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Bookbird



A JOURNAL OF INTERNATIONAL CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

children's books from around the world

British award for poetry

multiculturalism in Greece

learning to read picturebooks

an Irish mythic hero

US picturebooks in Japan

reading beneath the surface in Ethiopia

professional books reviewed

INTERNATIONAL BOARD ON BOOKS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

iBbY

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

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Who will Comfort Toffle?, originally published as *Vem Ska Trösta Knyttet*, is one of the picturebooks included in the European Picturebook Collection, on which is based the ECET course, described in this issue (page 39) in an article by Penni Cotton.

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*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!*

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Editorial

Life – literature, too – is very strange! Having decided against themed issues of *Bookbird*, we discovered that the first issue under our editorship turned out to have a theme anyway: picturebooks, appropriate and inappropriate for children. And now our second issue has gone and developed a most intriguing thrust, too, all by itself.

People are sometimes puzzled by the idea that *Bookbird* concerns itself with ‘international’ children’s literature. People wonder if it has to do with translation studies – and yes, that certainly comes into it: Miki Kobayashi’s fascinating study in this issue of the US picturebooks that get translated into Japanese is a case in point. But it also has to do with bringing national literatures to a world community and with exploring how national literatures inform a national consciousness that is also international. It is only from the basis of our own culture that we can develop useful ways of thinking about the world outside that culture. And that is, roughly, the focus of this issue of *Bookbird*.

Indeed, the passionately Greek writer from the 1950s that we meet in Meni Kenatsouli and Theodora Tzoka’s paper sounds as if she might be related to Lady Augusta Gregory, the Irish writer of the turn of the 20th century who is the subject of Ciara Ní Bhroin’s paper on a version of the myth

of Cuchulainn intended for children. Lady Gregory’s freighting of her translation of Irish myth with political meaning may not have been overt, but essentially she was engaged in a task not all that very different from that undertaken by the Ethiopian writer, Tesfaye, the more pointed political message of whose children’s story *Shitaye* is analysed here by Michael Daniel Ambatchew.

And the European Picture Book Collection and the resulting European School Education Training course, discussed here by Penni Cotton, are projects that provide us with ‘some understanding of how children’s literature can be universally understood, although individual interpretations may vary’. The thoughts of Paul Hazard on children and books may seem dated today, but his concept of the universality of the ‘republic of childhood’ prefigures the ideal behind the EPBC project and some of the ideas teased out in this issue of *Bookbird*. Hazard had first-hand experience of war in his native France, which went some way towards informing his belief that books are one way of achieving greater international understanding – a belief he shared with IBBY’s founder, Jella Lepman.

But there is a fine balance between a kind of cultural imperialism – sometimes manifest as a desire that, in simplistic terms, all children should hear the same stories and read the same books – and, on the other hand, an intention to encourage mutual understanding through realising that in their literatures and in their lives the inhabitants of this planet have much in common, although the means of expression may be different.

In a new year’s message, María Candelaria Posada, IBBY’s new executive director for communications, used a phrase that exactly captures the ideas expressed in this issue of *Bookbird*. She wrote about working together ‘with local purposes and world objectives’. And that is what we mean by ‘international children’s literature’: work that is deeply engaged in the local, the national, the regional, the culturally differentiated, but that, consciously or unconsciously, works towards world objectives and international cultural exchange.

Happy reading!

Bookbird editors

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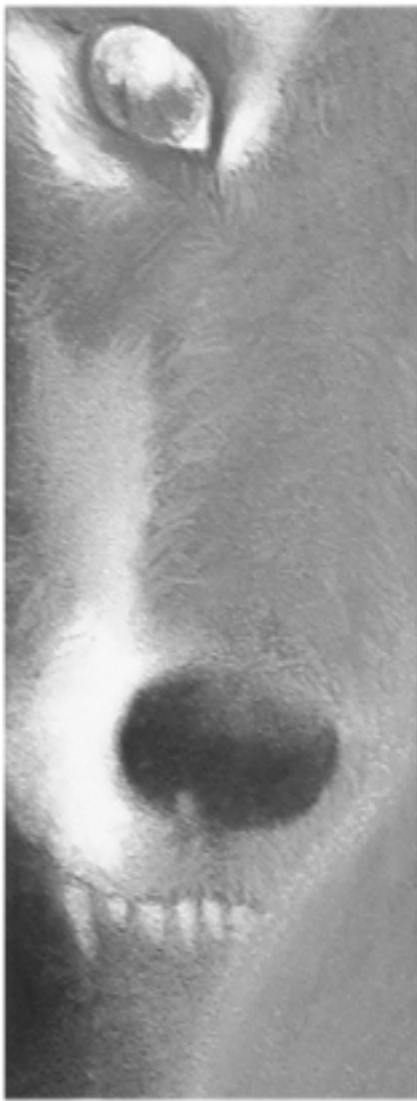


Which US Picturebooks Get Translated into Japanese? Criteria for Choice

BY MIKI KOBAYASHI



Miki Kobayashi is a translator working in Japan. She has translated H G Wells's Time Machine and (with Mizuhito Kanehara) Donna Jo Napoli's Crazy Jack, and is currently working (with Mizuhito Kanehara) on Jean M Auel's The Plains of Passage



••• *Many award-winning picturebooks from the United States are translated into Japanese. In this study, Miki Kobayashi considers the criteria that seem to govern the choice of American picturebooks to be introduced to Japanese children*

Quite a large number of picturebooks first published in the United States are translated into Japanese and published in Japan. Of 43 Caldecott Medal/Honor picturebooks published in the 1990s, 24 have been translated into Japanese; of the 43 Caldecott books mentioned, nine picturebooks that retell folktales or fairytales are examined in this paper, five of which have been translated into Japanese. I discuss the characteristics that differentiate the

‘1990s Caldecott’ Folktale Picturebooks Translated into Japanese

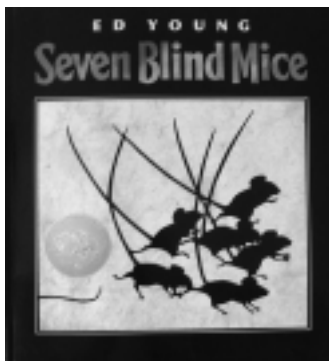
1997 Medal	David Wiesniewski <i>Golem</i> (New York: Clarion, 1996) (a Jewish legend)
1994 Honor	Gerald McDermott <i>Raven: A Trickster Tale from the Pacific Northwest</i> (San Diego: Harcourt Brace, 1993) (a Native American legend)
1993 Honor	Ed Young <i>Seven Blind Mice</i> (New York: Philomel, 1992) (an Indian fable)
1991 Honor	Fred Marcellino <i>Puss in Boots</i> (New York: Farrar, 1990) (a French fairytale)
1990 Medal	Ed Young <i>Lon Po Po: A Red-Riding Hood Story from China</i> (New York: Philomel, 1989) (a Chinese folktale)

translated ones from the untranslated, attempt to establish what criteria govern the choice of which American picturebooks should be introduced to Japanese children and propose a set of simple formulas that describe these choices.

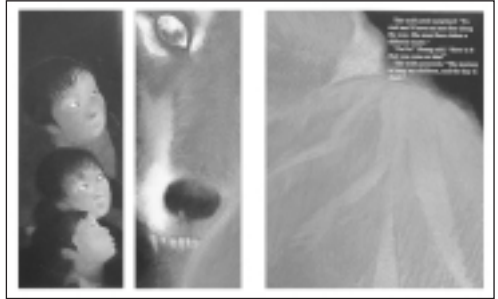
Criterion 1: Unique and abstract artistic style

Seven Blind Mice, *Raven* and *Golem*, which have all been translated, attract the viewer’s eyes from the very covers. The illustrations in *Seven Blind Mice* are paper-collage. *Golem* also introduces cut-paper collage, which is marvellously intricate and has three-dimensionality. In *Raven*, the raven is not painted in black as we commonly see, but is illustrated in a highly stylised form, such as that seen on totem poles, against soft watercolour.

The unique abstract art in these three picturebooks stimulate the child viewer’s imagination in two ways. Firstly, they transform simple combinations of colours into storytelling. Secondly, and more importantly, they encourage the child to interpret illustrations actively, that is, to associate each element in the illustrations with reality or the world around him or her. Similarly in *Lon Po Po*, Young illustrates minimally. In this simplified art, size, space and colours speak much, depending on how the viewer reads. For example, when a figure is illustrated very tiny as a mouse on the elephant in *Seven Blind Mice*, its weakness or incapability is expressed. Another example is the first illustration of *Lon Po Po*, where the mother leaves home and the tiny figures of the sisters against the wide space around their house convey anticipation of uneasiness. Conversely, when a figure is illustrated enormously large its power or energy is expressed. The close-up wolf’s face with its glaring eye is threatening enough for the viewer to worry what will become of the sisters.



The translated picturebooks also share another significant uniqueness: dynamism. In all five translated picturebooks, ‘zooming’ is used and viewpoints often change. When a picture is zoomed in on, the child feels she is actually close to what’s happening; when a picture is zoomed out, he feels he is far from the scene. Also, changing viewpoints give the viewer a sense of physical movement.



Puss in Boots fascinatingly adapts the low viewpoint, which is as low as that of a child and unobtrusively invites the child viewer into the story.

In *Lon Po Po*, vertical panels like those seen in ancient Chinese art are used to give dynamism to the illustrations. The first five double-page spreads especially make wonderful use of panelling to express dramatic tensions between the mother and the sisters, or the sisters and the wolf. The verticality later resonates with the high, treetop viewpoints of the sisters, who make the clever plan to climb up the tree and cheat the wolf.



As for the untranslated books, it is true each book has its own uniqueness. To illustrate *Rapunzel* Zelinski chooses a highly elaborate Renaissance style that is rare in picturebooks, and everything from the costumes to the scenery is luxuriously illustrated in detail and evokes Renaissance Italy. Illustrations in *The Talking Eggs* are richly expressive watercolour. Characteristic of *The Faithful Friend* is ‘impressive scratchboard-and-oil artwork’ (Cooper 1995) which conveys the atmosphere of the island of Martinique, the setting of the original story. *Tops and Bottoms* is remarkable in its vivid depiction of humanised animals and fresh vegetables through the combination of pastel and watercolours.



Unlike the abstract and simplified art style of the translated picturebooks, the illustrations in the untranslated books are outstanding for their masterful representations; but the feelings of the characters as well as

‘1990s Caldecott’ Folktale Picturebooks

Not Translated into Japanese

- 1998 Medal Paul O Zelinski *Rapunzel* (New York: Dutton, 1997) (a German folktale)
- 1996 Honor Robert San Souci and Brian Pinkney *The Faithful Friend* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1995) (a West Indian folktale)
- 1996 Honor Janet Stevens *Tops and Bottoms* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1995) (an Afro-American folktale)
- 1990 Honor Robert San Souci and Jerry Pinkney *The Talking Eggs: A Folktale from the American South* (New York: Dial, 1989) (a Creole folktale)

Unlike the abstract and simplified art style of the translated picturebooks, the illustrations in the untranslated books are outstanding for their masterful representations :

circumstances around them are so expressively and realistically depicted that there is little room left for the viewer's imagination. In viewing these illustrations, the child is a kind of a receptor, being given ample information by the illustrations.

Moreover, in the untranslated books, size and viewpoints rarely change. Even when a viewpoint is exceptionally high, as in the second illustration of *Rapunzel*, the intention is to show the viewer what the garden is like in detail rather than invite her to be a participant in the story.

Criterion 2: 'Inconsistent' relationship between illustration and text

In picturebooks, relationships between illustration and text are various: there may be agreement, extension or inconsistency (see, for example, Nikolajeva and Scott 2000; Nodelman 1988; Schwarcz 1982). Reading a picturebook in which texts and illustrations are inconsistent or contradictory, depicting what is happening in different ways, is a complex process. However, when a child actively integrates two different narrations and interprets *the* story satisfactorily in his own way, he has greater fun.

In Ed Young's picturebooks, text and illustration are not consistent, exactly as the writer/illustrator himself expresses it (on the Scholastic website): 'There are things that words do that pictures never can, and likewise, there are images that words can never describe.'

Lon Po Po has *one* series of illustrations, which simply shows what is going on, but the text tells a much more complex story. The text says, for example, 'the old wolf' comes up to visit the three sisters in their mother's absence; however, the three sisters think their grandmother, Lon Po Po, has come to their house and they let 'her' in. At this point, the viewer sees from the illustrations that Lon Po Po is really a wolf and that the sisters are deceived. Later, when the sisters continue calling the wolf 'Po Po' even after they know the truth, the child viewer knows that now, in turn, the wolf is deceived. In *Lon Po Po*, the child is allowed to know secrets the characters don't know. The text doesn't overtly tell what the secrets are, but an imaginative child finds it out by herself and has pleasure from the discovery.

In Seven Blind Mice, the text tells one story and the illustrations are telling two stories :

On the other hand, in *Seven Blind Mice*, the text tells *one* story about seven blind mice, that is, what they see ('a pillar', 'a snake', 'a spear', 'a great cliff', 'a fan', 'a rope' and, finally, 'an elephant') when they go to find the Something one by one. And the illustrations are telling *two* stories, taking turns: one set of illustrations describing what the mice think they see and the other showing what the Something really is (a leg, a trunk, a tusk, a head, an ear, a tail of the elephant, and a whole elephant). The child is allowed to know more than the text, or the mice, and he is given a chance to imagine what the Something is before the last white mouse claims, '...but altogether the Something is... / an elephant!'

Conversely, in the untranslated group, illustrations and texts are in almost total agreement.

Illustrations are faithful depiction of texts; or illustrations visually show what things are really like or what the situation or the setting of the story is really like.

• ***Conversely, in the
untranslated group,
illustrations and texts are
in almost total agreement***

Criterion 3: Agency of the ‘child’

The books that have been translated have child characters that perform active roles in the stories. The sisters in *Lon Po Po* are not waiting to be rescued by a woodcutter as the girl is in familiar versions of *Red Riding Hood*. The eldest sister, Shang, glimpsing ‘the wolf’s hairy face’ in a moment of light in the darkness, makes up a clever plan and takes action to protect herself and her young sisters from the dangerous wolf. In *Raven*, the raven feels sad to see the world utterly dark. Having changed himself into a child of the Sky Chief’s daughter, he wisely steals the shining ball, namely ‘the sun’, from the Sky Chief and brings it to ‘all the people’. The cat in *Puss in Boots*, identified as ‘child’ because of the book’s childlike viewpoint, is also witty. Seeing his master in such a severe condition as to mention eating ‘[his] cat’, the very same cat says, ‘Don’t worry, master, just get me a sack and a pair of boots to carry me through the brambles, and you’ll see that you haven’t come out as badly as you think.’ The cat successfully keeps his word, and the young master finally marries the princess. The seven mice in *Seven Blind Mice* look childlike because of their tiny figures. Six of them fail to find out what the Something is because they see only a part of it. But the seventh, a she-mouse, dares to climb up on it and runs over it thoroughly and solves the puzzle of what it really is. In *Golem*, in spite of his gigantic size, the golem can be regarded as a child character because he calls his creator Rabbi Loew ‘Father’, and also because it is described how simple and innocent he is. This childlike golem is created only ‘[t]o protect the Jews’.

• ***The books that have been
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On the contrary, none of the child characters in the untranslated group has any agency. Rapunzel, imprisoned in the tower by the sorceress, is just waiting for the prince to come and change her life. A few years later, when Rapunzel sees the prince, who has lost his vision but has long been searching for her, she opens her arms and weeps. Her tears ‘suddenly’ make his vision clear. She seems to have no will; she is just reacting to fate. In *Talking Eggs*, Blanche is sweet and kind; she does all the work as her mother tells her. And her total obedience to the old woman she befriends finally makes her ‘a grand lady’. In *Faithful Friend* one of the young protagonists eavesdrops on three zombies’ wicked plan followed by the final sinister words, ‘If

anyone hears this and repeats this he will turn into stone from the soles of his feet to his knees.’ Thus, the only way for him to save his friends is to keep silent. In *Tops and Bottoms*, it is the parents who make up a tricky plan to regain the land they sold to the lazy bear. Children in the family just work industriously according to the plan.

