspiele (Language Games)

Zürich: SJW 1979 (SJW 1485).

In einem Schloss in Schottland lebte einmal ein junges Gespenst (A young ghost once lived in a castle in Scotland). *

Illustrated by Werner Maurer. Aarau: Sauerländer 1979 (NordSüd 2022).

Dr. Parkplatz (Dr. Parking)

Olten: Walter 1980 (Ravensburger Buchverlag 1992, SJW Zürich 2017).

Der Granitblock im Kino (The Block of Granite in the Cinema).

Darmstadt: Luchterhand 1981 (Neuausgabe 1997, Ravensburger Buchverlag).

Der Nachthafen (The Chamber Pot).

Illustrated by Werner Maurer. Zurich: Benziger 1984.

Tschipo und die Pinguine (Tschipo and the Penguins)

Luchterhand 1985 (TB dtv Reihe Hanser).

Der Räuber Bum (The Robber Bum)

Illustrated by Werner Maurer. Aarau: Sauerländer 1987.

Der Riese und die Erdbeerkonfitüre (The Giant and the Strawberry Jam)

Illustrated Nikolaus Heidelberg. Ravensburg: Ravensburger 1993 (pocket book: dtv Reihe Hanser).

Der Urwaldschreibtisch (The Jungle Desk)

Illustrated by Dieter Leuenberger. Aarau: Sauerländer 1994.

Tschipo in der Steinzeit (Tschipo in the Stone Age) *

Illustrated by Arthur Loosli. Ravensburg]: Ravensburger 1995.

Die Spaghettifrau (The Spaghetti Lady)

Illustrated by Nikolaus Heidelberg. Ravensburg: Ravensburger 1998.

Der grosse Zwerg und andere Geschichten (The Big Dwarf and Other Stories)

Illustrated by Nikolaus Heidelberg. Munich: dtv 2003 (Reihe Hanser).

Wenn ich mir etwas wünschen könnte (If I had a wish).

Illustrated by Rotraut Susanne Berner. Munich: Hanser 2000.

Der Tanz im versunkenen Dorf (The Dance in the Sunken Village). Illustrated by Reinhard Michl. München: Hanser 2005

Aller Anfang (The Beginning of Everything). Stories by Jürg Schubiger and Franz Hohler

Illustrated by Jutta Bauer. Weinheim: Beltz & Gelberg 2006.

Mayas Handtäschchen (Maya's Little Handbag)

Illustrations by Jacky Gleich. Sauerländer bei Patmos 2008.

Das grosse Buch (The Big Book) *

Illustrated by Nikolaus Heidelberg. Munich: Hanser 2009.

Es war einmal ein Igel (There Once Was A Hedgehog).

Illustrated by Kathrin Schärer. Munich: Hanser 2011.

Jonas und der Hund

Illustriert von Karin Widmer. Zurich: SJW 2011.

Die Nacht des Kometen (The Night of the Comet). *

Illustrated by Kathrin Schärer. Munich: Hanser 2015

Am liebsten ass der Hamster Hugo Spaghetti mit Tomatensugo. Tiergedichte (The Favorite Food of Hamster Hugo was Spaghetti with Tomato Sugo. Animal poems).

Illustrated by Kathrin Schärer. Munich: Hanser 2018

Das kleine Wildschwein und die Krähen (The Little Porcupine and the Crows).

Illustrated by Kathrin Schärer. Munich: Hanser 2023

Der Weltuntergang (The End of the World)

Originally published 1983 as a TV performance

(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kUFttt_Uk8Q).

New book edition illustrated by Dieter Leuenberger. Zurich: SJW 2023.

* This books have also been published as German or Swiss-German audio-books.

