

No child is an island

Most of this issue is devoted to short reports on our conference 'No Child is an Island: The Case for Children's Literature in Translation', held at Roehampton University on Saturday November 12th 2005. The subject proved very popular with people offering workshops, to the extent that we had to increase the number of presenters. Their subjects included books from areas as diverse as Alaska, Afghanistan, Brazil, Poland, Russia, Hungary, Greece, Uganda, and China, as well as several western European countries, and most of these sessions, together with those of the plenary speakers, are represented here by summaries or excerpts. It may be that

the enthusiasm of academic researchers for the topic of translated fiction has slightly outstripped the interest of children's literature readers in general. If, however, any of those present at the conference were initially lukewarm about the topic, I am sure they will have been converted into enthusiasts by the end of a very rich day.

Alarmingly, the week preceding November 12th did not bode well. It was bad enough when four separate workshop presenters had to drop out, for a variety of reasons. However, one of these sent his paper so it could be read, while two others were replaced by valiant reserves who stood in

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at the last moment. It might have been the last straw when Emer O'Sullivan, our first keynote speaker, was not well enough to travel from Germany, if it hadn't been for Gillian Lathey, who stepped into the breach. She provided an eloquent account of the early history of children's book translation, and also gave her seminar paper during the afternoon! Many thanks to Gillian, whose pioneering work in furthering translated children's literature has been enormously influential. We were fortunate too in having talks by two of the currently best-known translators of children's books, Anthea Bell and Sarah Adams, who are doing so much to bring a knowledge of fiction in other languages to the monoglot English.

The panel discussion which followed involved Patricia Billings, the Director of Milet, who talked mainly about picture books in translation. Elv Moody, a senior editor at Puffin, spoke from the perspective of a large publisher about the difficulties resulting from the need for foreign books initially to be read and assessed by people fluent in their languages. It hadn't always been easy to find suitable translators from non-Western-European languages, and this had certainly been a barrier against some books appearing in English editions. Isobelle Carmody, a prominent Australian children's writer, who spoke as a translated author who spends a good deal of time in Prague, observed that she sees herself as a different person if speaking a different language, an insight that relates to the fact that a translated book can never replicate the experience of the original.

During the day, participants had the chance to buy books, to look at a collection of poetry in translation from the Poetry Library, and to examine the exhibition of the books associated with the Children's Bookshow, described in *Outside In: Children's Writers in Translation*, newly published by Milet (who are sponsoring this issue of *IBBYLink*; a review of this book appears below). After the workshops, tea with shortbread was sponsored by Frances Lincoln to launch their new publication, *The Loch Ness Ghost*. Then Isobel Hoving, winner of a prestigious Dutch award for her novel *The Dream Merchant*, spoke of how translations need to create a balance between familiarity and strangeness, while Sarah Adams, recent winner of the Marsh award for her translation of the work of Daniel Pennac, electrified her audience with her recordings of the comments of her teen-age informants and of songs relevant to the translated texts. At the end of the day, I think that all participants must not only have been better informed about the problems and opportunities involved in the translation and publishing of foreign books for an English speaking young audience, but also optimistic about the wealth of literature which is, so to speak, on our doorstep.

The full proceedings of the conference will appear in a book to be published by Pied Piper Publishing later in 2006 (see www.piedpiperpublishing.com).

Pat Pinsent

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The summer issue of *IBBYLink* (copydate April 30th) will be devoted to the topic of Graphic Novels, and the autumn issue (copydate July 31st) will be on Non-fiction books for children.

Contributions for both issues, together with reviews of children's books or books about children's literature will be welcome – please send to PatPinsent@aol.com.

The Translator Revealed

Making and altering meaning

Gillian Lathey

Summary of plenary talk

Writing on translation abounds with references to translators as 'invisible'. In accordance with the low status of children's books, an accreditation of the translated work has always been less likely in translations of children's than of adult literature, so that many translators of children's books into English belong to the great disappeared of literary history. Who were the translators for children of the past? Was translating just a hack job, or did translators exercise some control over the choice of text and manner of translation? Fortunately, a number of translators for children have left behind traces in the form of prefaces, footnotes or afterwords that reveal some surprising insights into translation choices and strategies.