Criterion 4: No ‘bad’ adults

With regard to the circumstances around the child, one element is common to all the untranslated books. It is the appearance of ‘bad’ adults. In *Rapunzel*, the pregnant mother cannot hold back her impulse to eat an herb called rapunzel, grown in the sorceress’s garden, which no one has ever entered, and asks her husband to steal it. The husband, being caught by the sorceress in her garden, agrees to give his baby to the sorceress in return for the rapunzel. The sorceress raises the child, naming her Rapunzel, and imprisons her, when she reaches the age of twelve, in a high tower to keep her safe from the world. Later, the sorceress sends her to a wild land when she finds out about the affair between her and the prince. In *The Faithful Friend*, the wicked man torments the young protagonists because one of them is marrying his niece. The mother in *The Talking Eggs* is abusing the child character, Blanche. It may be unbearable for the child viewer to think of having these kinds of mothers, fathers, foster-mothers or uncles in reality. In *Tops and Bottoms*, the hare family are ‘in very bad shape’ because they had to sell their land to the big black bear, who is very lazy because he has lots of money and land. The lazy bear can be identified as adult not only because of his size but also because he is old enough to be a business partner with the father hare.

***In the translated stories, :
no adult appears to do :
harm to children :***

In the translated stories, no adult appears to do harm to children. In *Golem* the conflict is between adults and adults; neither of them do any harm to the ‘child’ character, the golem.

Criterion 5: Endings not involving happy transformation to adult status

The translated books differ from the untranslated also in their endings. The untranslated books have overtly happy endings:

Rapunzel:

‘The prince led his family out of the wilderness toward his kingdom, where they were received with great joy. There they lived a long life, happy and content.’

Tops and Bottoms:

‘Hare bought back his land with the profit from the crops, and he and Mrs. Hare opened a vegetable stand. And although Hare and Bear learned to live happily as neighbors, they never became business partners again!’

The Faithful Friend:

‘Clement and Pauline lived happily together. Hippolyte fell in love and married, too, and the children of both couples grew up as close as brothers and sisters.’

The Talking Eggs:

‘When they [the mother and the older sister] returned home ... they found Blanche had gone to the city to live like a grand lady – though she remained as kind and generous as always.’

What should not be missed regarding these endings is that all the happiness is accompanied by a certain kind of physical change such as becoming adults or leaving home. Rapunzel and

the two young male protagonists in *The Faithful Friend* grow up and have their own family in the end. Blanche in *The Talking Eggs* leaves her home and becomes ‘a grand lady’. Hare and his family don’t have to live in the dark hall now that they are rich; they are no longer ‘in very bad shape’.

***The untranslated books
have overtly happy endings,
including physical changes
such as becoming adults or
leaving home*** :

In the translated books, no such physical growing up or leaving home is recognised in terms of the child characters. Neither the golem nor the raven stays in the human world, where everyone grows up to be an adult. They finally go back to what they were in the beginning: clay and a bird respectively. As for the seven blind mice, they are the same in appearance even after they have learned ‘The Mouse Moral’; they look quite settled and satisfied. *Lon Po Po* and *Puss in Boots* seem to have similar endings. Both the sisters and Puss have learned how to deal with and survive the adult worldliness that threatens their lives. However, in the end, they are not yet obliged to enter the adult world. Although it is getting dark outside, the sisters are in a cosy house and telling their mother ‘the story of the Po Po who had come’. Puss looks comfortable with his boots off up on the stairway, not caring about the king’s party down in the hall.

***In the translated picture-
books the child characters
stay in their childhood*** :

In the translated picturebooks, while the child characters’ circumstances change around them or they experience inner transformation, they remain physically unchanged from the

beginning of the story to the end. They stay in their childhood.

Conclusion

It appears from this study that we can draw up some distinct formulas to show what is common to the five translated books, as follows:

- Child => imaginative*
- Child => active*
- Child => no growing up*
- Adult => not bad*

These simple formulas, taken together, indicate what kind of picturebooks have tended recently to be translated and introduced to Japanese children: ones that respect the child’s imagination, make her active, keep her as a child and show no bad adults. These formulas do not merely demonstrate the Japanese preference. Another significant fact is also revealed by the formulas: picturebooks retelling folktales published in the United States can be divided into two groups – those where these formulas apply and those where they do not.

As Hilary Crew (2002) points out, traditional tales are originally told by ‘the omniscient anonymous narrator’, which makes the reader ‘passive’ and not readily engaged in interpreting the tales. The unique and creative arts or the intriguing inconsistency between texts and illustrations of the translated picturebooks, however, challenge this traditional one-way presentation of story that has long been characteristic of folktales. Also, unlike traditional tales that often function as lessons teaching children how to grow up properly, the translated picturebooks show no anticipation about what the child should be like in the future, they just expect her or him to stay in childhood, free from adult worldliness. And lastly, while traditional tales

function to ‘acculturate women to traditional roles’ (Lieberman 1986) and seldom have ‘female heroes who show intelligence, perseverance, or bravery’ (Barchers 1990), *Lon Po Po* subverts the old concept of femaleness, introducing the brave and wise female character. *Seven Blind Mice* also challenges the old notion by mentioning the first six mice by ‘he’ and the seventh white mouse, who gives the clear answer what the Something is, by ‘she.’

To summarise, the formulas drawn up in this paper are evidence of picturebooks that attempt new presentation or new interpretation of traditional tales and thus attempt to construct a new or ideal childhood that matches the contemporary societal expectation in the United States. And, in conclusion, current Japanese society values the same construction of childhood as in the United States, and, therefore, chooses to

translate American picturebooks that effectively and successfully portray the ideal childhood as embodied in the formulas.

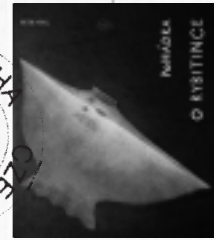
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 graphy

Petr Nikl is an exceptionally distinguished artist in the Czech Republic. This gentle book is an entirely original graphic and literary creation. The soft lines and muted colours of the drawings perfectly complement the poetical text. Here is a dreamy and gentle allegory about the eternal human longing for order, harmony and happiness. Words and pictures combine to produce multi-layered connotations with potential for activating a child’s imagination.

The shy little inhabitant of the sea is a messenger of tolerance. Her timely message, subtly conveyed, is of the utmost importance everywhere in the world.

Naděžda Siegllová



Petr Nikl

Pohádka o Rybitince

[The Tale of the Little Fish]

Prague: Meander, 2001, 52pp

isbn 8086830602 (picturebook, 6+)

Championing Irish Literature

A Postcolonial Critique of Lady Augusta Gregory's
Cuchulainn of Muirthemne

BY CIARA NÍ BHROIN



Ciara Ní Bhroin lectures in English literature at the Marino Institute of Education in Dublin

••• *Lady Augusta Gregory's 1902 translation of the Cuchulainn story into a vernacular Hiberno-English, for use in schools, was written partly to disprove the notion that native Irish literature lacked imagination and idealism and was unsuitable for passing on to children. Ciara Ní Bhroin considers this historically important children's book from a postcolonial perspective*

Lady Augusta Gregory (1852–1932) was a leading member, along with the poet WB Yeats, of the Irish Literary Revival. She took a passionate interest in the Irish language, collected folktales, wrote several plays and was a founder member of the Abbey Theatre. In 1902, she published *Cuchulainn of Muirthemne*, a translation of the ancient Irish myth of Cuchulainn into a poetic vernacular English, intended for use in Irish schools. Now mainly of antiquarian or academic interest, *Cuchulainn of Muirthemne* was nevertheless a seminal book of the Revival and a rare instance of the innovative influence of Irish children's literature on that for adults.

In his influential essay 'On National Culture' Frantz Fanon (1961) argues that national consciousness is a precursor to international consciousness and that both should be informed by a humanist philosophy based on consciousness of social and political needs. Central to his theory of decolonisation is that 'the building of a nation is of necessity accompanied by the discovery and encouragement of universalizing values'. 'Far from keeping aloof from other nations', he argues, 'it is national liberation which leads the nation to play its part on the stage of history.'

In relation to the stage of international literature, it is certainly true that Ireland's greatest contribution was produced at a time of national awakening, a time that has come to be known as the Irish Literary Revival. An increasingly crisis-ridden Home Rule campaign had caused disillusionment with parliamentary politics in Ireland at the turn of the 20th century and led to the birth of local self-help initiatives (Mathews 2003). In tandem with activity in other areas was an increased cultural activity, much of which aimed at transcending the sectarian and political division of the time through evoking a shared glorious and heroic ancient past. Charles Stewart Parnell's charismatic leadership and tragic demise in 1891 no doubt inspired the cult of the tragic hero which permeates the literature of the Revival and is embodied in the archetypal image of Cuchulainn.

Glossary

Anglo-Irish (not to be confused with Hiberno-English): People of English descent living in Ireland and generally of the Ascendancy or ruling class; when applied to literature, this term is more general and refers to Irish literature written in English

Cuchulainn (or Cú Chulainn – pronounced ‘coo hullen’): Heroic warrior of Irish myth

Hiberno-English: Dialect of English spoken in Ireland, influenced by the Irish language

Home Rule: A proposed form of government whereby Ireland would have domestic autonomy within the United Kingdom

Douglas **Hyde** (aka **de hÍde**): Leading member of the Celtic Revival movement, poet, writer, Gaelic scholar and first president of the Republic of Ireland

Irish language: A Celtic language spoken in Ireland, unrelated to English, and often known, especially outside Ireland, as Gaelic

Irish Literary Revival: The literary aspect of a cultural and political movement at the turn of the 20th century also known as the Celtic Revival

Charles Stewart **Parnell**: Irish political leader who fought for Home Rule in the late 19th century; he was brought down by the scandal caused by his liaison with a married woman, and died soon afterwards

Transformative and subversive translation

A member of the Anglo-Irish Ascendancy, Lady Gregory was uncharacteristic of her class in her passionate nationalism. *Cuchulainn of Muirthemne* was written primarily to repudiate statements made by Drs Atkinson and Mahaffy of Trinity College in response to the demands of the distinguished Gaelic scholar, Douglas Hyde, that Irish language and literature be taught in secondary schools. They claimed that Irish literature lacked imagination and idealism, was generally either silly or obscene and should therefore *not* be introduced into the school system (O’Connor 1984; Kiberd 2000). Determined to defend the integrity of Irish literature and to prove Atkinson and Mahaffy wrong, Lady Gregory undertook the task of translating transcripts of the Cuchulainn tales recorded by Eugene O’Curry and collating them with other manuscripts, primarily those of Stokes, De Jubainville and Kuno Meyer.

Finding that the different versions lacked coherence, Gregory selected sections from many manuscripts, inserting a few sentences of her own to impose unity on the work as a whole. The result of her labours, *Cuchulainn of Muirthemne*, is characterised not only by the qualities of imagination and idealism, but also by the ‘Kiltartanese’ dialect (Hiberno-English as spoken in Lady Gregory’s home area of Kiltartan, County

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Galway) in which it is written. This, more than anything else, distinguishes *Cuchulainn of Muirthemne* from previous translations into English of ancient Irish sagas and transforms the act of translation itself.

For other Anglo-Irish writers, such as Charlotte Brooke, Samuel Ferguson and Standish O'Grady, translation was an act of unification, a means of uniting Anglo-Irish and native Irish through a shared ancient culture and of enhancing esteem and partnership between Ireland and England within the context of Empire. Matthew Arnold's (1919) theories on the complementary natures of Celt and Saxon lent weight to a vision of union that accommodated and indeed encouraged Celtic difference. Though they embraced ancient Irish culture, the underlying motives of Brooke, Ferguson and O'Grady – the preservation of their own class and the naturalising of landlord-tenant relationships – were not very different from those of writers such as Maria Edgeworth, who rejected native tradition in favour of modern imperial progress. Indeed, Cairns and Richards (1988) describe the explicit identification of many Ascendancy intellectuals with Irish culture as a deliberate strategy amounting to 'little less than an act of cultural appropriation', an attempt to shape and control the emerging discourse in the interests of their own class.

Lady Gregory's translation of the Cuchulainn saga was subversive in a number of ways. Firstly, it was a deliberate challenge to the Trinity College professors who wished to denigrate Irish culture, an attempt to subvert the ideological control of the Trinity College establishment, which upheld the imperial values of a privileged class. To those who held the imperialist's contempt for the native culture and equally to those who enthusiastically sought to absorb its 'otherness' into imperialist hegemony, Lady Gregory intended to pose a challenge. She wished to validate native Irish culture through use of epic mythology and to show that this rich heritage was not the preserve of scholars and academics, but could be enjoyed by the masses through a living and distinctively Irish literature.

Lady Gregory's inclusiveness, her desire to make epic material available to the peasantry and to children – a powerless and often marginalised audience – was a direct contradiction of those, like Standish O'Grady, who urged writers 'to leave the heroic cycles alone and not to bring them down to the crowd' (Kiberd 2000). In her 'Dedication of the Irish Edition to the People of Kiltartan', she very deliberately addresses a native audience, a small local community, in an act that is the very antithesis of the provincialism which looks to the imperial capital. While distancing herself from the Trinity College establishment, she closely identifies herself with the local community in a manner similar to that of the oral storyteller.

However, Lady Gregory's description of herself in the book under discussion as 'a woman of the house, that has to be minding the place, and



Lady Augusta Gregory



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about Cuchulainn of
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listening to complaints, and dividing her share of food' highlights the difficulty of the Ascendancy intellectual who wishes to identify with the native peasantry. Fanon has described the precarious position of the native intellectual wishing to reconnect with the peasantry, but alienated by an assimilative colonial education. The position of the Anglo-Irish intellectual, who was both settler and native, was doubly precarious, however. Any attempt by Lady Gregory to identify with the peasant perspective, particularly her use of dialect, involved the risk of unconsciously appearing patronising. Nevertheless, her desire to do so, however precarious, deserves acknowledgement, as does her use of dialect as an empowering means of self-expression. Indeed, what is most subversive about *Cuchulainn of Muirthemne* is the way in which it reshapes the imperial language.

Reshaping the imperial language

In his preface to Gregory's *Cuchulainn*, WB Yeats writes of the difficulty he had experienced in writing stories of medieval Irish life with no language available to him but 'raw, modern English'. The search for a fitting language to express ancient Irish experience and a new awakening Irish consciousness was the challenge facing Irish writers in the English language. Fanon (1961) has drawn attention to the problem facing the native artist trying to create an authentic cultural work using the imperial language and derived forms: 'He contents himself with stamping these instruments with a hall-mark which he wishes to be national, but which is strangely reminiscent of exoticism.' Ironically, emphasising the otherness of Irish writing, through use of dialect and through a stress on ancient spirituality, fed into imperial notions of Irish exceptionalism, as expounded by the theories of Matthew Arnold in particular. Yet such an emphasis seemed necessary in order to establish Irish distinctiveness and therefore justify the claim to a separate national identity.

Lady Gregory was hugely influenced in her choice of idiom by the prose translations in Douglas Hyde's *Love Songs of Connacht* (1893). Recognising the literary potential of a distinctively Irish rendering of the English language, Lady Gregory tried to evolve a style deriving partly from the speech of the local community of Kiltartan and partly from her knowledge of the Irish language and her experience of translation. The resulting idiom had the advantage of seeming truer to the original transcripts than previous translations, closer to the native oral tradition and similar to a living, though transitional dialect of peasants who still thought in Irish. While Standish O'Grady related the epics in a formal, apocalyptic



'The Death of Cú Chulainn' bronze by Oliver Sheppard (1911), GPO, Dublin

style, using elegant Victorian English and little dialogue, Lady Gregory's aristocratic heroes and heroines speak in a peasant idiom, yet with ancient nobility. This is particularly effective in the laments throughout the book, those of Deirdre, Ferb and Emer and Cuchulainn's laments on the deaths of Ferdiad and of his son Conlaoch. The idiom captures the raw personal grief and elegiac dignity of the *caoineadh* (lament).

In radically altering the English language to give a new voice to awakening national consciousness, translations such as those of Hyde and Lady Gregory 'mark a transition from translation as an act of exegesis to translation as an agent of aesthetic and political renewal. Translations no longer simply bore witness to the past; they were to actively shape a future' (Cronin 1996).

Decolonising the future

The association of myth with the sacred and of epic with the heroic made Lady Gregory's choice of form alone an effective answer to any allegations of lowness of tone or lack of idealism in Irish literature. Irish mythology evoked an ancient Gaelic civilisation equal to that of Greece or Rome, with the added advantage of being relatively unknown to the modern world and therefore wonderfully new and unused. While literary critics of the time such as John Eglinton (1899) questioned the relevance to a modern literature of legends 'which cannot be transplanted into the world of modern sympathies', Fanon (1961) has shown that the reclamation of the past through myth is vital to the process of decolonisation. In delving into the pre-colonial past, the writer uncovers 'beyond the misery of today ... some very beautiful and splendid era', whose existence 'rehabilitates the nation' and 'serves as a justification for the hope of a future national culture'. The past, therefore, is recovered with an eye to the future.