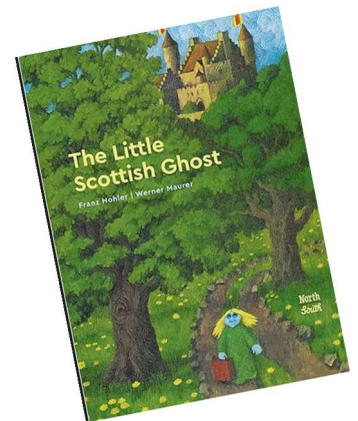
6. Bibliography of Translated Books by Franz Hohler

Tschipo

- Dutch (Antwerpen: Lotus 1981)
- Slovenian (Ljubliana: Mladinska knjiga, 1981)
- Spanish (Madrid: Ediciones Alfaguara SA 1984)
- Polish (Warshaw: Text-on 1996)
- Bosnian (Sarajevo: Jez 1997)
- French (Geneva, La Joie de Lire 2010)
- Georgian (Tbilisi: Universal 2018)

In einem Schloss in Schottland lebte einmal ein junges Gespenst (A young ghost once lived in a castle in Scotland).

- English (London: Hutchinson, 1980)



Dr. Parkplatz (Dr. Parking)

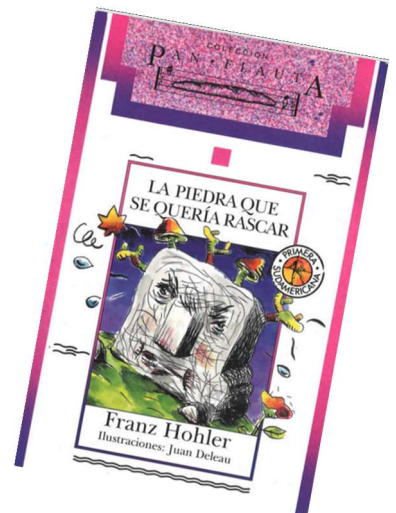
- Turkish (Ankara: T. C. kültür bakanligi 1997)
- French (Geneva: La Joie de Lire 2002; Farsi, 2014)
- Persian (Teheran: Neyestan 2014)
- Arabic (Abu Dhabi: Kalima, 2024)

Der Granitblock im Kino (The Block of Granite in the Cinema).

- Spanish (Madrid: Ediciones Alfaguara SA, 1981)
- Dutch (Tilburg: Zwijsen 1983)
- Polish (Warshaw: Państwowy Instytut 2023)

Tschipo und die Pinguine (Tschipo and the Penguins)

- Spanish (Madrid: Ediciones Alfaguara 1987)
- French (Geneva: La Joie de Lire 2008)



Der Riese und die Erdbeerkonfitüre (The Giant and the Strawberry Jam)

- Spanish (Selection; Buenos Aires: Editorial Sudamericana 1997)

Der Urwaldschreibtisch (The Jungle Desk)

- Danish (Kopenhagen, Agertoft 1994)
- Bosnian (Sarajevo: Jez 1994)
- Arabic (Abu Dhabi: Kalima 2009)

Tschipo in der Steinzeit (Tschipo in the Stone Age)

- French (Geneva: Le Joie de Lire 2011)
- Georgian, 2018

Der grosse Zwerg und andere Geschichten (The Big Dwarf and Other Stories)

- French (Geneva: La Joie de Lire 2004)

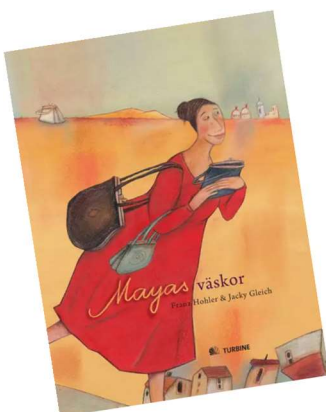


Wenn ich mir etwas wünschen könnte (If I had a wish)