Two translators for children of the late 18th and early 19th centuries have written commentaries that indicate the translator's power within a given historical period to alter meaning or influence the course of British children's literature. Mary Wollstonecraft, best known as the author of *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, expresses a didactic, moral purpose when addressing adults in the 'Advertisement' to her 1790 translation of Christian Gotthilf Salzmann's *Elements of Morality for the Use of Children*. She even inserts into her translation a tale set in the recently fought American War of Independence, representing the humane behaviour of a native American. A translator's reference to the Gulf or Iraq wars in the spirit of Robert Westall's *Gulf* would be a modern equivalent, although Wollstonecraft's purpose was to promote in children a rational, enlightened view of the world rather than to prove a political point. Edgar Taylor, first translator of the Grimm's tales into English (published in 1823), on the other hand, justifies his choice of text from an opposing, anti-rationalist perspective, complaining in his preface that popular tales had been banished from the nursery in the interests of 'scientific learning'. Although the influence of Grimm's tales on British children's literature is well documented,

Taylor's pivotal role, his championship of the imagination, and his rationale for bringing these household tales primarily to a young audience are only rarely acknowledged.

Across history the translator has also adopted the role of mediator, guiding – or sometimes misguiding – the child towards an appreciation or assimilation of difference. Mary Howitt, first English translator of Hans Christian Andersen, attempts to demystify the foreign in the fey little poem 'To English Children' that introduces her translation of Otto Speckter's fables (1844), while Anna Barwell offers children a patronising comment on Norway and the Norwegians ('it is very rare to find anyone dull or stupid') in the preface to Hans Aanrud's *Little Sidsel Longstocking* (1923). Prolific children's author Joan Aiken adopts a far more child-centred approach to translation, practising the art of the storyteller in order to beguile her young reader into understanding the French and Russian heritage of the source text author in the lengthy introduction to her translation of the Comtesse de Ségur's *L'Auberge de l'Ange-Gardien* (1976).

The historical examples outlined above demonstrate an alteration and mediation of source texts that reflect changing concepts of what is 'good for the child', as well as the pro-active role that translators have on occasion played in the history of British children's literature. Translators are not mere conduits, nor do they always censor or abridge arbitrarily. Indeed, there are instances where translators have negotiated the cultural transition of texts for the young with great acuity and sensitivity. The reasons behind the frequently criticised manipulation of source texts deserve greater critical attention.

An article on the historical role of translators for children as revealed in prefaces will shortly appear in a volume to be published by the St. Jerome Press, edited by Walter Verschueren.

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Grounds for Cautious Optimism?

Anthea Bell

That cautious title sums up this paper. I am supposed to have specialised in the translation of books for young people, although I did very little such work for many years. Far more literature, adult as well as juvenile, is translated out of English than into it, but when I began working as a translator a comparatively large number of children's books was being translated.

It was to get at what was inside the foreign books I couldn't read that, in childhood, I made a rapid assault on the languages in which they were written, and I still remember my delight when I could tackle a whole book in French. I wanted to read the books in their own languages – it is thus, I suspect, that those who would rather read the original than a translation inadvertently qualify themselves to be translators.

And we all need translators, even if we don't know it. Translations are essential if readers are to have access to books written in a wide variety of foreign languages. Even at a time when there was little likelihood of a foreign title's being published in English, I always felt that it was particularly valuable for children to have access to the best books written for them in languages other than their native tongue. For one thing, it ought to encourage the habit of wide reading as an adult. At a recent seminar in Oxford, it was mentioned that there seems to be an upturn in the translation of certain genres, including children's books. I would not describe children's books as a single

genre, but I do now detect greater willingness on the part of English-language publishers to look seriously at titles for children from other languages.

I see no fundamental difference between translating for adults and for children. I have been asked if I adopt a different approach for a children's book, but no: I adopt a different approach for *every* book, because the translator is always trying to adopt the author's *persona*. I am very happy to move between adult and juvenile literature, and find it odd that children's books should be perceived as separate from books in general. They have often been in a kind of ghetto, and since translation itself inhabits something of a ghetto in English-language publishing, translated children's books have been banished to a ghetto twice over. I believe, cautiously, that they are on the way out of it.