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That *Cuchulainn of Muirthemne* was written for children is doubly significant: raising the consciousness of the young is a powerful way of shaping the future of a nation. In his study of Levi-Strauss's structural analysis of myth, Edmund Leach (1974) emphasises the important role of myth in conveying the ancient collective wisdom of a society to its junior members. As a vehicle of continuity between the ancestors and descendants of a race or nation, myth is a powerful antidote to the disruptive force of colonialism.

Furthermore, as a source of national 'rehabilitation' or salvation, myth is endowed with sacred significance. Terence Brown (1991) writes that

Cultural nationalism invests the records of the past with the spiritual charge of the sacred. Archaic texts are not simply archaeological remnants; they are chapters in the sacred book of the people.

This is evident in Yeats's preface to *Cuchulainn of Muirthemne*, in which repeated references to the Bible, along with numerous classical allusions, emphasise the book's symbolic significance. Indeed, his close association of the people, the land and the sacred has echoes of the Old Testament in particular. Just as Abraham led the chosen people to the Promised Land, and Moses delivered them out of slavery in Egypt, the Revival writers aspired to reconnect the Irish people with their ancient past and with their native land, in order to awaken the national soul.

Cuchulainn as national soul

The ultimate personification of national soul was Cuchulainn. Lady Gregory's Cuchulainn is characterised most notably by youth and vigour, but also by beauty, bravery and loyalty. He is semi-divine, son of the sun-god, Lugh, and of a human mother, Dechtire, and has access to the supernatural aid of the *sidhe* (fairy people) in times of trouble. Such qualities made him the ideal icon to regenerate a disillusioned and emasculated Ireland, traditionally figured as a poor old widow. Cuchulainn's supernatural conception and the wonderful boyhood deeds by which he earns his name anticipate his subsequent heroism. Indeed, he is still a boy when Cathbad the druid tells him, in Gregory's translation, that 'all the men in the whole world will some day have the name of Cuchulainn in their mouths'.

The ultimate personification of national soul was Cuchulainn :

Cathbad's prophecy of great fame and early death establishes Cuchulainn as tragic hero on the very day he takes up arms. He is outrageously glorious in battle, defending Ulster single-handedly against the forces of Maeve and Ailell. In love, too, he is successful, wooing and winning the beautiful Emer through riddles and dangerous feats. Desirable to women and having numerous lovers, Cuchulainn's sexual vigour is directly antithetical to the prudish moral code that led to the denunciation of Parnell, whose relationship with a divorcée was considered scandalous.

The extent to which Lady Gregory herself subscribed to Victorian sensibilities in sanitising much of the sexual material of the saga is debatable. Indeed, PJ Mathews (2003) argues that 'in some respects ... Lady Gregory can be accused of internalising the colonial critiques of Mahaffy and Atkinson'. Undoubtedly, Lady Gregory did not

want to leave her book open to any charges of 'indecent' or 'lowness of tone', an indication of the pressure felt by Irish writers following the Atkinson/Mahaffy controversy to prove the inherent purity and morality of Irish writing. That *Cuchulainn of Muirthemne* was intended for use in schools was also a major consideration – an early instance of the dilemma continually facing writers of children's literature and arising from the tension between the authenticity of a literary text and its perceived appropriateness to a juvenile audience.

As with all tragic heroes, Cuchulainn's sorrows are as great as his joys. His heart-rending battle with his boyhood friend, Ferdiad, is all the more tragic to the modern reader in the light of the Irish civil war, which broke out only twenty years after *Cuchulainn of Muirthemne* was first published. Most tragic of all is the unwitting killing of his son, Conlaoch, which is the subject of Yeats's play, *On Baile's Strand* (1904). The powerful image of Cuchulainn fighting the waves became for Yeats a symbol of the individual's struggle for heroism in a modern world.

Cuchulainn's death is in keeping with his life. Tying himself to a pillar in order to die fighting in an upright position, Cuchulainn is the ultimate Irish image of heroic self-sacrifice (see photo, p.16). His short but intensely lived life exemplifies what Yeats (1902) writes of myths in general:

The great virtues, the great joys, the great privations come in the myths, and, as it were, take mankind between their naked arms, and without putting off their divinity.

Cuchulainn for children

Declan Kiberd (2000) points out that all treatments of the Cuchulainn story are explorations of contemporary issues by means of a narrative set in the remote past. For Standish O'Grady,

Cuchulainn served as an inspiring example of nobility to the Ascendancy class, while Yeats saw in him an inspiration to each individual to awaken an inner heroism. The Irish revolutionary Patrick Pearse saw in the young Cuchulainn a shining example for the youth of Ireland in particular and, more specifically, a means of inculcating patriotic fervour in his students at St Enda's boys' school. The obvious parallels with the Christian story, explored explicitly in Pearse's portrayal of Cuchulainn, lent weight to the cult of heroic self-sacrifice which inspired the revolutionaries of 1916.

Lady Gregory's portrayal, which omits some of the more grotesque accounts of Cuchulainn's occult powers, emphasises the hero's humanity. Without diminishing his heroism, she managed to create a character with whom modern readers could more easily identify. Moreover, since her intention was to demonstrate the idealism of Irish literature, it possibly seemed better to omit accounts of Cuchulainn's distortions, explaining instead that his appearance changed to that of a god.

Subsequent treatments of Cuchulainn in children's literature emphasise not only his humanity, but, unsurprisingly, his boyhood heroism. Indeed, many focus exclusively on Cuchulainn's boyhood deeds and in particular on how he got his name (by killing a dog, whose role as guard-dog he subsequently had to take on, thus becoming 'Cú Chulainn', the hound of Culann).

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• grotesque accounts of
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Symbol of Celtic regeneration

All treatments of Cuchulainn, whatever their specific emphases, portray him as a symbol of regeneration. Furthermore, his heroic qualities rendered him the very antithesis of modern British philistinism and promoted an image of the romantic and noble Celtic spirit, at odds with a tawdry and essentially reductive modern world. Cuchulainn embodies what Arnold (1919) describes as the 'Titanism of the Celt, his passionate, turbulent, indomitable reaction against the despotism of fact', ironically the very quality which, according to Arnold, made the Celt unsuccessful in the material world and incapable of self-government. In promoting Arnold's image of the romantic Celt through a figure such as Cuchulainn, Revival writers were defining Irish national identity in discursive terms set by the colonial context.

Irishness thus became the antithesis of Britishness. Since an increasingly industrialised and urbanised Britain was seen to epitomise

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***• Irish cultural nationalism in
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• centuries was profoundly
• reactionary***

modernity, Ireland was conceived of as rural, spiritual and traditional. Irish cultural nationalism in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, therefore, was profoundly reactionary, and its apparent anti-modern cast drew censure, not only from critics like John Eglinton, but also from Irish writers such as George Moore and James Joyce. However, Fanon (1961) argues that this reactionary stage is part of the process of decolonisation. Through the reclamation of a pre-colonial native culture, the writer reconnects with the native population and accords their shared past the value denied it by the colonial power. Essentialism, in such a context, becomes a strategic step in the resistance of imperial hegemony.

***Myth: the key to imaginative
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For writers such as Lady Gregory and Yeats, myth was the key to imaginative repossession of the past as an inspiration for the future. Equally important, it was the key to emotional reconnection with local places and landmarks and, by implication, to imaginary repossession of the land. Yeats (1902) urges the Irish people to keep Cuchulainn and his friends ‘much in our hearts’ and says that ‘If we will but tell these stories to our children the Land will begin again to be a Holy Land’.

Irish mythology and children’s literature

Lady Gregory was one of the first of many writers to ‘tell these stories’ to Irish children in the English language; but the promise of the Literary Revival was unfortunately not achieved in relation to Irish children’s literature, which was

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characterised by its national orientation rather than its literary innovation. It was not until the 1980s, with the growth of an indigenous publishing industry for children’s books, that a renaissance occurred in Irish children’s literature. Nevertheless, the Revival marked the beginning of a fascination with myths, legends and folktales which remains prevalent in Irish children’s literature today.

However, as Robert Dunbar (1996) points out, this inheritance

in the hands of the less gifted writer ... has proved to be more of an encumbrance than an inspiration. This is a genre which too easily lends itself to clichés and stereotypes, both linguistic and thematic.

Cormac Mac Raois (1997), himself a writer of Irish fantasy for children, has questioned – with echoes of Yeats’s reservations regarding Lady Gregory’s exclusion of some sexual passages from *Cuchulainn of Muirthemne* – the appropriateness of retelling for children myths originally intended for adults, when sanitisation compromises authenticity: ‘In the further toning down required for children’s versions there is a risk of presenting a narrative of unappealing blandness.’ Certainly, the current outpouring of glossy ‘Irish myths and legends’ collections needs scrutiny. It arguably reflects the wider fashion of packaging Celtic culture as

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a marketable commodity – in other words, nativism for profit – rather than a need to re-invent and recreate our ancient past, and by implication ourselves.

Cuchulainn of Muirthemne was a seminal book in translating tradition at a key moment in Ireland's decolonisation and in laying the foundations for a national children's literature in the English language, which is today gaining increased international exposure. Today, the notion of Irish exceptionalism in children's literature is giving way to the exploration of Irish experience as representative of human experience. An increasingly global Anglo-American culture, however, raises new questions about national identity and cultural diversity in the new millennium. Perhaps we should bear in mind Fanon's (1961) argument that

**• Today, the notion of Irish
• exceptionalism in children's
• literature is giving way to the
• exploration of Irish experience
• as representative of human
• experience**

It is at the heart of national consciousness that international consciousness lives and grows. And this two-fold emerging is ultimately the source of all culture.

Based on the Sanskrit phrase 'Vasudeva Kutumbakam', which means 'The world is one family', this outstanding anthology of Indian folktales is an endeavour by members of the Association of Writers and Illustrators for Children (AWIC, the Indian IBBY) to recreate and share the magic that is India. Relying on India's age-old tradition of storytelling, each of the 26 tales, retold by AWIC members and illustrated by thirteen well-known illustrators of children's books, opens a whole new world to its readers.

Text and illustrations combine in each of the tales to give the reader a genuine and authentic feel of the different regions of India. Using a variety of styles, the illustrators present vivid pictures of the region depicted in each story. The tales themselves emphasise universal human virtues – like truthfulness, loyalty, courage, generosity, humour and honesty – by weaving them into the fabric of the story. Clever ministers, beautiful damsels, wicked stepmothers, virtuous kings, wily jackals and benevolent spirits abound and make the stories come alive.

At the end of each story is a short description of where it originated, a device that provides perspective for the tale. Targeting the discerning age group of 8–12-year-olds is a challenge, but this elegantly designed volume is a contender for their interest.

Sonali Jha Chatterjee



Nita Berry and Deepa Agarwal (eds)
(Atanu Roy design)

ONCE UPON A TIME IN INDIA:
AN ANTHOLOGY OF FOLK TALES

New Delhi: Macmillan 2004 174pp
ISBN 1403922462 (folktales, 8–12)

Six children have gathered around the master drummer, Dudu Addi. Each child has to choose a drum and an accompanying symbol. Those who make the 'wrong' selection won't receive drumming lessons. Dudu Addi helps every child to choose correctly by telling a story about each symbol.

The stories are partly based on traditional stories from Ghana and other African countries. The tales, one by one, create beautiful images of the atmosphere and cultural traditions of these countries. At the end, as all the children come together, the stories also come together, joining to make a whole of related parts.

The writer uses a pleasant style characterised by simple, short sentences. Attractive colour illustrations enhance the told stories and evoke the atmosphere of the African settings. Children learn about both storytelling and cultural traditions in African countries.

Toin Duijx

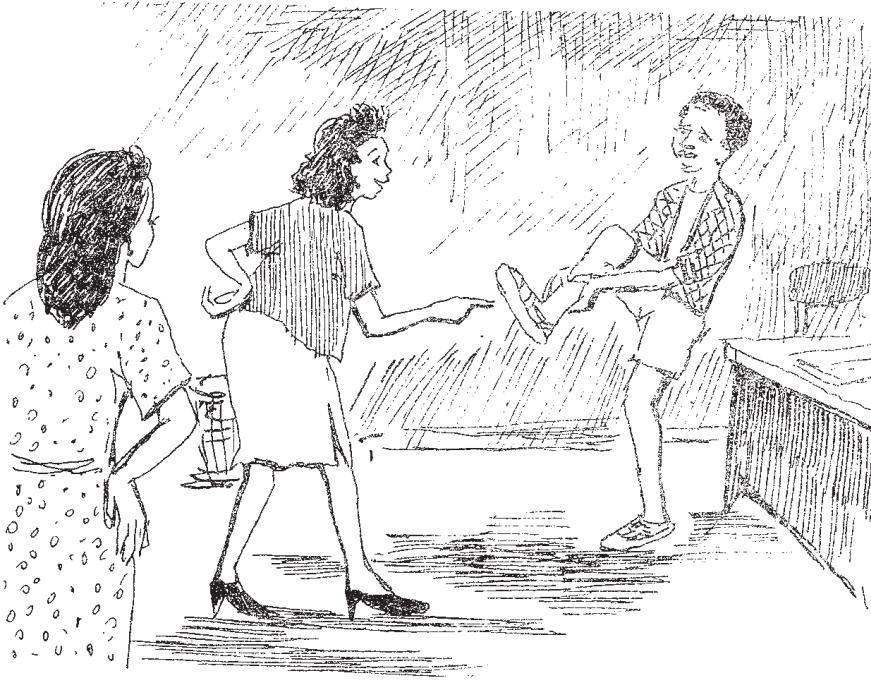


Hans Hagen (illus Philip Hopman)

De dans van de drummer
[The Drummer's Dance]

Amsterdam: Van Goor 2003 109pp
ISBN 9000034590 (illustrated storybook, 9+)

Political Protest in *Shitaye*



• African writers, including Ethiopians, have had to live under the yoke of censorship for decades. In order to express their criticisms and survive, many writers have developed the technique of writing stories with two levels of meaning – a surface level with politically correct views and an inner level with cries of protest and dissent. Michael Daniel Ambatchew uncovers the political subtext of one recent children’s story

In Ethiopia, children’s books are expected to educate while entertaining rather than to entertain for entertainment’s sake. Accordingly, *Shitaye*, a 20-page children’s book with black-and-white illustrations written and published in Ethiopia in 2003 by the well-known children’s author, Tesfaye G Mariam, teaches the acceptable moral of ‘look at the log in your own eye, before you see the splinter in another’s’ – on the surface, that is. However, a deeper meaning can be discovered in it that reflects the author’s view of African reality and world politics.

Historical background

Ethiopia has 75 identified ethnic groups, over 80 languages and a population of approximately 65 million. Amharic has been the national language for centuries. In 1935, Italian colonisers invaded the country

BY MICHAEL DANIEL AMBACHEW



Michael Daniel Ambatchew is a freelance English and education consultant in Ethiopia and the author of a dozen children’s books

and forced Emperor Haile-Selassie into exile. A deliberate effort was made to exterminate local intellectuals and harsh measures were taken to try to make Ethiopians accept the position of second-class citizens. People joined guerrilla movements *en masse* and fought bitterly against the Italians, and in 1940, with assistance from the international community, especially Britain and America, Ethiopia was liberated. After the liberation, however, the feudal system was allowed to continue, whereby absentee landlords appropriated one-third of the peasants' produce. There was growing pressure from intellectuals and students for a more liberal system, but when a famine occurred in one province in the early 1970s, attempts were made to cover it up, as the Emperor's 80th birthday was being lavishly celebrated. Scenes of extreme poverty contrasting with excessive opulence were probably the last straw which led to the Ethiopian Socialist revolution.

***Scenes of extreme poverty
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Ethiopian Socialist revolution*** :

With the coming to power of the Dergue in 1974, and in the reign of Colonel Mengistu Haile-Mariam, there were hopes for a brighter future with equality and prosperity. All land was confiscated, and farmers were given user rights over the land they ploughed under the slogan 'Land to the Tiller'. Even measures like censorship of literature were at first borne with patience. However, the economy suffered, and declining per capita income, serious internal and external macroeconomic imbalances and widening budget deficits characterised the period between 1974 and 1991. A war with Somalia, internal conflicts and political struggles added to the problems. Intellectuals fled the county when

civilian killings became common, and it is currently estimated that the number of Ethiopian intellectuals in the diaspora is double that of intellectuals living in Ethiopia. A massive famine, in which 7 million Ethiopians starved, led to general disillusionment and strengthened guerrilla groups fighting to topple the government.