- Dutch (Amsterdam: Querido 2000)
- French (Geneva: Le joie de lire 2000)
- Danish (Kopenhagen: Agertoft 2000)
- Swedish (Stockholm, Alfabeta 2000)
- Spanish (Madrid: Ediciones SM 2000)
- Hebrew (Tel Aviv, Am Oved 2001)
- Korean (Hyonam 2002)
- Basque (Irun: Alberdania 2007)
- Spanish (Irun: Alberdania 2007)
- Chinese (Beijing: Gingko 2018)

Aller Anfang (The Beginning of Everything). Stories by Jürg Schubiger and Franz Hohler

- Lithuanian (Vilnius: Gimtasis Zodis 2007)
- Spanish (Grupo Anaya 2007)
- Galician (Vigo: Xerais de Galicia 2007)
- Italian (Mailand: Il Castoro 2008)
- French (Geneva: La Joie de Lire 2008)
- Chinese (Sichuan: Children's Publishing House 2010)



Mayas Handtäschchen (Maya's Little Handbag)

- Swedish (Århus: Turbineförlaget 2011)
- Danish (Århus: Turbineförlaget 2011)

Das grosse Buch (The Big Book)

- Catalan (Barcelona: Editorial Joventut 2010)
- Spanish (Barcelona: Editorial Juventud 2010)
- Korean (Seoul: Cheongeoram 2011)

- Chinese (Taiwan: Fei-Bao 2011)
- French (Selection; Geneva: La Joie de Lire 2012)
- Hindi (New Delhi: Vani Prakashan 2012)
- Ukrainian (Cernowitz: Knigi XXI 2017)

Es war einmal ein Igel (There Once Was A Hedgehog)

- Swedish (Stockholm: Turbine Förlag 2012)
- Danish (Århus: Turbineforlaget 2012)

Jonas und der Hund

- French (Zurich: OSL 2011)
- Rhaeto-Roman (Zurich: OSL 2011)

Die Nacht des Kometen (The Night of the Comet)

- Russian (Moskau: Rarebird 2019)

Am liebsten ass der Hamster Hugo Spaghetti mit Tomatensugo. Tiergedichte (The Favorite Food of Hamster Hugo was Spaghetti with Tomato Sugo. Animal poems)

- Farsi (Teheran: Neyestan 2020)

Das kleine Wildschwein und die Krähen (The Little Porcupine and the Crows)

- Danish (Århus: Bogoo 2024)

Der Weltuntergang (The End of the World)

- French (Zurich: SJW 2023)
- Rhaeto-Roman (Zurich: SJW 2023)



7. Ten of the Most Important Titles by Franz Hohler

1. **Tschipo**

Illustrated by Arthur Loosli. Darmstadt: Luchterhand 1978 (pocket book: dtv Reihe Hanser 62293).

2. **Dr. Parkplatz (Dr. Parking)**

Olten: Walter 1980 (Ravensburger Buchverlag 1992, SJW Zürich 2017).

3. **Der Granitblock im Kino (The Block of Granite in the Cinema).**

Darmstadt: Luchterhand 1981 (Neuausgabe 1997, Ravensburger Buchverlag).

4. **Der Urwaldschreibtisch (The Jungle Desk)**

Illustrated by Dieter Leuenberger. Aarau: Sauerländer 1994.

5. **Das grosse Buch (The Big Book)**

Illustrated by Nikolaus Heidelberg. Munich: Hanser 2009.

6. **Wenn ich mir etwas wünschen könnte (If I had a wish).**

Illustrated by Rotraut Susanne Berner. Munich: Hanser 2000.

7. **Mayas Handtäschchen (Maya's Little Handbag)**

Illustrations by Jacky Gleich. Sauerländer bei Patmos 2008.

8. **Es war einmal ein Igel (There Once Was A Hedgehog).**

Illustrated by Kathrin Schärer. Munich: Hanser 2011.

9. **Das kleine Wildschwein und die Krähen (The Little Porcupine and the Crows).**

Illustrated by Kathrin Schärer. Munich: Hanser 2023.