I think that among the reasons for a revival of interest in foreign literature for young people are initiatives such as the Marsh Prize for Children's Literature in Translation, essentially the brainchild of Kim Reynolds here at Roehampton and the distinguished author Aidan Chambers. In the past few years I myself have translated more books for the young than in the two preceding decades. All of us at this conference would like translated children's literature to move further into public view; I see a distinct tendency that way, and hope it will continue.

Mind the Gap

Sarah Adams

This is an excerpt from Sarah's talk, which was the concluding plenary session at the conference, a situation in which she maintained the interest of her audience both by her stimulating examples and by appropriate music. The full text will appear in the book of conference proceedings.

I've been visiting primary schools around London recently for The Children's Bookshow. In the workshops I've been running with Year 3s, we've been talking about Daniel Pennac and *L'Oeil du Loup* (*The Eye of the Wolf*). It's

the tale of a young orphan called Africa and a wolf from the freezing wastes of the 'Barren Lands'. These two characters find themselves staring at each other through the wire mesh of a city zoo cage. Technically, their worlds and life experiences are such poles apart that they have everything and nothing to say to each other. When the wolf, for instance, stares into Africa's eye and sees projected onto the boy's iris, or the twinkle of his pupil, as if onto a cinema screen, the arid wastes of the Sahara, his only means of interpreting what

he sees is as ‘Big hills of snow, as far as the eye can see. A strange, yellow kind of snow that creaks and crunches with every step, and slides in patches like the snow in Alaska.’

This impasse of comprehension reminds me of a quote I once came across from the anthropologist Claude Levi-Strauss, who argued that there’s no point in travelling because either you encounter something so extraordinarily different from what you know that you have no means of assimilating or understanding it; or else you engage with something compatible with what you already know, and you instantly homogenize it. Translators, I would claim, are voyagers in language whose job it is to bring the meaning back to the reader.

Of course, Africa and Blue Wolf, as we discover the wolf is called, *do* find ways of communicating and making sense. Through the power of storytelling, through flexing their imagination and understanding that our ability to imagine ourselves into someone else’s shoes is just that, a muscle, that requires flexing and discipline and practice, as well as beefing up or making more sinuous. Dialogue between the two participants only opens up once they are at a level starting point.

When I found myself faced with a class of predominantly Bengali Year 3s, who were already adept translators and interpreters at home, the fact that second and even third languages were a given, meant that these children had already put aside all prejudices about strange new sounds passing through their lips. They were riveted when I read a chunk of the story in French – because we’d laid down enough story-telling blocks for them to build on, and because they were open enough to the idea that sometimes you can catch sense from the sound and flow of words, even if you don’t have a talking dictionary to hand... My point was that to get to grips with contemporary French is to access that whole world of French-speaking countries that is the legacy of colonial history. I explained that Daniel Pennac is a Corsican born in Casablanca, Morocco, who grew up in Africa and South East Asia and who now lives in the multicultural district of Belleville in Paris. His taste for cultural mixity or ‘métissage’, for ‘not being surrounded by people just like me’, which is so prevalent in his writing, could as well have been reflected in, say, the music he listened to as a child.

In the second part of her talk, Sarah Adams discussed the problems and opportunities involved in translating colloquial language.

In Praise of Imperfect Translations

Reading, translating, and the love of the incomprehensible

Isabel Hoving

It is often said that a good translation reads as if the text were originally written in the language into which it is translated. This notion of a good translation seems to imply that readers desire sameness rather than otherness, and that they would only be able to identify with otherness (as in stories about unknown cultures), if this otherness could be completely appropriated by the self. This cannibalistic strategy of identification is not the only one possible, however. Even more than adults, children often opt for another strategy: they let themselves be overwhelmed by otherness, for instance by imitating the admired other. Imperfect translations of youth novels in fact greatly stimulated my own sensitivity, as a Dutch girl, to cultural difference and style.