***At first things improved
under the EPRDF and the
country seemed to have
economic stability as well
as liberal laws*** :

In 1991, the Ethiopian People's Republic Democratic Front (EPRDF) seized power, with Ato Melese Zenawi as its leader, and the province of Eritrea became an independent country. At first things improved and the country seemed to have economic stability as well as liberal laws. The retraction of censorship laws led to a blossoming of newspapers, magazines and literature in general. However, after several years, the initial exuberant response is fast fading, and a war with Eritrea broke out in 1998. The biggest famine ever, with 13 million starving, has made people sceptical about the bright future of plenty that is supposed to be around the corner.

The author

Tesfaye Gebre-Mariam has written over a dozen books in English and Amharic and is one of the founding members of a group of writers calling themselves 'Writers for Ethiopian Children'. His tendency to express his political concerns in his books is reflective of his life experiences.

Tesfaye was born in the town of Ghimbi in the southwest of Ethiopia in 1949, the decade following the liberation of Ethiopia from Italian colonisers. He grew up in the town of Assossa, which is near the Sudanese border, and is a hotbed

***Tesfaye's tendency to
express his political concerns
in his books is reflective of
his life experiences*** :

of political unrest. Moreover, his father had been in the Ethiopian army that fought against the Italians in the late 1930s and in the ensuing struggle for power, which involved the British, Americans and Ethiopians trying to take up the reins surrendered by the Italians.

Tesfaye completed his elementary and secondary education in Assossa. After that, he studied at the Harar Teacher Training Institute in the south-east of the country. This institute had students from all over Ethiopia, which gave Tesfaye the opportunity to share experiences with teacher trainees nationwide.

After obtaining his certificate, he worked as a teacher in rural areas, where poverty was a part of daily existence. He went on to study for his diploma in education at Bahr Dar College of Teacher Education and was involved in the student protests that called for 'Land to the Tiller' and eventually led to the revolution of 1974. During summer vacations he worked as a research assistant for an international organisation, which involved him in travelling to the north of the country where he was exposed to the famine and its effects on the people under the rule of the emperor. Because of the political unrest, Tesfaye withdrew from college and went back to working as a teacher and as a school director. During the socialist period, from 1974 to 1991, Tesfaye became a socialist party member and worked in the Ministry of Education as a district and then a provincial supervisor. Later on, he worked in the Workers' Party of Ethiopia Headquarters in Addis Ababa.

In the 1980s, while working in the Workers' Party of Ethiopia, Tesfaye joined the extension programme of Addis Ababa University and

began studying for his first degree in foreign languages and literature in the evenings. Here his political awareness found a natural outlet in creative writing and Tesfaye began writing children's literature.

He published his first children's story *YeGichilay Meda* [The Gichilay football field] (1989) in Amharic with the state-owned Kuraz Publishers. The story demonstrated how problems facing society could be solved by the masses themselves. The community unite and create a football field (*meda*) in the area of Gichilay for their children to play in. However, Tesfaye quickly became disenchanted with the practice of Marxist theory and this was reflected in his writings. The censors rejected a book of his entitled *Shibita and Barud* at the time, as they felt that the boy named Shibita being bitten by his own dog, Barud (which means 'bullet shell' in Amharic), was an indirect appeal for the military to revolt against the dictatorial socialist government.

***At Addis Ababa University,
his political awareness
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In 1988, Tesfaye completed his primary degree with distinctions. He continued his studies for his master's in literature at the same university and wrote his dissertation on folktales gathered from his hometown of Assossa. In 1991, with the coming to power of the present government, he joined Addis Ababa University as a lecturer and attained the rank of assistant professor. After some years, he became disenchanted by the cronyism and resigned from the university. Since 2000, he has lectured in private colleges, namely Unity College and Micro-Link College, but he has devoted more time to his writing career and has

published several books in English and Amharic. Although he retired completely from politics with the downfall of the socialist government, his political awareness tends to show in his writing.

In 2002 he published a book in English entitled *What if I Refuse?* which has as its plot a mischievous fox that frightens a bird into sacrificing her chicks one by one. The fox does this by pretending he can chew down the tree and thus deprive her of all her chicks, as well as her nest. Eventually, the bird dares to refuse, after being advised by other birds to do so. She discovers to her delight that the fox is simply bluffing and that he cannot harm either her chicks or herself. Eventually, the birds attack the fox and pluck out his eyes, which leads to his death. There are obvious parallels to African governments that threaten their peoples, who do not dare to refuse and are unaware of the massive strength that lies in their numbers.

Shitaye

In 2003, Tesfaye published his latest book in English entitled *Shitaye*. *Shitaye* is an Amharic name that corresponds to Rose in English, but can also be used to mean a disgusting odour.

Shitaye, the protagonist, is apparently a civil servant. She suddenly smells something awful in her office. She tries to discover the source of the smell together with her colleague, Shewaye. At first, they mistakenly assume a banana peel is a dead mouse. *Shitaye* roughly orders Kebede, a messenger, to get rid of it. But on realising that it is only a banana peel, she accuses Kebede of being the source of the smell. She humiliates him by making him show the soles of his shoes, one of which has a hole. Kebede knows this and doesn't want to lose face, but *Shitaye* harasses him into showing his shoe soles.

Then she accuses two small children, aged nine and five, of being the source of the smell. After

Shitaye is an Amharic name that corresponds to Rose in English, but can also be used to mean a disgusting odour :

inspecting the nine-year-old's shoes, she makes the poor five-year-old pull down his pants and looks at his bottom, even though he is in tears and says that he is clean.

Shitaye then levels her accusations at her colleague and officemate Shewaye. After finding that Shewaye's shoes are clean, *Shitaye* begins to blame the guards in the compound. Before calling in the guards to be inspected, Kebede timidly suggests that she check her own shoes. *Shitaye* is most outraged and indignant. However, she raises her shoes to show they are clean, but to her dismay she finds they are covered in droppings.

On the surface, Shitaye is a cautionary tale, advising children to 'look at the log in your own eye before the splinter in another's' :

On the surface, *Shitaye* is a cautionary tale, advising children to 'look at the log in your own eye before the splinter in another's'. However, at a deeper level this could be considered as another one of Tesfaye's stories that are a condemnation of the governments of Africa or Ethiopia as being the major polluting factor of the social environment as a whole, while they are only too quick to look for scapegoats. They forcefully accuse others and humiliate and attack them for their own wrongdoings.

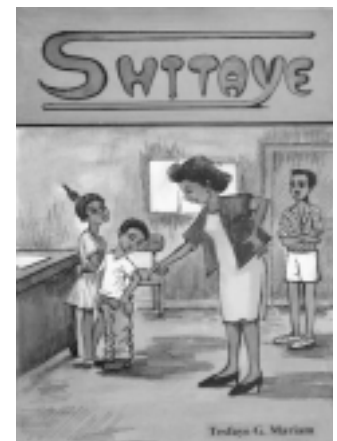
The story begins with *Shitaye* boasting of her superiority due to her nose. She says it is not only bigger and straighter than Shewaye's, but also works better. As these are women talking, it

is unlikely that their noses could be considered as phallic symbols, but if one were to consider them as symbolic of the rifles that many African governments use to come to power, then indeed those who have bigger, better and more efficient arms do take political and economic ascendancy. In the case of Ethiopia, both the socialist government and the EPRDF came to power with their rifles in hand, then subsequently held elections, which they won resoundingly.

Next, it is Shitaye herself who begins to complain aloud about the smell in the room, while Shewaye has also noticed it, but is trying to ignore it. Similarly, while the African public tends to try to ignore and cope with existing social problems like corruption, ironically it is the governments who lead huge campaigns against corruption that they are ultimately responsible for. The setting up of anti-corruption commissions appears to be one of the prerequisites for getting debt relief from the international financial institutes. Naturally Ethiopia has set up one and is among the African countries involved in poverty-reduction strategies, which the World Bank and IMF have prescribed for Africa and insist on calling 'government-owned initiatives'.

After that, although Shitaye claims to be more refined and sensitive to things, she openly mocks her friend for sympathising with the dead mouse. This can be directly compared to African governments that claim to represent the broad masses, yet rob them blind to fill their coffers in foreign banks. In fact, they often mock humanitarian organisations and persons who do sincerely feel for the people. On an international level, developed countries are forcing African countries to pay enormous amounts of debts, which often exceed their GDP and prohibit agricultural subsidies, while they subsidise their own farmers. Ironically, the present Ethiopian government is paying debts that were incurred by the socialist government for the purchase of arms to fight the EPRDF!

To continue, Shitaye has no empathy with the messenger. She beckons him with her forefinger in a most condescending manner. She does not even suspect that his reluctance to lift up his left shoe could be due to his feeling embarrassed by the hole in the shoe. In fact, she even fails to notice his signs of 'visible fear' and his 'eyes begging for mercy'. Even on discovering his shoes are clean, she puts his behaviour down to foolishness. On the contrary, Shewaye understands, and tries to encourage him to get the torment over with. The parallels with African governments and leaders that throw multi-million dollar affairs while their people are dying due to famine and poverty are noticeable. In Ethiopia, the emperor was celebrating his birthday extravagantly, while people in the north were starving. The military



junta was also celebrating the launching of the Workers' Party of Ethiopia, while the people were suffering from famine and war. Emperor Bokassa's coronation is another example, where African leaders and governments focus their attention and resources on things that interest them, irrespective of the feelings and the needs of the majority of the people. Similarly, international financial institutions have not openly admitted that their structural adjustment programmes actually exacerbated poverty in Africa, but are encouraging African governments to get over it and launch the new poverty-reduction strategies.

***This episode with the children
can be linked directly to the
actions of many African
governments that have
ratified the Convention on
the Rights of the Child*** :

In the story, Shitaye grabs hold of the girl's shoulder and forces the boy to pull down his pants and expose his buttocks. Tesfaye goes into specific details, giving us Shitaye's words, 'lower, lower, ... Yes, still lower,' and having us see the poor boy's hands trembling and his tears gathering as she cranes her neck to peek into his pants. Unlike in the incident with Kebede, Shewaye does not say a word in defence of the children. This episode with the children can be linked directly to the actions of many African governments that have ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child – which, in Article 19 explicitly states that governments should protect the child from all forms of maltreatment and establish appropriate mechanisms for the prevention of abuse (CYFWO 1992, p. 42) – yet continue to recruit child soldiers, and turn a blind eye to child prostitution and child labour. Considering the fact that Tesfaye worked on the publication of stories that illustrated the CRC to the public, it is likely that this speculation is correct.

The incident where Shitaye turns upon her own friend, Shewaye, could also be compared to African governments in which senior generals and close allies to the leaders are either killed by them, or else are plotting *coups d'état* against their friends and leaders. In fact, Shitaye does this very gently, saying she is confused and is forced to suspect her friend. Similar to some African governments, Shitaye also wishes she had more power and 'rules and regulations to punish'. In fact she boldly declares, 'I wish I could line them up and flog them'. Parallels could also be drawn at the international level, where the fight against terrorism has led to many previously unimaginable scenes, like Blair and Gaddafi shaking hands and Americans boycotting French wine.

Moreover, Shitaye perceives the slightest suggestion of her being the source of contamination as 'insulting'. Finally, at the ultimate moment of revelation, she neither admits her errors nor apologises for her wrong accusations, but instead remains silent. Both figuratively and literally, we see that she is covered with s_ _ t! Like many governments and leaders, Shitaye has a completely flawed image of herself and declares, 'I was always clean and smelt like a rose, always,' words reminiscent of the words of the Ethiopian socialist dictator, who butchered thousands of Ethiopian youth, yet once declared, 'I have never even killed a mosquito.' Similarly, the abuses committed by the American 'liberators' in Iraq have not been whole-heartedly admitted and only grudgingly apologised for.

***Both figuratively and
literally, we see that she is
covered with s_ _ t!*** :

To sum up, it is hardly likely that all these parallels between the protagonist and African leaders and governments in particular and world politics in general are purely coincidental. On the contrary, it is more plausible that as an educated and politically conscious African,

Tesfaye has taken this opportunity to express his political concerns as well as educate children all in the same book. *Shitaye* can be interpreted as a caustic criticism of governments who abuse their power by humiliating and tormenting others, while they themselves are the root cause for all the prevailing corruption, pollution and discord. Nevertheless, the story works well at both levels and does not read as an agenda-driven political protest camouflaged in a children's story. Thus Tesfaye can be said to have written a story that can be appreciated by children and adults at different levels.

**• It is hardly likely that all
• these parallels between the
• protagonist and African
• leaders and governments are
• purely coincidental**

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 Tesfaye G Mariam (2003) *Shitaye* Addis Ababa: Commercial Printing Enterprise

NB: Ethiopians do not use surnames. Therefore for publications within Ethiopia the usual style is that their name and their father's name is given. However, for works published abroad, their father's or grandfather's names are usually assumed to be surnames, so it is common to have the same person referred to differently due to this inversion of names.

Through both her fiction and her non-fiction, Deborah Ellis provides children with first-hand candid and truthful knowledge of the contemporary lives of children affected by adult failure. Her trilogy – 'The Breadwinner', 'Parvana's Journey' and 'Mud City' (Toronto: Groundwood Press) – set in war-torn Afghanistan in the 1980s and based on Ellis's interviews with Afghan women and girls, lets readers see for themselves how young children live through and cope with the horrors of war.

'The Heaven Shop' takes readers to the African country of Malawi, and individualises for them impersonal newspaper stories that report how thousands of children in Malawi and Zambia are left orphans when their parents die of AIDS, a disease of pandemic proportions in these countries. The comfortable lives of Binti Phiri, her sister and brother collapse into nightmare when both their parents succumb to AIDS. But Binti, a typical Ellis child character, shows extraordinary strength in adversity. Using limited resources and limitless courage, she struggles to rebuild a new life for herself and her siblings.

Writing in the 'Toronto Star', Deirdre Baker praises Ellis's honest, uncondescending voice: 'warm with compassion and humor, and especially, belief in children's heroism. Her writing is accessible, engaging and important.'

Glenna Sloan



DEBORAH ELLIS

THE HEAVEN SHOP

Markham, Ontario: Fitzhenry and Whiteside 2004
 186pp ISBN 1550419080 (realistic fiction, 10+)

Embracing Multiculturalism through Understanding 'Greekness' Contemporary Greek Books for Children



..... *In the past, Greek children's books were expected to give Greek children a sense of national identity. Today, although 'Greekness' in children's books continues to promote a deep understanding of national selfhood, at the same time children's books offer readers the idea that 'Greekness' is just one cultural possibility. Meni Kanatsouli and Theodora Tzoka discuss a selection of recent Greek children's books that, though steeped in 'Greekness', also embrace a more multicultural ethic*

BY MENI KANATSOULI AND
THEODORA TZOKA



Meni Kanatsouli is an associate professor at the University of Athens

Theodora Tzoka is a doctoral student in children's literature at the University of Athens

Until recently, Greece was a culturally homogeneous nation; now it is becoming a country of mixed cultures, and the phrase 'Europe, our village' is commonly used in Greece today (see, for example, Maratou–Alibranti and Galinou 2000). Social groups representing cultures other than the mainstream are being

The phrase 'Europe, our village' is commonly used in Greece today :

incorporated into the fabric of modern Greek society, and it is becoming obvious that the prevalent view regarding cultural and linguistic homogeneity needs to be reassessed.

'Greekness' in children's literature

There has been an ongoing debate in Greece regarding national identity or 'Greekness'. (See also Margaret Meek (2001), who has characterised national identity as an unstable construct which had its origins in Europe no earlier than the 19th century.) Until recently, when this discussion has concerned Greek literature, it has been limited to adult literature, though Penelope Delta, for example – a famous Greek children's author of the early 20th century – has dealt extensively with the issue of national identity. In her efforts to create practically from scratch a body of national literature for young Greek readers, she often gets carried away by her passionate search for the Greek character in children's books:

[Greek] Children who have learned a foreign language, after having to read their Greek lessons, enjoy reading amusing foreign books and by entertaining themselves in such a way, they of course shape their intellect but little by little, they lose their national soul. They learn about foreign traditions, foreign poetry and foreign ideals while ours are becoming more and more forgotten. I would like more writers to write about girls and boys who play, speak, behave well or mischievously in a Greek environment, books with dialogues and narrative taken straight out of the Greek home, where our national customs and traditions, our family holidays are described in detail. (Delta 1997)

The ethnocentric character of Delta's books is also apparent in other Greek children's books, and Delta's conviction that there should exist a children's literature whose aim would be to project the various forms of Greekness was shared by many. For example, in the 1950s a group of women with common literary interests got together to create the Women's Literature Society, and, following in Delta's footsteps, endeavoured to promote Greekness in children's books. They clearly made mention of the need for hellenising the Greek children's book, and, to this end, established a competition for the writing of children's fiction, mainly historical, with themes drawn from the traditions and the history of the Greek people.