10. **Der Weltuntergang (The End of the World)**

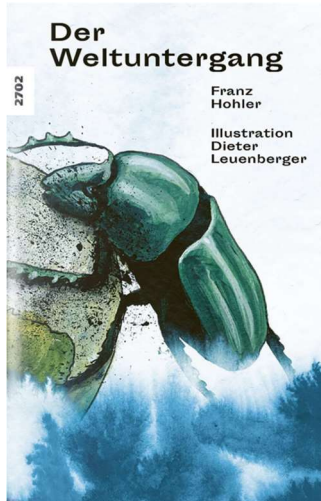
Originally published 1983 as a TV performance
(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kUFttt_Uk8Q).

New book edition illustrated by Dieter Leuenberger. Zurich: SJW 2023.

– Books in blue were sent to the jury.

8. Five Representative Books in Reviews

8.1. Der Weltuntergang (The End of the World)



Written in 1973, the text has been variously published in school materials, first book edition 1998. New edition: Zurich: SJW 2023.

Franz Hohler wrote *The End of the World* for the stage in 1973 as a reaction to the first report of the Club of Rome. The story begins small, with a little beetle on a Pacific island whose extinction doesn't bother anyone, but triggers a chain of destruction of evergreater proportions caused by mankind that will ultimately mean the end of the world. The rhythmic language creates a virtuous crescendo and develops a pull that is hard to resist, and the text's urgency makes us shudder even 50 years after it was written.

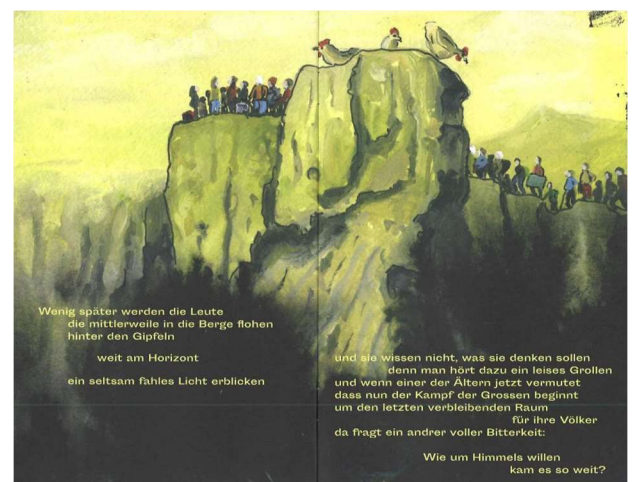
Review by Christine Tresch⁴

„In 1972, the Club of Rome published *The Limits to Growth*, the first report to show the effects of localised exploitation of our planet on the whole world. Two years later, Franz Hohler took to the stage for the first time with his 'sprechgesang' *Der Weltuntergang*.

The prophetic text is now available in a convincingly designed SJW booklet.

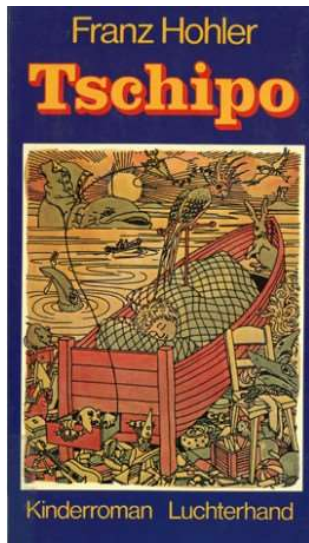
Hohler tells the story of how the disappearance of an inconspicuous, dirty beetle species on a small island in the South Pacific triggers a global chain reaction. This leads to the earth becoming largely uninhabitable and the mighty begin to fight over the areas that lie above sea level. [...]

Franz Hohler's apocalypse is more relevant than ever. This can cause disillusion and anxiety for anyone who has known the text for a long time. What have we adults learnt in fifty years, and why are we not much further ahead on the climate issue? After reading this parable about arrogance, ignorance and selfishness, children and young people from the end of primary school will rub their eyes and ask themselves, as Greta Thunberg does: How dare you continue to look the other way?“



⁴ <https://sikim.ch/rezension/der-weltuntergang/> (14/5/24).

8.2. Tschipo (Trilogy)



Tschipo. Darmstadt: Luchterhand 1978 (dtv Reihe Hanser 2019).

Tschipo und die Pinguine. Darmstadt: Luchterhand 1985 (dtv Reihe Hanser).

Tschipo in der Steinzeit. Ravensburg: Ravensburger 1995.

Tschipo dreams so intensively that he always finds real remains from his dreams in bed in the morning. With Tschako, he experiences the most adventurous things on an island.

Review by Gerda Wurzenberger⁵

"He did not even notice that he was talking in another language, it only struck him that he was lying under a thick fur on a heap of foliage and that daylight did not come in through a window but through a hole in the rock."

Tschipo (1978), *Tschipo und die Pinguine* (*Tschipo and the Penguins*, 1985) and *Tschipo in der Steinzeit* (*Tschipo in the Stone Age*, 1995) are three novels for

children that feature the same protagonist and basic concept: young Tschipo, whose intensive dreams often leave something behind the next morning, either in his bed or in his room, a scent, a pinecone, a chocolate bicycle or a live penguin. But Tschipo can also dream his way to the scene of his dream, in the first book to an island in the South Seas and in the third to the Stone Age. With his invention of the "transactive" dreamer Tschipo, Franz Hohler has opened some wonderful, fanciful perspectives: Ever new accounts of unbelievable adventures become possible, a window is opened on ever new worlds, because dreams are not bound by the laws of reality. A tension both pleasurable and creative arises between the realistic level of Tschipo's everyday surroundings, commentaries by the narrator that speak directly to the reader and the unpredictability of dream activities and their consequences. This tension is further heightened by the author's playful way with language, a language which is also aware that a different German is spoken in everyday life in German-speaking Switzerland (Tschipo's explicit homeland) – namely, Swiss-German."



⁵ <https://www.literaturschweiz.ch/de/Lesetipp/a725fe3c8093c2c0> (17/1/23)

8.3. Wenn ich mir etwas wünschen könnte (If I Had a Wish)



Illustrations by Rotraut Susanne Berner
Munich: Hanser 2000.

The fairy grants Barbara three wishes, and three times she chooses the wrong things. First the blue shoes that her mother refused to buy her, then a red ballpoint pen and finally a big, colourful parrot. How silly, what does she want with these things? With the red pen Barbara does not make any mistakes and so Anna can copy her homework, and the parrot teaches the whole class to sing. In the end, Barbara has found friends and is happy at school. Sometimes even the wrong wishes turn out to be the right ones after all.

Review by Helene Schär⁶

„Barbara can do everything less well than the others, has neither friends nor is she beautiful. One night a fairy appears and grants her a wish. A pair of blue shoes! The next morning there are not the brown shoes in the box that the mother bought her the day before, but a pair of blue ones. With these Barbara can suddenly run fast, gets admiring looks and is even accompanied home. One night the fairy comes back. Barbara immediately knows that she wants a red ballpoint pen. The wish comes true and Barbara can suddenly write beautifully and correctly. When the fairy appears for the third time, Barbara wants a parrot. And lo and behold, the postman is standing with a parrot in front of her door in the morning. Her mother is not enthusiastic. But the parrot sings many songs, and Barbara can suddenly sing much better at school. And because the parrot says "Good morning, beautiful ones" to the mother and Barbara every morning, the two have (indeed become much more beautiful, and the mother has come to terms with the bird. - Following the fairy tale with the three wishes and many other fairy tale elements, Franz Hohler tells a modern story about a girl who gradually learns to be herself and to believe in herself. The story contains many astutely observed subtleties; the cheerful and colourful illustrations complement the text in an imaginative way and undoubtedly appeal to children.“



⁶ <https://sikjm.ch/rezension/wenn-ich-mir-etwas-wuenschen-koennte/> (17/01/23)

8.4. Das grosse Buch (The Big Book)



Stories for Children.