The view today is that Greek children's literature in which a new and evolving idea of Greekness is portrayed should be included in school curricula in Greece. Such literature allows the reader to become familiar with various aspects of Greek culture, and how they permeate Greek literature. A more profound acquaintance with Greekness, as it is depicted in children's literature, promotes a deeper understanding of our national selfhood, while at the same time the reader becomes aware of the fact that 'Greekness' is just one cultural possibility amongst many, all of which deserve equal respect and equal treatment. The projection of cultural diversity through Greekness opens up new channels of communication with the cultures of other peoples, European and worldwide (Manna and Brodie 1992, Dietrich and Ralph 1995, Bishop 1997).

Greekness in contemporary Greek children's books

In 1999, we initiated a research project on 'Greekness' in literary books for children of elementary school age. Our main focus was the ways in which multicultural understanding can be promoted through these books.

We put together a corpus of books in which



Corpus of Books

- Christ Boulotis *Kadmos, the Doggie and the Moon* (Athens: Kastaniotis, 1996)
 Christ Boulotis *The Strange Love between the Horse and the Elm Tree*
 (Athens: Ellinika Grammata, 1997)
 Christ Boulotis *The Statue that Felt Cold* (Athens: Patakis, 1999)
 Eugenie Fakinou *Astradeni* (Athens: Kedros, 1982)
 Vasilis Hatzivasilioiu *The Consultant* (Thessaloniki: O Mikros Paratiritis, 1987)
 Elsa Hiou *Nene from Smyrne* (Athens: Kastaniotis 1996)
 Thetis Hortiati *Rigas of Oregano and Other Tales* (Athens: Kastaniotis, 1996)
 Nikos Kasdaglis *At Panormitis* (Athens: Kedros, 1997)
 Manos Kontoleon *Magic Mother* (Athens: Delphini 1992)
 Maro Loizou *The City at the Sea Bottom* (Athens: Minos 1995)
 Maro Loizou *The Water of Immortality* (Athens: Kedros, 1997)
 Irene Marra *Yalousa* (Athens: Kedros, 1991)
 Iro Papamoshou *The Bridge of the East* (Athens: Patakis 1995)
 Athena Paparadaki *The Oil Tin* (Athens: Kastaniotis, 1979)
 Litsa Psarafi *The Tears of Persephone* (Athens: Patakis, 1984)
 George Sari *The Tight Shoes* (Athens: Kedros, 1979)
 Kira Sinou and Helen Apostolopoulou–Huk *The Hand at the Bottom of the Sea*
 (Athens: Kastaniotis, 1987)
 Eugene Trivizas *The Magic Pillows* (Athens: Patakis, 1991)
 Helen Valavani in *A God Spurts Out* (Athens: Kedros 1991)
 Sophia Zarabouka *Alexander the Great* (Athens: Kedros 1993)
 Alki Zei (Sophia Zarabouka illus) *Alice in Marbleland*
 (Athens: Kedros 1997, in Greek and English)

Note: All these books were written and published in Greek and are not available in English translation, except where noted.

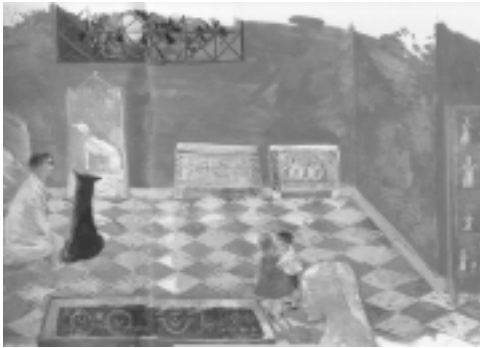
diverse forms of Greekness were represented. We decided to select books mainly belonging to the genres of modern literary tales, fantasy literature and the realistic novel. Historical fiction and biographies were excluded, as we considered that their portrayal of Greekness served specific ideological purposes. Our aim was to search for books where Greekness did not constitute the main purpose of the literary story, but rather permeated the books, existing along with a host of other features, some of them having to do with other cultures.

We decided to restrict our selection to books that were written in the last twenty years or so, because the idea of Greekness as a means of understanding not only our own culture but also

other cultures is fairly new in Greek children's books. Greekness in literature has always been a way of familiarising ourselves with our own cultural peculiarities, but in today's global community it is also a way of understanding our 'universal' self, a self that is constantly being reshaped through our contact with other cultures. This multicultural view of Greekness is best traced in contemporary Greek children's books.

We were also concerned that the books selected should be of a high literary standard.

The books that were finally chosen are indicative of current trends in Greek children's literature and offer an overall view of the various aspects of Greek national identity and how they are interwoven.



The Oil Tin (Paparadaki) is a journey into two different and often conflicting aspects of Greek life. On the one hand, it illustrates traditional rural life and, on the other, life in a modern city.

In *The Tight Shoes* (Sari), traditional life is seen through the eyes of Panagiotis and his mother, and a picture of urban life is given through Zoe and her mother. We read about people's superstitious beliefs in the existence of ghosts, demons and miraculous cures and witness the simplicity of traditional life. Juxtaposed with the world of old ideas is the world of new ideas introduced by the sophisticated residents of the capital – ideas about child rearing and a woman's equal place in society. These two opposing Greek worlds seem to be reconciled despite their differences, predicting the emergence of a new Greek society, which will eventually be able to find a compromise between the new and the old.

These two opposing Greek worlds seem to be reconciled despite their differences, predicting the emergence of a new Greek society :

In *Astradeni*, Fakinou recounts the experiences of little Astradeni who, together with her family, moves from the small island of Simi to Athens. The whole story is structured around two worlds – Astradeni's past life on the island and the memories she cherishes of that life; and her struggle to cope with the difficulties of life in the

big city. This duality not only illustrates the conflict between Greek traditional life and modern Greek life, but prepares us for the dramatic climax of the book which comes with the rape of Astradeni (see also Kanatsouli 1999).

The Water of Immortality (Loizou) is about the wanderings of two children who set out on a journey all over Greece in search of the water of immortality – but, much more than that, it is a journey that gives the two children the opportunity to discover their own land, its ancient myths and popular traditions. It's a book about music, love and the path to wisdom, a wisdom that the two heroes acquire when they finally come to the realisation that the water of immortality does not really exist but that what lives on for all eternity is our memory of things.

In *The City at the Sea Bottom*, also by Loizou, the setting is unquestionably Greek: the Mediterranean sea and light, the mythical sea horse, the strange city at the bottom of the sea with its ancient buildings, the amphitheatre, the *agora* (ancient market place) and the ancient Greek statues. The illustrations artfully reinforce the dream-like atmosphere of the book. The dominant colour is blue, the transparent blue of the Greek seas, and in the last illustration is the gold of Greek sandy beaches.

The Consultant (Hatzivasiliou) (see also Tselfes and Kanatsouli 2003) and *A God Spurts Out* (Valavani) both draw inspiration from the traditional Greek world. Both books are written in a

language full of traditional words which have to do with attitudes, things and descriptions of everyday tasks which belong to a long-forgotten time of the past.

In Hortiati's *Rigas of Oregano and Other Tales*, a feeling of Greekness is pervasive through the stories' emphasis on oral tradition. All seven stories are poetically written and use a play of words common in folk poetry: homonyms, word repetition, composite words, riddles all make up the pieces of a very inventive language.

Yaloussa, by Irene Marra, is about Greek emigration around the middle of the 20th century. The book doesn't deal with the problems of Greek immigrants in other countries, as do so many other books of the time, but rather focuses on the problems of relatives who were left behind in the old country. Like the heroine of the book, many Greek parents, often very old, were parted from their children and experienced deep feelings of loneliness and abandonment. They lived solely for the day when their loved ones would return and the word *xenitia* (foreign land) was a word full of pain and anguish on the lips of many.

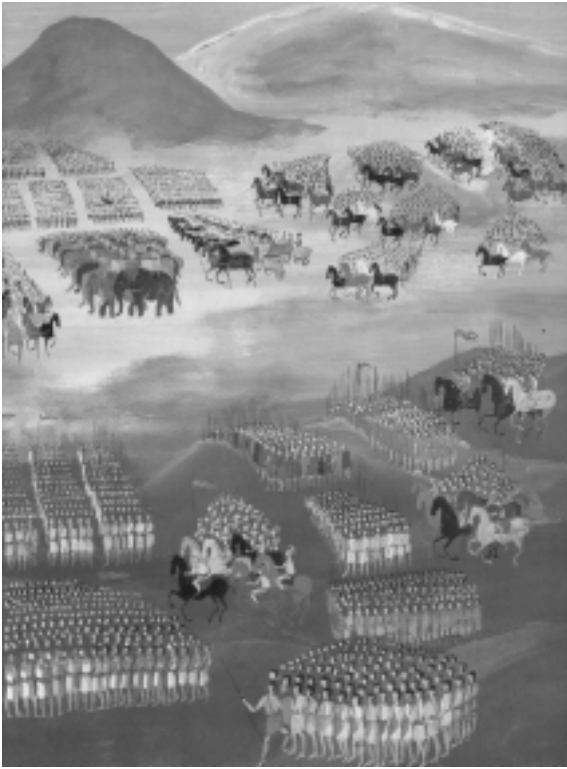
Traditional Greek life also inspired Nikos Kasdaglis's novella *At Panormitis*, where Greekness is depicted rather negatively, in a world that is male-dominated, harsh and cruel, governed by unwritten laws. What determines the relationships of the men and their responsibilities towards society is family and the 'vendetta', which used to be quite a common way to resolve differences in traditional Greek society. The story is about adults, but is told from a little boy's point of view.

***Other books are about :
Greece's ancient past seen :
through the eyes of a :
modern Greek child :***

Other books are about Greece's ancient past seen through the eyes of a modern Greek child. For

instance, *The Hand at the Bottom of the Sea* (Sinou and Apostolopoulou–Huk) is about ancient treasures aboard a sunken ship. The subject matter of *The Tears of Persephone* (Psarafi) is the ancient myth of Persephone and the revival of traditional attitudes (superstitions, customs, symbolic meanings). (For a more extensive treatment of this book, see Economopoulou and Kalogirou 2003.) *Alice in Marbleland* is an innovative book whose intertextual play with Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland* is obvious. Zei's Alice wanders through the British Museum and into the room where the Elgin marbles are kept. There she runs into the Cheshire cat who gives her a magic roll of film, which Alice uses to photograph the marbles. On her return to Greece, she develops the film and the marbles are automatically restored to their rightful place, the Parthenon. The book's ideological intent is obvious, since it openly supports the return of the Elgin marbles to the Parthenon. The Greekness of the book is most evident in the profound emotions of the heroine and in the book's illustrations. Alice poses in front of the frieze of the Parthenon in the British Museum. There is also a plan of the Parthenon with its architectural details, while in the façade of the Parthenon all the metopes are restored to their original place, the only difference being that the Elgin metopes are shown in a different colour (see also Kanatsouli 2002).

The Magic Pillows by Eugene Trivizas (see Tsamadou–Jacobberger 2002) is about totalitarianism, about a bad tyrant who inscribes laws which abolish people's freedoms and orders the mass-production of special pillows which turn dreams into nightmares. The book is rich in symbolic language and as such is open to a variety of interpretations. It may be an allegorical representation of the seven-year dictatorship in Greece (1967–74). Of course, Greece is not the only country that has experienced the atrocities of such a system. The need to live in freedom, without tyrants, so as to be able to dream and



hope is a universal need. It has always, however, strongly expressed the independent Greek spirit.

In the short story ‘The Pebbles’ included in Manos Kontoleon’s collection *Magic Mother*, the heroine, 15-year-old Rosa, is able, with the use of her magic pebbles, to heal the infirm. It is hard to say whether the girl is half saint or half witch, whether she is a sacred symbol of orthodoxy or a shady character who derives her powers from some dark, religious superstition. Rosa is undeniably Greek, since in her personage intense religious tradition coexists with popular belief in demonology; but on the other hand, Rosa does not discriminate against people of other faiths. Her healing powers are meant for all human beings as well as animals. The Greek elements are broadened to take on a more universal scope.

Alexander the Great is a biography that focuses on a mixture of multicultural and Greek elements. Zarabouka emphatically projects the multicultural aspect of the conquests of Alexander the Great, while also casting light on Greekness, mainly

through the book’s vivid illustrations, which briefly summarise the history of Greek art. For instance, the illustrations of Alexander the Great and his son Philip are inspired by the small ivory heads which were found in the Vergina tomb. Her depiction of the battle scenes are modelled on the traditional paintings of Panayiotis Zographos, while the illustration of Roxanne, Alexander’s oriental wife, is inspired from the pre-Byzantine art of Fayoum. In other words, the text is highly multicultural while the illustrations are profoundly Greek. The textual and illustrative narratives differ in content, or at least in how they shift the emphasis of the content – creating what Perry Nodelman and others call the ‘irony’ of the picturebook, whereby the illustrations do not narrate the story of the text but rather complete or alter it.

Christ Boulotis’s books also recall ancient Greece. For instance, *Kadmos, the Doggie and the Moon* is a story of love but it is a love that unfolds in a totally Greek setting. The funeral offerings in the glass showcases of the museum, the scattered statues and sarcophagi in the museum’s yard, the ancient Greek inscription the archaeologist studies are all images from ancient Greek civilisation. Alongside these images are images of modern Greece, the twining vine, the pine tree, the black grapes.

The Strange Love between the Horse and the Elm Tree on one level is the love story between two different creatures that manage to overcome all obstacles. On a more symbolic level, it can be interpreted as an effort to reconcile and unite two sets of entirely different mentalities and attitudes as they are represented in the horse and the elm tree. Going one step further, it can be seen as the need for society today to accept and reconcile all kinds of social, cultural and ethnic diversity. The book can be read as the symbolic expression of a new era that is opening up in front of us, an era of change, where boundaries shift, different cultures mix, the old blends with the new and ‘otherness’ is respected.



The main character in Boulotis's *The Statue that Felt Cold* is an ancient Greek statue of a young boy that was found in Turkey and later transferred to the archaeological museum of Athens. The 'small refugee', as the statue was christened by the archaeologist Karouzou, has but one dream and that is to travel at least once to its native land. Greek elements permeate the entire book, but at the same time the drama of refugees being uprooted from their homes – a tragedy Greek people are unfortunately very familiar with – is of course a universal drama. Although the uprooted statue personifies the drama of Greek refugees, it is a general, overall open cry of protest for the

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The Bridge of the East, with its parallel stories of refugee life, speaks straight to the heart of the Greek reader :

uprooting of peoples from all over the world.

Iro Papamoshou's *The Bridge of the East*, with its parallel stories of refugee life, speaks straight to the heart of the Greek reader. The history of the Greek people is full of the drama of refugee life and the loss of their homelands. The book vividly conveys the atmosphere of a time when people from different cultures managed to live together in harmony, putting aside their differences for the sake of humanity. It is a sensitive issue that still concerns Greek people today.

Nene from Smyrne by Elsa Hiou is another story about refugees. Nene was forced to leave her homeland, Smyrne, and seek refuge on the island of Samos. Her stories, narrated to her grandson, are full of the memories of her beloved Smyrne, her life with the Turks there and accounts of the historical events that led to the uprooting of thousands of Greeks. The past and present time of the places described in the book, Smyrne, Samos, Asia Minor today, are full of Greek elements, or at least this is how the two main characters of the book feel about these places. Turks also people the book, however, and they paint a different image of Greekness. This book portrays an open, all-accepting image of a people who know how to live with others.

Conclusions

Greek children's literature today has undergone a variety of ideological shifts, many of which are a result of multicultural trends that have influenced children's literature all over the world today. In so far as issues of national identity are concerned, Greek children's books today are free of the ethnocentric ideology and heavy didacticism that

characterised Greek children's literature for the greater part of the 20th century. Although elements of Greekness clearly permeate the books under discussion, they are not in the least bit coloured by an ethnocentric ideology. They are rather a simple depiction of the various aspects of Greek life and Greek thought both in the present and the past. The reader may be transported in time to the wonders of ancient Greek civilisation, or may learn about rural Greek life. The more obviously multicultural books emphasise the need not only for accepting cultural differences but also for learning how to live harmoniously with people who are different from us.