Illustrations by Nikolaus Heidelberg.

Munich: Hanser 2009.

The world is full of riddles, each one offering material from which yarns can be spun. Franz Hohler is the unparalleled master of such storytelling. His secret is that he takes nothing at face value. He is not afraid of asking even the oddest questions, or of coming up with the most bizarre answers. This is just the way children respond to problems, and his stories will have them laughing long before they are able to read them on their own.

Review by Felicitas von Lovenberg⁷

„Author Franz Hohler and painter Nikolaus Heidelberg are a team beloved not only by children. Now at last, all of their stories and pictures are available in one volume.

(...) For each and every one of these 91 completely wonderful stories by Franz Hohler there is a picture by Heidelberg, sometimes two. Such abundance does not, of course, simply roll down from the Swiss Alps, in the country where Hohler lives, nor does it flow down the Rhine imperturbably from Heidelberg's studio in Cologne, but represents the interest and compound interest of a long relationship between the author and the painter. Many of the stories readers know from earlier collaborations now sport a new or additional illustration, and it is in keeping with the cost-benefit ratio of this fall's books, which is in any event a source of continual amazement, that reading the book feels like inserting a small coin into a gigantic candy machine, which begins to gurgle and crash mightily – before emitting, instead of one little biscuit, its entire store.

Not that Franz Hohler's stories ever have anything sickly-sweet about them: on the contrary, they are – more than anything else – surprising. There is no story by the 66-year-old Swiss author, not even half a page long, whose outcome is predictable, not one hackneyed sentence, not the least evidence of routine, habit or fatigue. Which is completely comprehensible, considering that in Hohler's stories everything is alive: the bathtub and the freezer compartment, the ticket machine and the spaghetti package. The fireplace has throat ache, the block of granite is bored, the salesman's clothes march out of his house without Mr Zogg in them, a handstand and a headstand tie

⁷ Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, 14/03/2009, no. 62, p. 34

the knot, a short-circuit and a megaphone make an announcement together, a high-pressure zone joins forces with a low-pressure zone to produce a mighty storm – and then there's the pencil sharpener affixed to a gymnasium for certain thought-provoking reasons. In addition there are all kinds of fairy-tale motifs, a particular specialty of Heidelberg's: there's the last prince, who becomes a house-husband, and the princess who becomes an apothecary, the mouse family that gives a concert during a state visit, the giant who cooks strawberry jam, and the brave little dog that finds its paradise. Many of Hohler's ideas are funny, some of them just strange, but they all attest to a philosophical cheerfulness and hope that captivate readers of all ages.

You can't even count all of the most original of the strange stories, the wittiest of the humorous ones, but the aetiology of the mountains of Switzerland (they came from Holland, as a trade for alpine tulips) is pretty sensational, as is the poem *Weihnachten, wie es wirklich war* (Christmas as it really was) or the fate of poor misunderstood Herr Beeli, who was so fond of keeping sheep. Of course, children, whose sense for possibility has not yet been stifled, have a better time with Hohler, are able to visit the little man in the syrup bottle or the lady from the spaghetti package and can lock animals back into the magazine out of which they have broken free. But Hohler also knows about the child within the adult who has himself gorged full of toys, or the old man for whom everything is inverted. Such lack of sense and purpose gives rise to a magic, one that works reliably against considerations of plausibility and is therefore required more than once a day. [...]"

DER GROSSE ZWERG

Es war einmal ein Zwerg, der war 1,89 m groß.



"The Big Dwarf

Once upon a time there was a dwarf who was 1.89 m tall."⁸

⁸ Das grosse Buch, p. 104

8.5. Es war einmal ein Igel (There Once Was a Hedgehog)



Illustrated by Kathrin Schärer

Munich: Hanser 2016

96 p.

ISBN 978-3-446-24927-1

There once was a hedgehog, who suddenly grew wings
... There once was a whale, who slipped on a pail. This is how his rhyming stories begin, and if you want to know how they end, you'll find out after eight lines at the most. Stories don't get any shorter than this. Franz Hohler's children's poems are little comic masterpieces, ideal goodnight stories or just for in-between, when there isn't much time for reading aloud. They have become standard texts in schools.

Review by Christine Tresch⁹

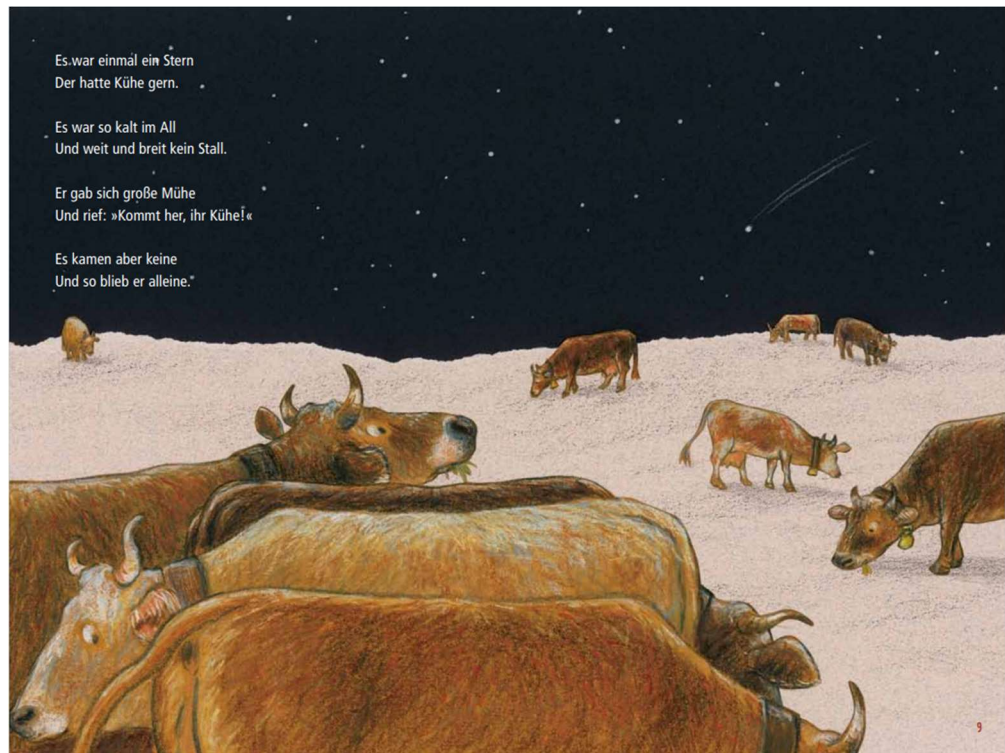
"Once upon a time there was a star, a man, a mountain, an ape, a Viennese – Franz Hohler presents forty short poems with the same prelude, based on rhymed two-liners, in his new book. Forty whimsical, spun texts, language games with claws. Franz Hohler, the grand master of short and abbreviated forms at his best. Anyone who picks up *Es war einmal ein Igel* doesn't stop reading, reads to the surroundings, bizarre and hearty, as at the end of the book: "Es war einmal ein Furz / Der lebte nur ganz kurz. // Er stank noch drei Sekunden / Und dann war er verschwunden."

The first lines of the lyrics function as flywheels, setting a story mechanic in motion, with seductively smooth, then scratchy rhymes serving as lubricants. For example, in this poem: "Once upon a time there was a fox / That didn't make a sound. // He lay so still in the grass / That a silly rabbit // Sat down on him to rest. / That was the last of it."