• ***Greek children's books today
are free of the ethnocentric
ideology and heavy didacticism
that characterised Greek
children's literature for the
greater part of the 20th century***

National identity, whether Greek or otherwise, has of course always been a way for nations to get to know their collective selfhood, their history, their culture. However, in children's books today, national identity is also a means of promoting the idea that despite what separates us there is much more that unites us. The emphasis on cultural singularity is now considered as a means of showing respect for the history and past of our country while at the same time showing respect for the idea that, despite cultural peculiarities, we are all people of a common world: a world where national cultures can be liked and appreciated and should be shared with people of other nations.

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First published in Taiwan, where it won the Hsin Yi Picture Book Award, Guji Guji secured a spot on The New York Times bestseller list in the autumn of 2004 when it was released in the United States. US sales skyrocketed after Daniel Pinkwater called the book a masterpiece in a review on American National Public Radio.

Raised from an egg by Mother Duck, Guji Guji is content to live a duckling's life, although he doesn't resemble his siblings. Then he meets three strange, mean creatures who convince him that he is one of them, a crocodile, and who try to persuade him to deliver his duck relatives for their dinner. How Guji responds is delightfully rendered in spare text, effectively translated into English, and complemented by colourful, hilarious illustrations. With great subtlety, the book conveys a message about acceptance of difference.

Glenna Sloan



CHIH-YUAN CHEN

GUJI GUJI

TAIWAN: HSIN YI PUBLICATIONS 2003
AND LA JOLLA, CA: KANE/MILLER 2004

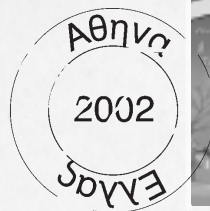
32PP ISBN 1929132670 (US EDITION) (PICTUREBOOK, 4-8)

Cats, dogs, tortoises, rabbits and pelicans, as well as people who love animals and people who do not, are the protagonists of the six short stories in this book. The author, motivated by her own personal experiences, narrates moving stories in which animals that used to live as real members of her own family take leading roles. This is how she manages to convey, through her texts, her love and concern, not only for the specific animals she refers to but also for animals in general.

The stories are pleasant to read with noteworthy messages referring to the importance of respecting nature and its creatures.

This book was highly commended by and received an honour diploma from IBBY Greece in 2003, in the books for intermediate readers category.

Vasso Nika



KIRA SINOU

I DYNASTIA TON MISKA

[Miska's Dynasty]

**Athens: Psicoghios 2002 236pp
ISBN 9602746130 (short stories, 9+)**



Visual Narratives across Cultures

Devising a Course on Reading Picturebooks

• *The European School Education Training course is a companion project to the online European Picture Book Collection. It is a web-based course designed to help teachers, parents and children to read picturebook narratives. Penni Cotton was involved in devising this course*

The website of the National Centre for Research in Children's Literature, which is based in Roehampton in Britain, acts as host for another website, that of the **E**uropean **P**icture **B**ook **C**ollection (www.ncrcl.ac.uk/epbc). Since the development of that EPBC site in 2000, the European Commission has funded the development of another, related website, also accessed through the Roehampton centre's website.

The new project is an online training course on reading picturebooks, called the **E**uropean **S**chool **E**ducation **T**raining course. Its address is www.ncrcl.ac.uk/eset. This training course, which is designed to help teachers, parents and children to read picturebook narratives, is completely free of charge. Note that participants do not actually take the course online: the idea is that the course materials are available for downloading, so that they may be

BY PENNI COTTON



Penni Cotton is a research fellow at the National Centre for Research in Children's Literature (at the University of Sussex, Roehampton, UK) and director of both the European Picture Book Collection project and the European School Education Training course

adapted for individual use by teachers or teacher trainers.

The ESET course was written by a small group of European educationalists specialising in children's literature. It is designed to be used with the EPBC books and its main objective is to give guidance on how to read the visual narratives of European picturebooks and thus gain insights into other languages' literatures and cultures.

Multilingualism

One of the main aims was to make the course as multilingual as possible, and it was initially available in English, French and German; other languages have followed. The ESET team are particularly proud of the introduction, as, with the help of a large number of European colleagues, it is now in more than 25 European languages.

One of the main aims was to make the course as multilingual as possible

The importance of this linguistic availability cannot be overestimated. The team feels that both adults and children should have the opportunity to explore the similarities and differences between languages and try to make comparisons with their own. Through activities such as those provided within ESET, users are able to develop a knowledge and awareness of several languages. This allows them access to other literatures and cultures.

Structure of the course

The materials used in the ESET course centre around the European Picture Book Collection, which was developed during a three-year EU Comenius-funded project using material from

The course provides a structure which facilitates discovering more about European countries

15 EU member states. The course provides a structure which facilitates discovering more about European countries, and is divided into three sections:

- **Linguistic knowledge:** Familiarisation with EPBC materials and focus on linguistic similarities and differences
- **Literary analysis:** In-depth focus on aspects of the visual narratives which texts have in common, plus identification of those aspects which are culturally specific
- **Cultural awareness:** Drawing together the two previous strands through looking at the universal themes which permeate the books. This has been done by devising activities that allow exploration of European cultures, through email, chatrooms and the internet

The ESET course comprises three *modules*, one each on language, literature and culture, together with aims and objectives for each module. Each module consists of five *sessions*. Each session contains

- Learning outcomes
- Resources
- Session outline
- Cultural reflection

Each session is linked to

- the EPBC website
- other European children's literature websites
- other relevant internet resources

Each session length

- is designed to be about 2 hours
- can be shortened or lengthened, depending on time available and the reasons for using it

Course content

To give an idea of the ESET content, here is an overview of the course:

	Language	Literature	Culture
1	Icebreaker: language portraits	Introduction to European children's literature/the EPBC	Games for cultural awareness
2	Understanding more than you think	Characterisation	Across generations and cultures
3	The look and sound of European languages	Setting	Promoting intercultural relationships
4	The graphic systems of European languages	Story: traditional tales	Cultural representations of fictional characters
5	Similarities between European languages	Telling stories in pictures and words	Cultural ways of seeing

Sample sessions

To give a flavour of the course, here are three sample sessions, each of which can be found in more detail on the ESET website:

Language 1: Icebreaker: Language portraits

Learning outcomes

- Become aware of the different languages spoken in the group
- Become aware of how people feel about the languages they speak
- Develop a way of representing multiculturalism visually

Required resources

- 'Body shape female', 'Body shape male' (A4-pages with body outlines like figures in a colouring book, available on the website)
- Colouring pencils, crayons, markers etc in a wide range of colours
- Tape to stick pages to the wall

Session outline

- Give participants one body shape each and ask them to colour it in proportion to the languages they speak. For example, if a participant is fluent in English but also speaks a bit of French and Spanish, s/he should colour a large part of the body in one colour (eg blue), with smaller parts in other colours (eg green/yellow).
- Get participants to work in pairs to discuss:
 - Which colours represent which languages on your partner's 'body'? (eg What colour is chosen for the first language and why?)
 - How do the body parts relate to the different languages?
 - Are certain body parts associated with certain languages ? (eg Are head, heart always the colour of the first language? Are hands and feet for languages of 'work' or 'travel' etc?)
 - Do you have an invisible language, one which you would like to speak but have never had the chance to learn?
 - How did you come into contact with all the languages in your portrait?
- Hang up the 'language portraits' as an exhibition. (Each can then be presented to the whole group by the partner of the person portrayed.)

Cultural reflection

- Is it important for people to speak languages other than their native one(s)?

Literature 1: Introduction to European children's literature

Learning outcomes

- An awareness of the origins of many European children's books
- An understanding of the important role that visual narratives can play in telling a story from another culture
- Some understanding of how children's literature can be universally understood, although individual interpretations may vary

Required resources

- The EPBC or other European picturebooks
- Teachers' resource section of the website
- EPBC books section of the website www.ncrcl.ac.uk/epbc/
- Flipchart

Session outline

- Discuss how much participants know about European children's literature
- Using a flipchart, jot down their suggested book titles – look at distribution across countries
- Discuss the sometimes unrecognised European origins of many well-known children's books and try the European children's literature quiz that can be found in the teacher's resource section of www.ncrcl.ac.uk/epbc
- In pairs, participants to discuss the EU countries and languages spoken there – share with group
- Distribute a selection of European picturebooks: in pairs, participants to elicit countries of origin
- Discuss how they did this, eg language, pictures, publisher etc
- In pairs, participants to read the visual story and, in three sentences/pictures, describe their own version of the beginning, middle and end of this story
- Participants now change books with another pair and do the same with the second book
- Participants to compare the two versions of the same story and, if EPBC books are used, compare with English translation on www.ncrcl.ac.uk/epbc website

Cultural reflection

- Are there many universal childhood themes which run through European picturebooks?

Culture 1: Games for Cultural Awareness**Learning outcomes**

- Awareness of cultural identity within European families
- Some understanding of different cultural ways of organising life
- Ability to focus on the representation of cultures through individual pictures and small amounts of text

Resources

- The EPBC or other European picturebooks
- Flipchart and colouring pens etc
- www.ncrcl.ac.uk/epbc/

Session outline

As names are often a clue to cultural identity, **Game One** provides an opportunity for participants to discuss how the similarities and differences in names can give insights into how a society organises itself.

Discuss with participants:

- What is the most common in your culture – to use one family name, two or none?
- Where do family names come from? Can you explain your whole name? (Some cultures allow for several family names to explain their full lineage, others only use one)
- Write your own names and explain where they come from, eg I am called Mary after my grandmother, or because it is my eldest sister's choice. My family name is my father's
- Some names sound more familiar than others in Europe, but names like Sushma may be very familiar in Indian communities. Discuss the Ahlbergs' book as it shows ethnic differences at school
- In small groups, participants create lists of children's names from the books in the EPBC collection, or other European picturebooks. Two or three books per group is enough. Here are some examples:

Bruno, Daniele, Irene, Elisa (*Bruno lo zozzo*)

Raul, Barbara (*Der Schäfer Raul*)

Marguerite, Marco (*Un jour mon prince viendra*)

Katie (*Katie Morag and the New Pier*)

Gabriel, Analisa (*El guardián del olvido*)

Lotje (*Lotje is jarig*)

Gavin, Errol, Sophie, Sushma, David, Kate, Robert, Alison (*Starting School*)

- Separate boys' names from girls'. Are there names that are confusing? As you make separate lists of names, look at the pictures and describe the physical attributes of these characters. Write them in front of each name
- Compare the spelling of these with names that you know already. Example: Daniele in Italian and Daniel (in Portuguese, English) or Daniela (in Portuguese)
- Play: **I am [a name]** Look carefully at the characters in the EPBC books, or other European picturebooks. Pick one of the characters and mimic actions that will help your group to guess your name
- Discuss with the whole group what can be learned about other cultures through the names of the characters in European picturebooks

Cultural reflection

- Consider the importance of using the origins of names as a means of sharing personal, historic and cultural identity

Conclusion

We very much hope that those using ESET will find the course useful; both when discussing the similarities which exist between European cultures, and when celebrating the differences. We also hope that the ESET methodology will become a starting point for further exploration of cultures worldwide.

The European Commission financed the ESET course over a three-year period. During the first year (2001–2002) the course was written; during the second year (2002–2003) it was trialled in a number of European countries; and in the third year (2003–2004) final changes were made. The ESET website was launched on 9 June 2004, and is now available in English, French, German, Dutch and Portuguese. The ESET team would welcome any comments about the course and, if any assistance is needed, their email addresses are on the ESET homepage.

Books included in the European Picturebook Collection



- J & A Ahlberg (1990) *Starting School*, Picture Puffin, UK
 L Baeten (1996) *Lotje is jarig*, Clavis, Belgium
 J Buisman (1976) *Kees en Keetje*, De Harmonie, The Netherlands
 M Foreman (1978) *War and Peas*, Picture Puffin, N. Ireland
 S Frasca (1995) *Bruno lo zozzo*, Piemme, Italy
 JM Gisbert & A Ruano (1990) *El guardian del olvido*, Ediciones SM, Spain
 M Hedderwick (1993) *Katie Morag and the New Pier*, Red Fox, UK
 T Jansson (1984) *Vem ska trösta Knyttet?* Jakobstads Tryckeri och Tidnings Ab, Finland
 A Κυριτσόπουλος (1985) *Ο παραμυθάς στον γλυκομάγο*, Κέδρος, Αθήνα, Greece
 S Lewis & J Morris (1966) *Cantre'r Gwaelod*, Gomer/Pont, Wales
 C Malaquias (1988) *A ovelha negra*, Texto Editora, Portugal
 E Muggenthaler (1998) *Der Schäfer Raul*, Peter Hammer Verlag, Germany
 J Müller & J Steiner (1989) *Aufstand der Tiere oder die neuen Stadtmusikanten*, Saltzberg, Switzerland
 A Nève & K Crowther (1995) *Un jour mon prince viendra*, Pastel, L'école des loisirs, Belgium
 IS Olsen (1994) *Mosekonens Bryg*, Gyldendal, Denmark
 Y Pommaux (1994) *Une nuit, un chat...*, L'école des loisirs, France
 G Rosenstock (1995) *Naomh Pádraig agus Crom Dubh*, An Gúm, Ireland
 U Stark & A Höglund (1992) *Kan du vissla Johanna*, Bonniers Juniorförlag, Sweden
 A Theis & M Ries (1995) *D'Grissette an D'Choupette um motorrad*, Joseph Beffort, Luxembourg
 I Ullrich & G Gepp (1993) *Das Land der Ecken*, Picus, Austria

The CLPE Poetry Award

BY ANN LAZIM



Ann Lazim is the librarian at CLPE and the administrator of the CLPE Poetry Award. She is also chair of the British section of IBBY and a member of IBBY's Executive Council

• Ann Lazim introduces a recently established
• British award for children's poetry books,
• which aims to promote a branch of children's
• literature often overlooked by other awards

There are a number of awards for children's books in Britain. They include the prestigious CILIP¹ Carnegie and Kate Greenaway Awards (for writing and illustration respectively), the Smarties Prize (in three age categories) and the Red House Children's Book Award (also in three categories: picturebook, shorter novel, longer novel), which is chosen by children. More recently established prizes include the Branford Boase Award for a first novel, the Booktrust Teenage Prize and the biennial Marsh Award for Children's Literature in Translation. There is also a range of regional awards, most of which are chosen by young people. However, all these awards go to picturebooks and novels. Although volumes of poetry are eligible in some cases, they never seem to be nominated and certainly never win.

Aidan and Nancy Chambers recognised that poetry for children was undervalued and for 25 years administered the Signal Poetry Award in association with the journal *Signal*. However, when *Signal* ceased publication after a distinguished 100 quarterly issues, the poetry award also ended.

CLPE

In 2002 the Centre for Language in Primary Education (CLPE) became an independent charity, having previously been linked with a local government education authority. CLPE was founded in London in the 1970s to provide in-service training for primary school teachers in the subject area of language and literacy. A reference library of current children's literature has grown with CLPE and includes a large collection of poetry for children. The centre also conducts educational research and has produced a range of associated publications. These include several related to poetry: *Hands on Poetry: Using Poetry in the Classroom* (1995) and *A Year with Poetry: Teachers Write about Teaching Poetry* (1997), plus four anthologies of poetry by children in local schools.

For further information

... about CLPE and the Poetry Award see www.clpe.co.uk

... about British children's book awards see www.booktrusted.com

***Although volumes of poetry
are eligible for some other
prizes, they never seem
to be nominated and
certainly never win*** :

CLPE's independence coincided with the ending of the Signal Poetry Award, and carrying on *Signal's* tradition seemed an ideal way of publicising the centre's relaunch as the Centre for Literacy in Primary Education, as well as promoting a branch of children's literature very close to our hearts. The approval of Nancy and Aidan Chambers was sought and given, and the first CLPE Poetry Award was presented in June 2003. The award is given to a volume of poetry for children or young people, which can be a single poet collection or an anthology, first published in the UK in the preceding year.

2003 award

The first year's judging panel was made up of the poet Michael Rosen, the lecturer Morag Styles and it was chaired by Margaret Meek Spencer. The first winner was *Under the Moon and Over the Sea* (Walker Books), an anthology of Caribbean poetry, edited by John Agard and Grace Nichols, themselves both distinguished and popular poets, originally from Guyana and living in Britain for many years. This is a sumptuous and beautifully designed book. A previous compilation by these editors, *A Caribbean Dozen*, gave voice to thirteen poets of Caribbean origin. Here they have adopted a thematic approach, beginning with the Caribbean as a homeplace and ending with journeying away from there. Each of the five thematic sections is illustrated by a different artist. Cathie Felstead's collages portray the underwater worlds surrounding the islands. Jane Ray illuminates the vibrant storytelling traditions. Christopher Corr's bright colours give life to flora and fauna, and

Satoshi Kitamura uses humour to make a display of Caribbean food. Finally, poems about migration from the Caribbean give flight to Sara Fanelli's imagination.

In her book *From the Garden to the Street*, Morag Styles (1998) acknowledges the significance and vitality of the work of Caribbean poets within the UK poetry scene since the 1980s:

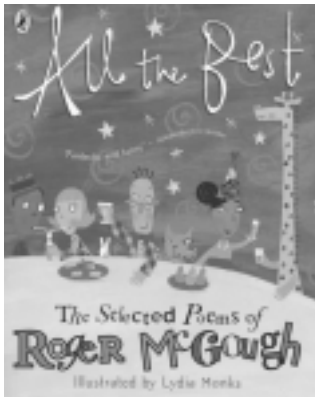
What began for some as a desire to educate black (and white) pupils about their cultural heritage in the Caribbean, developed into a new poetry for children which took account of black experience in Britain and gave a focus for writing about West Indian life too.

Writing about *Over the Moon and Under the Sea*, Michael Rosen (2003) highlighted the place of this anthology within the development of poetry for children:

The book tells us what it's been like to be part of the Caribbean family of peoples, so on the way it 'writes back' to the vast tradition of 'heritage' collections of English poetry and its despicable sub-genre, the verse that celebrated the heroic deeds of imperialist expansion and rule. This book is in fact a post-colonial 'treasury', subverting all those connotations of heritage, plunder and piracy.

The runner-up was a collection by Allan Ahlberg, illustrated by Fritz Wegner, devoted to poems about football and entitled *Friendly Matches* (Puffin). In the article quoted from above, Michael Rosen describes it as 'a brilliant weaving of memory, fantasy, humour and pathos. It conjures up a period [the 1950s] as well as the present, companionship, excitement, and craziness.'

The shortlist was relatively long compared with those of most book awards. It included thirteen titles which were initially selected by CLPE's team



of advisory teachers in collaboration with Margaret Meek Spencer from fifty titles submitted by publishers. The other two judges were then free to call in any other titles from those submitted to add to the list. The shortlist included work by well-established poets such as *A Nest Full of Stars* by James Berry (Macmillan) and *To Catch an Elephant* by Gerard Benson (Smith/Doorstop Books) and new names such as the self-published Chrissie Gittins with *Now You See Me, Now You ...* (Rabbit Hole Publications). Roger McGough was there twice, with his own collection *Good Enough to Eat* (Puffin) and an unusual thematic anthology *Wicked Poems* (Bloomsbury).

2004 award

In 2004, the situation was reversed and the award went to a single poet collection, Roger McGough’s selected poems *All the Best*, illustrated by Lydia Monks (Puffin), and the runner-up was an anthology for older children chosen by Carol Ann Duffy, *Overheard on a Saltmarsh* (Macmillan Young Pica-dor), for which she invited 29 contemporary poets to select a poem which has a particular resonance for them and placed it alongside one of their own.

Writing about the winning book, Myra Barrs and Sue Ellis (2004), CLPE’s co-directors, say:

McGough’s particular strength has been, over 25 years, to engage children with poetry and make it serious fun. Playful, silly, and musical by turns, this is poetry which also makes you think. There is a subversive edge to McGough’s work which means that his poems communicate and delight at different levels. McGough deploys rhyme in an extraordinarily skilful way, and specialises in spectacularly funny punch lines.

This time the twelve-book shortlist included a collection by Valerie Bloom, *Whoop an’ Shout* (Macmillan), and an anthology chosen by her, *One River Many Creeks* (Macmillan). Newer names included Jan Dean with *Wallpapering the Cat* (Macmillan) and Lindsay MacRae with *How to Make a Snail Fall in Love with You* (Puffin), and there were two books which combined poetry and prose: Tony Mitton’s *The Tale of Tales* (David Fickling Books) and an anti-war anthology *Lines in the Sand* edited by Mary Hoffman and Rhiannon Lassiter (Frances Lincoln).

**Roger McGough’s poetry
is serious fun with a
subversive edge**

The number of books submitted in 2004 was reduced to 38, which is a cause for concern, leading Myra Barrs and Sue Ellis (2004) to ask the following questions:

Were publishers becoming more cautious about publishing new writers and new writing in this field? Was poetry publishing declining generally,

despite a growing audience for poetry? Is children's publishing changing, in line with adult publishing, focusing on a few big titles and major authors, with less attention being paid to minority tastes?

Accompanying pamphlet

In *Signal* an article written by the judges always accompanied the announcement in print of the award and reviewed in detail the books they had been given to consider. These became valuable critical summaries of the year's publishing output of poetry for children in the UK. CLPE is continuing this wider consideration of the current children's poetry scene by publishing an annual pamphlet about the award. The booklet celebrating the first award in 2003 included an introduction by CLPE's co-directors, reflective articles by all three judges and an annotated booklist of the shortlisted titles. The pamphlet reviewing the 2004 award is in the pipeline and will be available by the time you read this.

Looking forward

As the entries for the 2005 award arrive, we will be able to form a clearer picture about these apparent trends. This year, for the first time, submissions from the Republic of Ireland as well as the UK will be eligible.

For the third year running the award will be presented in the Royal Festival Hall's Chelsfield Room, an occasion which is a good platform to celebrate and promote poetry for children. It is sponsored for the second year by Mr and Mrs Pye's Charitable Foundation. We would like to

***Is children's publishing
changing, with less
attention being paid to
minority tastes?*** •••••

involve children themselves within the process and we are considering incorporating a 'shadowing' scheme similar in concept to that carried out alongside the CILIP Carnegie and Greenaway Awards (see www.carnegiegreenaway.org.uk) but, initially at least, on a smaller scale.

***We have a strong belief in
the importance of
encouraging the reading
of poetry for pleasure*** •••••

We have a strong belief in the importance of encouraging the reading of poetry for pleasure in homes and in schools. It is also important to note that not all the poetry being published for children is of good quality. Morag Styles (2004) comments: 'there are far too many relentlessly jokey books of second rate verse printed on rough paper ... such poor quality fare does not sustain young readers or respect them.' The co-directors of CLPE point out that although poetry is an integral part of the literacy curriculum in British schools 'it is sometimes used as an opportunity to focus on form and on linguistic features, rather than on meaning or on children's response to the intellectual and emotional content' (Barrs and Ellis 2004). On a more positive note, they also state our primary reason for administering this award: 'The power of poetry to engage and delight children, and to demonstrate to them the pleasures of language, needs to be much more widely acknowledged.'

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¹ The abbreviated name of the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (formerly the Library Association) has been added to these awards.

Books on Books

Professional Literature Reviews

Edited and compiled
BY BARBARA SCHARIOTH



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

Vibeke Stybe

“Børnene kysede mig kærligt”

H.C. Andersen
og børnene



• This issue includes two titles from Denmark
• on Hans Christian Andersen, published to
• mark that author's bicentenary. Also
• reviewed are three encyclopaedias of
• children's literature: one from Denmark, one
• from the Netherlands and one from Poland.
• Other books are from Poland, Francophone
• Switzerland and the United States

DENMARK

DET DANSKE SPROG- OG LITTERATUR-
SELSKAB (ED)

***Andersen: H C Andersens samlede værker:
Eventyr og Historier I–III***

[Andersen: Complete works of H. C. Andersen:
Fairy Tales and Stories I–III]

København: Gyldendal 2003 560pp, 528pp and 488pp

ISBN 8702019912 DKK 6995.00 (for all 18 vols)

(subscription DKK 5995.00)



This eighteen-volume ‘complete works’ is undoubtedly the most important Danish contribution to the Hans Christian Andersen 200th anniversary celebrations. Even these eighteen volumes, however, are not enough to cover Andersen’s complete writings, but are restricted to his published work in Danish; they do not include his correspondence, for example.

The first three volumes, which appeared in 2003, comprise Andersen’s ‘Fairytale and Stories’, a title he himself created to cover also his more realistic tales, such as the ‘Galoshes of Fortune’, which cross the boundaries of the fairytale genre. This is the first critical edition of Andersen’s work, which means that every text was compared with the first edition and extant manuscripts and that sources as well as relevant variants are indicated in the critical apparatus. The fairytales of the present edition, however, are based on the *Complete Works* in seven volumes edited by Erik Dal from 1963 to 1990.

Andersen’s artwork, especially his silhouettes, are interspersed through the text in all three volumes. Even though they do not act as illustrations, they create a sense of unity and lighten the text. Given this attention to layout, it hardly needs to be mentioned that typography, paper and binding are of the finest quality.

Andreas Bode

KARI SØNSTHAGEN
AND TORBEN WEINREICH
Leksikon for børnelitteratur

[Encyclopaedia of children’s literature]

Frederiksberg: Branner og Korch 2003 552pp

ISBN 8741159705 DKK 399.00



This first Danish encyclopaedia of children’s literature is international in scope but with a strong focus on Denmark. Works from other countries are included where Danish translations are available.

The encyclopaedia offers articles on the most important and popular authors and illustrators as well as scholars, institutes, organisations, journals, awards and other relevant headings. There are some more elaborate articles providing information about children’s literature from various countries – especially the Scandinavian ones, but also a number of others (Germany, France, United Kingdom, US); for the remaining countries the entries refer to the most important secondary sources. Even though the entries clearly concentrate on contemporary Danish literature, the history of children’s literature is not neglected.

We owe this worthwhile reference work to two renowned specialists in children’s literature, who have chosen the entries with great care, while always keeping in mind the limited space available. This explains why most references are rather short – at times a little too short, especially when all that is left are the dates of birth and death. Nevertheless, for Scandinavian children’s literature in particular, this encyclopaedia is a very useful reference tool.

Andreas Bode

VIBEKE STYBE

‘Børnene kysede mig kærligt’: H. C. Andersen og børnene [‘The children kissed me lovingly’: H C Andersen and children]
 København: Danmarks Pædagogiske Universitets Forlag
 [et al] 2004 132pp ISBN 8776130223 DKK 165.00



The octogenarian *grande dame* of Danish scholarship in children’s literature has spent more than half her life studying Andersen and his work. For this study she has selected many primary sources and quotes on the topic of ‘Andersen and children’. Her insightful comments are a reflection on one important aspect of his work: Andersen, the children’s friend. It is widely known that Andersen’s relationship to children was quite ambivalent. Even though he considered himself a children’s friend, this only applied to children of close family and friends; he hated playing this role with the children of prominent people. In general, however, he is said to have had a way with children.

Vibeke Stybe’s look at Andersen’s life from the point of view of his relation to children is as original as it is revealing. It may not tell us how unconditional Andersen’s love for children really was, but we can be sure that children adored him and his fairytales – even if they did not always understand them.

Andreas Bode

NETHERLANDS

JANVAN COILLIE [ET AL] (EDS)
Encyclopedie van de jeugdliteratuur
 [Encyclopaedia of children’s literature]
 Baarn [et al]: De Fontein [et al] 2004
 381pp ISBN 9026119887 €49.50



The idea behind this encyclopaedia was to make a reference book for people professionally interested in children’s literature as well as for parents and educators. There is, naturally, a focus on Dutch children’s literature, but it does not predominate, and the scope is international. This encyclopaedia offers not only information about authors and illustrators of children’s literature, but also descriptions of important books and famous characters from children’s books as well as information about different genres and awards. There are about a thousand entries on authors and illustrators and more than a hundred entries on titles of books or characters. All entries on authors and illustrators follow the same structure (place of origin, year of birth and, if applicable, year of death, education, literary career, list of most important books). An extensive bibliography of secondary literature together with lists of websites and important institutions for children’s literature invite the reader to find more information. This very accessible and well-designed encyclopaedia gives a lot of information in a nutshell. Although there is a wide range of information about children’s literature available on the internet, well-structured and carefully researched reference books like this one remain absolutely indispensable.

Toin Duijx

.....
 • 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.

POLAND

KRYSTYNA LIPKA-SZTARBAŁŁO ET AL
(EDS)

***Polish Illustrators for Children: Almanac
1990–2002 = Polscy ilustratorzy dla dzieci***

Warszawa: Okręg Warszawski Związku Polskich Artystów
Plastyków [2002] 151pp ISBN 8389099756 € 15.00

Polish illustration was especially influential in the 1960s and 1970s. The so-called ‘Polish School’ at the Academy of Arts in Warsaw was internationally recognised for its innovative poster-art as well as for its picturebook art. Names such as Antoni Boratyński, Janusz Grabiański, Zbigniew Rychlicki, and, in the 1980s, Stasys Eidrigevicius represent high artistic standards and important innovations in the picturebook.

This catalogue reflects the last decade of the 20th century, namely the years since 1990, after the political turning-point. Publishers were suddenly faced with completely new structures and the economic constraints of a market solely ruled by profit. Many illustrators could only publish abroad or not at all. This is why many seized the opportunity to participate in the exhibition ‘Polish Illustrators for Children’ at the 2002 Bologna Children’s Book Fair. Fifty-five illustrators of different ages and varying standards exhibited their published and unpublished work in Bologna and are presented in the catalogue.

Apart from established artists like Józef Wilkoń (b 1939), who continues to charm his audience with impressive new pictures, there are many younger artists like Maria Ryll (b 1975), who works with construction paper and collage techniques, or Mariusz Stawarski (b 1961) with his surreal and abstract illustrations. The catalogue provides biographical information (also in English) and addresses and will be useful as a handbook for all specialists in children’s literature.
Barbara Scharioth

BARBARA TYLICKA AND GRZEGORZ
LESZCZYŃSKI (EDS)

***Słownik literatury dziecięcej i
młodzieżowej*** [Encyclopaedia of children’s
literature]

Wrocław [et al]: Zakład Narodowy imienia Ossolińskich
2003 434pp ISBN 8304046067 PLZ 60.00

Almost twenty years after the publication of the *Nowy słownik literatury dla dzieci i młodzieży*, an up-to-date standard reference work for children’s and young adult literature was badly needed in Poland. The current volume has again been published by the Polish Academy of Science and features about a thousand entries, mainly on Polish authors and illustrators. But it also treats of children’s literature classics and international awards. Most specialists in Polish children’s literature have contributed to this work. The editors were joined by Gertruda Skotnicka, Joanna Papuzińska, and Ryszard Waksmund, to name but a few.

Werner Küffner



***An up-to-date standard
reference work for
children’s and young adult
literature was badly
needed in Poland*** :

SWITZERLAND

JOSIANE CETLIN (ED)

Regards croisés: apports à une histoire de la lecture et de la littérature pour la jeunesse en Suisse romande [Multiple perspectives: Insights into the history of reading promotion and children's literature in French-speaking Switzerland]

La Chaux-de-Fonds: Bibliothèques de la Ville de La Chaux-de-Fonds [et al] 2003 181pp ISBN 2970042509 CHF 38.00



This is the first publication to give deeper insight into the work of authors, illustrators, publishers and other professionals from French-speaking Switzerland. It marks the jubilee of two important institutions of French-Swiss children's literature: the 50th anniversary of the children's

library of La Chaux-de-Fonds and the 20th anniversary of the regional group *Jeunesse et Médias.Arole*. Apart from two essays on the historical development of these institutions (by Cetlin and Rutschmann and by von Stockar-Bridel and Tschirky), the volume offers multiple perspectives on French-Swiss children's literature. Readers gain insights into children's book production from 1850 until 1950 (Vallaton) and into the situation of contemporary authors (Neeman); they learn about the picturebook art and the publishing activities of the artist-poet Etienne Delessert (von Stockar-Bridel) and about the styles of comic-artists (Corbellari); they are invited to discover the motivation of early women writers (Maggetti) and to share the personal memories of a well-known and award-winning writer who enjoyed her first reading experiences in the La Chaux-de-Fonds children's library (Grobéty). An attractive selection of documentary photos and representative illustrations makes this collection of essays a truly worthwhile contribution to this festive occasion.

Elena Kilian

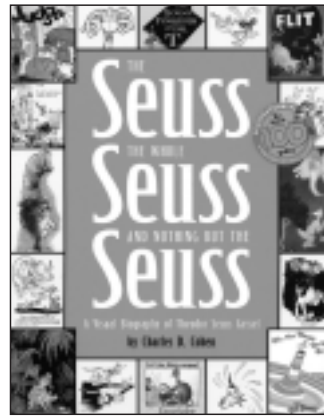
UNITED STATES

CHARLES D COHEN

The Seuss, the Whole Seuss, and Nothing but the Seuss: A Visual Biography of Theodor Seuss Geisel

New York: Random House 2004

390pp ISBN 0375822488 US\$ 35.00



The Cat in the Hat, the Grinch, Horton the elephant – these amiable and weird creatures are an integral part of American and international children's literature. The

nonsensical books of Theodor Seuss Geisel – more commonly known as Dr Seuss – have shaped the lives of innumerable children. In this colourful visual biography, published in 2004 on the occasion of Ted Geisel's 100th birthday, Charles D Cohen has created a treasure for all Seuss-lovers.