Basel illustrator Kathrin Schärer juxtaposes the poems, which are often about all too animalistic things, with picturesque images. She summons the personnel from her picture books, expands her repertoire of animals, and stages them from a wide variety of perspectives. The facial expressions of her protagonists speak volumes. The aforementioned fox, for example, clicks his tongue and squints at the rabbit, which dozes on his nose with its belly full. Or Johanna, the Johanna from the picture book *Johanna on the*

⁹ <https://sikjm.ch/rezension/wenn-ich-mir-etwas-wuenschen-koennte/> (17/1/23)

Train (atlantis 2009) farting at us with pleasure at the end. *Once Upon a Time There Was a Hedgehog* has brought them together for the first time. A sequel will follow, hopefully."



9. Translations from French and English Children's Books into German and Swiss German by Franz Hohler

- Etienne Delessert: Die Maus und der Lärm: Ein Umweltbuch für Kinder. Text: Anne van der Essen; Deutsch von Franz Hohler. Köln: Middelhaue 1975.
- Etienne Delessert: Die Maus und die Giftchen: Ein Umweltbuch für Kinder. Text: Anne van der Essen; Deutsch von Franz Hohler. Köln: Middelhaue 1975.
- Etienne Delessert: Die Maus und die - Schmetterlinge: Ein Umweltbuch für Kinder. Text: Anne van der Essen; Deutsch von Franz Hohler. Köln: Middelhaue 1975.
- Etienne Delessert: Die Maus und was ihr bleibt: Ein Umweltbuch für Kinder. Text: Anne van der Essen; Deutsche Fassung von Franz Hohler. Köln: Middelhaue 1977.
- Etienne Delessert: YOK-YOK 1. Die Amsel und drei weitere Geschichten. Text: Anne van der Essen; Deutsch von Franz Hohler. Köln: Middelhaue 1979.
- Etienne Delessert: YOK-YOK 2. Der Frosch und drei weitere Geschichten. Text: Anne van der Essen; Deutsch von Franz Hohler. Köln: Middelhaue 1979.
- Etienne Delessert: YOK-YOK 3. Der Zauberer und drei weitere Geschichten. Text: Anne van der Essen; Deutsch von Franz Hohler. Köln: Middelhaue 1979.
- Etienne Delessert: YOK-YOK 4. Die Nacht und drei weitere Geschichten. Text: Anne van der Essen; Deutsch von Franz Hohler. Köln: Middelhaue 1979.
- Etienne Delessert: YOK-YOK 5. Der Hase und drei weitere Geschichten. Text: Anne van der Essen; Deutsch von Franz Hohler. Köln: Middelhaue 1979.
- Etienne Delessert: YOK-YOK 6. Die Raupe und drei weitere Geschichten. Text: Anne van der Essen; Deutsch von Franz Hohler. Köln: Middelhaue 1979.
- Shel Silverstein: Der freigebige Baum. Dt. Fassung von Franz Hohler. Köln: Middelhaue 1979.
- Helme Heine: Gueti Fründ. Schwyzerdütsch vom Franz Hohler. Köln: Middelhaue 1987.
- Leo Lionni: Frederick. Schwyzerdütsch vom Franz Hohler. Köln: Middelhaue 1987.
- Jean-Pierre Siméon (Text)/Olivier Tallec (Illustration): Gedicht für einen Goldfisch. Aus dem Französischen nachgedichtet von Franz Hohler. Hildesheim: Gerstenberg 2009
- Axel Scheffler, Julia Donaldson: Der Gruffalo. Schwyzerdütsch von Franz Hohler. Weinheim: Beltz & Gelberg 2013.
- Fischer, Hans: Der Geburtstag. Schwyzerdütsch vom Franz Hohler. Zürich: NordSüd 2020.

10. Catalogue

- Exhibition „Lieber Franz Hohler“. Ein Autor schreibt für Kinder – Kinder schreiben einem Autor. SIKJM: Zurich 2006