This comprehensive and entertaining account of Geisel's life and career in all its different facets includes important background information about historical and personal events, presents his writings and illustrations for children and teenagers, and introduces his lesser known works for wartime propaganda and cartoon advertising. Cohen, a committed collector of all things Seussian, has meticulously gathered both factual information and amusing anecdotes and illustrates them with an abundance of visual material, such as posters, book illustrations or newspaper cartoons.

Claudia Söffner

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.

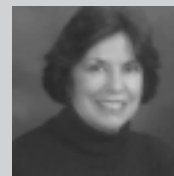
Contact details: Please send two copies: one to boobkirdsp@oldtown.ie AND one to bookbirdvc@oldtown.ie

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).

FOCUS IBBY



• Birthday greetings from
• the winners of the 2004
• Hans Christian Andersen
• Awards to Hans
• Christian Andersen on
• the occasion of his
• 200th birthday

Dear Hans Christian Andersen

It is your two hundredth birthday ... or would be, if you were still around. But then you are still around, in the best way a writer can be.

The stories born in your imagination still move people, grown-ups and children, even though you wrote them a long time ago, in what would seem to many to be a different world. The heart of ice in the Snow Queen and the red blood on the Red Shoes are powerful images that disturb readers now as much as they did when you first wrote them. We still cry for the Little Mermaid and recognise the Emperor with no clothes.

Your stories inform our stories, the stories writers tell today. They form an integral part of the mix of ideas that make us ask the same questions you asked of the reader, again and again and again: questions about the way we live, and the way we ought to live, the way we love, and the way we ought to love.

You are one of the greatest storytellers.

Happy Birthday

from

Martin Waddell

Andersen Award Winner for Writing 2004



[pictures copyright ©
Max Velthuis, 1989]

Compiled and edited
BY ELIZABETH PAGE



Elizabeth Page is IBBY's director of administration and is based at IBBY headquarters in Basel

Every other year IBBY presents the Hans Christian Andersen Award to an author and an illustrator whose complete works have made a lasting contribution to children's literature.

IBBY is grateful to the 2004 Award-winning author 2004, Martin Waddell for dedicating this birthday message to the immortal Hans Christian Andersen.

Waddell grew up in Newcastle, in Northern Ireland and has returned to live there. He is one of the best-loved and most prolific writers in Ireland today. Although he is best known for his picturebooks, he is also a superb writer for young adults, dealing with topics that are of concern for young people all over the world.

The HCA Award-winning illustrator for 2004 was Max Velthuis from the Netherlands. He was one of the most important author/illustrators in the Netherlands and his books are well known worldwide, being translated into 30 languages. He sadly passed away in January 2005 at the age of 81. A few days before that, he gave IBBY permission to enrich this message with his wonderful pictures. His characters, especially Frog, will stay in our memories always.

For further information about the Hans Christian Andersen Awards, presented since 1956 for writing and since 1966 for illustration, visit the IBBY website at www.ibby.org

The IBBY Hans Christian Andersen Awards programme is supported by Nissan Motor Co., Japan.

Introducing IBBY's New Director of Communications and Project Development



We are very happy to introduce the new IBBY director of communications and project development: **María Candelaria Posada**, who has been active and well respected in the field of children's literature for the

past fifteen years. She was the editorial director of the publishing house Norma in Bogotá and before that in other publishing houses in Colombia. She developed several series of books for Norma and co-ordinated publishing policies within the *Grupo Editorial Norma* for the whole of Latin America.

María Candelaria Posada will bring to IBBY her expertise in electronic communication and publishing and her drive to develop projects that will promote literacy and reading habits in children, especially in developing countries where these ideals often have a low priority.

A graduate (1972) of the University of Los Andes, Bogotá, in philosophy and literature, María Candelaria Posada went on to gain an MA in English literature from Washington State University (1975); and before joining Norma in 1987, she was a lecturer in Latin American literature at the National and Los Andes universities in Bogotá. In 2003, María Candelaria was elected to serve on the 2004 Hans Christian Andersen Jury, and travelled to Basel to attend the jury meeting in April 2004.

María Candelaria took up her role as IBBY director on 1 January 2005 and is based in Basel at the IBBY secretariat.

***New director of communications and project development
for IBBY: María Candelaria Posada, has been active and
well respected in the field of children's literature for the
past fifteen years*** :

The Right Book at the Right Time for All Children

Since August 2003, the Japanese Board on Books for Young People (JBBY) has sponsored an exhibition of the best of books for young people with disabilities – IBBY’s jubilee selection 2002 – on its tour of Japan under the title ‘Barrier-free Picture Books of the World’. By December 2004 the exhibition had been shown in 33 locations throughout Japan and it will appear in a further ten venues before its two-year tour ends in 2005.



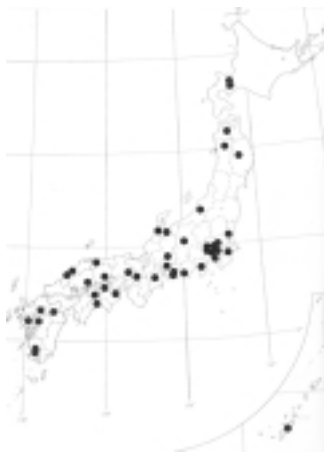
At each exhibition site the local hosts have elaborated on the collection in their own distinctive way, and each time the selection has been greeted enthusiastically. This is the first time such an exhibition has travelled around Japan. Of the 43 approaches to putting books in the hands of children with disabilities demonstrated by the selection of titles introduced by the IBBY

We are not only eager for people to learn about the many approaches available but also to see that there are children who need these books

Documentation Centre of Books for Disabled Young People, there are unfortunately many that have not been undertaken in Japan. For many people in Japan, the exhibition provided a unique opportunity to see types of special-needs books – even those that have been produced in Japan, such as cloth picturebooks, tactile picturebooks and picturebooks with text in Braille. We are not only eager for people to learn about the many approaches available – books with sign

language and pictographs, easy-to-read books and many more – but also to see that there are children who need these books. This was one of the great incentives for holding this exhibition in Japan.

In Japan, voluntary work in making tactile picturebooks has a history of more than 30 years and in this genre Japan can be considered a leader. Although children’s book publishing flourishes here, there continue to be many barriers in production, publication, distribution, as well as sales, when it comes to books for young people with disabilities, and much remains to be done. JBBY is resolved to build on the enthusiastic response to the exhibition to redress this situation and thus encourage progress in the field. The tour will draw to a close in July 2005 at the International Library of Children’s Literature at the National Diet Library, which will feature an historical perspective of services for children with disabilities from the archives and libraries of Japan, as well as a special book exhibition. We will continue our pursuit of ‘the right book at the right time for all children’.



The exhibition will be shown in 43 locations throughout Japan before its two-year tour ends in 2005

Hisako Kakuage

Chairman of the JBBY picturebook exhibition committee

IBBY Congress 2006

'**Children's Books and Social Development**' is the theme of the 30th IBBY congress, which will take place in **Beijing, 20-24 September 2006**, at the Beijing International Convention Centre. CBBY, the Chinese section of IBBY, is preparing a full and spectacular IBBY congress.

The themes of the congress are as follows:

Literature of Ours – Children's Forum

Children's Literature and Ethics

Children's Literature and the Ideal World

Children's Freedom and Space

Children's Books and the Multimedia Era

The Development of Trends in Children's Picturebooks

Reflection on the Phenomenon of Harry Potter

Reading of Underprivileged Children

The five-day programme will include the presentation of the Hans Christian Andersen Awards 2006, the IBBY-Asahi Reading Promotion Award 2006, the IBBY Honour List 2006, the Chinese National Children's Book Fair and a national exhibition of children's newspapers and periodicals. For the first time at an IBBY Congress, an international children's forum will be held where children will be talking about reading.

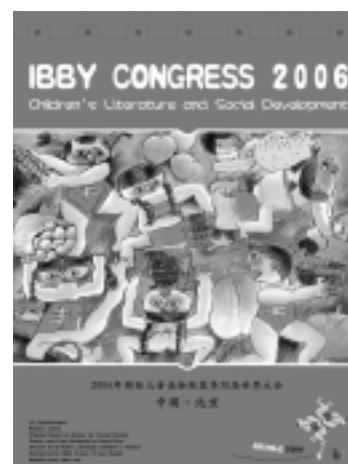
Seminar speakers are invited to submit papers related to the above themes. Further details are available from IBBY China (cbby@cbby.org) or from the IBBY secretariat (ibby@ibby.org).

The design of the congress logo stems from ancient Chinese folklore and symbolises auspiciousness as the 'pattern of four happinesses'. The logo designers took this basic idea and used children to symbolise happiness. The pattern of the children (are there two or four?) embodies the humour, wisdom and childlike pleasure inherent in the Chinese mentality, and expresses the feeling of solidarity and close interaction that the organisers want to symbolise at the Beijing congress. The emphasis on children reflects the mission of IBBY.

The congress will celebrate the 20th anniversary of CBBY. There are 367 million young readers in China, making IBBY China's task one of the widest-reaching in IBBY.

Information is available on the IBBY and CBBY websites, or by email from CBBY (cbby@cbby.org) or IBBY (ibby@ibby.org).

• ***The pattern embodies the***
 • ***humour, wisdom and***
 • ***childlike pleasure inherent in***
 • ***the Chinese mentality, and***
 • ***expresses feelings of solidarity***
 • ***and close interaction***



IBBY Travels with Peter Schneck

New Zealand: Storylines Festival, 14–20 June 2004

The eleventh annual Storylines Festival was a great success: over 25,000 visitors attended the open family day in the Aotea Centre in Auckland; in Wellington nearly 3000 gathered at the Westpac St James Theatre; and the Puke Ariki Youth Learning Centre in New Plymouth was busy all weekend with approximately 1000 visitors.

Because of the quality of the programme and the activities that were planned to occur on both North and South Island, the attention of the public and the media was guaranteed. Each year the festival is designed only for children and their books, and is thus unique!

With the participation of over 35 writers, illustrators and storytellers – among them internationally celebrated figures such as **Margaret Mahy, Joy Cowley, Sherryl Jordan, Gavin Bishop** – and with the help of at least 130 volunteers throughout the country, the festival was an enormous success.

The New Zealand writers, illustrators and storytellers who took part in the Story Tour reached more than 40,000 young people in just four days of visits to schools

and early childhood centres. The tour offered an opportunity for school-children to learn about the different formats of writing, illustration and storytelling. Prominent visitors – such as the popular authors **Garth Nix** and **Andrew Daddo**, and **Agnes Nieuwenhuizen**, manager of the Australian Centre for Youth Literature at the State Library of Victoria, Melbourne – also travelled from Australia to participate in the festival.

The supporters of this very significant and highly regarded festival now include about 40 trusts, companies and community groups. Some of them offer funds; others give support-in-kind, including cars to transport the speakers and hotel accommodation. Of special importance is the participation of the EDGE, the New Zealand cultural centre, which runs, among other things, the Aotea Centre.

As the international president of IBBY, **Peter Schneck** had the honour of launching the festival, and he took away many ideas about innovative ways that children can be engaged by writers and illustrators.

The final of the Kids' Lit Quiz™ 2004 (see *Bookbird* Vol 42/2) was part of the festival. Participants from New Zealand and Scotland competed in the exciting final,



Story Tour presentation with author Brian Falkner

Opposite Page

Left: Peter Schneck with participants of the Manukau family literacy project in Rowandale

Right: Family fun at the Aotea Centre, Auckland

The Story Tour offered an opportunity for school-children to learn about the different formats of writing, illustration and storytelling



which was narrowly won by Dunblane High School, winners of the UK heats in 2003, with the Evans Bay Intermediate School from Wellington as runners-up. The quizmaster was the IBBY New Zealand liaison officer, **Wayne Mills**.

Peter Schneck was deeply moved by his meeting with the participants of the Manukau family literacy project in Rowandale, which attracts adult students with their children. This project brings together parents, identified by teachers, in a voluntary group to prepare reading activities with their children.

The festival also involved other cultural events, including a preview of a musical show for children called *Napoleon and the Chicken Farmer*, combined with a Napoleon-look-alike competition for the children.

The Storylines Festival is organised by the Children's Literature Foundation of New Zealand, which is IBBY's New Zealand section. The section plans to organise the participation of various New Zealand illustrators at the BIB in Bratislava and put forward a proposal to sponsor International Children's Book Day 2007, which was later accepted by the IBBY Executive Committee.

During his visit Peter Schneck talked to many people involved in children's literature in New Zealand, including authors, illustrators, storytellers and publishers. Representatives of the

publishing houses Scholastic and HarperCollins showed interest in IBBY's international network and in *Bookbird*. **Rosemary Wildblood**, advisor on literature art services, **Rob Garrett**, manager of Creative NZ – the Arts Council of New Zealand, and **Karen Ross**, executive director of the New Zealand Book Council, were all keen to work with IBBY in various ways, so we can look forward to fruitful co-operation into the future.

He also visited the National Library of New Zealand, and met **Phil Parkinson** from the 'Early Printing in Maori Project' of the Alexander Turnbull Library, and was able to share information related to the first printing press, which was given to the Maoris by Austria in 1861.

Australia

On his way back to Europe, Peter Schneck used a three-day stopover in Sydney to make contact with IBBY Australia. He spoke by telephone to the president of IBBY Australia, **John Foster**, who lives in Adelaide, and he was able to meet **Maurice Saxby**, liaison officer of IBBY Australia and long-time IBBY supporter, in person, since he is based in Sydney. Another conversation, this time electronically, was with **Mark MacLeod**, the incoming chairperson of the Australian Children's Book Council, the foundation that runs the Australian Children's Book Award.

Obituary: Ruth Villela Alves de Souza

Ruth Villela Alves de Souza sadly passed away on 4 November 2004 shortly after her 91st birthday. She was born in Rio de Janeiro in 1913. During her studies in the United States she specialised in children's literature, and upon returning to Brazil worked primarily on children's literature criticism. After her retirement from her work as a librarian in the early 1960s, she helped the recently established FNLIJ – Fundação Nacional do Livro Infantil e Juvenil – which joined IBBY as the national section of Brazil in 1964. In 1968, she helped to create the publication *Boletim Informativo*, which published national and international news about children's literature.

Ruth served on the IBBY Executive Committee

IBBY notes the sad passing of a founding member of the Brazilian section of IBBY and an influential figure in IBBY internationally

in 1970–72 and on the Hans Christian Andersen Jury 1974 and 1976. Thanks to Ruth Villela Alves de Souza's international prestige, the first children's literature seminar was held during the São Paulo Book Fair in 1972, organised by FNLIJ. There soon followed the 14th IBBY congress in Rio de Janeiro in 1974. Thanks to FNLIJ and her influence, many courses specialising in children's literature were initiated in various cities around Brazil during this time.

She will be missed by her many friends and colleagues all over the world.

These two books of poems, written by the same poets, are true children of the technical age. 'The Blue Moon' started as fun between the authors, located in different cities, as they wrote emails to one another in the form of poems about the moon. The poems are all about the moon, reflecting emotions, doubts, queries, comments and humour, all from a child's perspective: 'The Naughty Moon:/ Moon-pa/ Where is your ma?/ Won't she scold you/ For staying awake in light/ All through the night/ To watch the Earth?'

'The Birds Fly, The Poems Remain' also began as an email exchange. If one poet sent a verse about a cat, the other replied on the same subject from a different perspective. The book has surprises: for one thing, it has two covers. Each writer uses one cover and writes her poems on odd pages only. The other's poems are upside down. When the book is reversed, the other writer starts from the cover and uses the odd pages. Only the odd pages are numbered.

Delioglu's charming, colourful illustrations add to the fun.

Glenna Sloan



Aytül Akal and Mavisel Yener
(illus Mustafa Delioglu)

Mavi Ay [The Blue Moon]

70pp ISBN 9755870571

Kuş Uçtu Şiir Kaldı

[The Birds Fly, The Poems Remain]

64pp ISBN 9755870857

Istanbul: Uçanbalık Yayıncılık 2004 (both books)
(poetry collections, 5+)

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