In my paper, I plead for a greater respect for this sensitivity to otherness, as it could be a great help towards developing the intercultural imagination that is indispensable in this age of globalisation (Martha Nussbaum). My own translated (first) youth novel, *The Dream Merchant*, provides an example of the issues at stake when dealing with these different strategies of identification. The novel, translated from the Dutch and published by Walker Books, addresses as its main theme the issue of cultural difference. While travelling through what one might call the world’s varied cultural memories of its turbulent past, the novel’s young heroes discover that there are very many ways to see the world. I have addressed this issue by having my protagonists travel through these differ-

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ent world views, identifying with them or dismissing them, while I have also made sure that the novel's style itself is off-beat, producing modest counter-rhythms. From the beginning, the novel was meant to sound like a translation, suggesting that a smooth, flowing story cannot capture the polyvocal, multiple, wayward present-day world. At the same time, I also wanted to show that 'other' cultural views of the world, far from being incomprehensible and alien, may well appeal to people whose own cultural backgrounds are different from them.

In the same manner as when I myself wrote the story, the translator and editors had to balance this philosophical dimension with the desire to make the book primarily a breathtakingly exciting story, with enough realism to allow the readers to identify with the situation of

the protagonists. Thus, they decided to situate the novel in London instead of in Amsterdam, as in the original, and to replace the hero's invented surname with a more common one. The resulting translation is generally judged to be good, though to my ears, it seems that in it the story's resistance to realism is reduced. On the other hand, the story has gained more consistency and clarity. There are evidently both gains and losses when writers, editors and translators try to strike a balance between otherness and recognition. As a Dutch writer, it seems to me that we – writers, translators and publishers – who are caught between multiculturalisation and the strict demands of the market, have urgent reasons to keep discussing the ways in which we can stimulate the readers' interest in otherness, instead of just addressing their pleasure in cannibalising others by identification.

Hungarian Translations of *Harry Potter*

Márta Minier – Dept of Drama, University of Hull

This paper looks at the *Harry Potter* series in Hungarian, with an emphasis on the translation of culture-specific concepts and intertexts for a multi-layered readership. The translation theorist Lawrence Venuti divides translation strategies into foreignising and domesticating ones. A domesticating translation adjusts the text to the taste of the receiving community, taking local expectations into account to a considerable extent. Foreignising practices are supposed to retain the otherness experienced in the original. I hope to demonstrate that the translator of the series, Boldizsár Tamás Tóth, neither unquestionably domesticates nor foreignises the texts. He respects the otherness of

the 'original,' and, in the main, does not relocate the wizard world in Hungary. His translations intend to reconceive the foreignness the translator may have encountered in his own reading of the 'originals.'

The detailed analysis includes comparisons of the names of persons, places, magical objects, school subjects, and so on, in the 'original' and in the Hungarian translation. On the understanding that creative and academic work are not totally distinguishable under the aegis of the postmodern, the article will also point out in what respects the translation strategies could be either more daring or more subversive.

Beatrix Potter's Tales

Culture specific items in children's literature

Margherita Ippolito – University of Bari, Italy

Culture-specific items are those lexical elements which relate to a deeply rooted cultural background and pose crucial translation problems due to the lack, in the target culture, of lexical items which carry the same semantic value of the source text lemma. When children are the audience of a text, the treatment of culture-specific items in translation will depend on the personal image of the child that translators have. Translators may assume two different positions and on this basis they will employ a specific translation strategy. If translators suppose that culture-bound elements promote children's cultural exchange and develop their world view, they will preserve the new lexical item as far as possible. As Göte Klingberg (*Children's Fiction in the Hands of the Translators*, 1986:10) observes: 'Removal of peculiarities of the foreign culture or change of cultural elements for such elements which belong to the culture of the target language will not further readers' knowledge of and interest in the foreign culture.' If, on the other hand, translators think that the cultural datum can disturb the children's reading, because it could result in incomprehensibility and strangeness, they will tend towards the adaptation of the new element to the familiar target culture. Riitta Oittinen (in *Translating for Children*, 2000:69) states: 'Translating for children ... refers to translating for a certain audience and respecting this audience through taking the audience's will and abilities into consideration.'

The translation of Beatrix Potter's *Tales*, and in particular the treatment of culture-specific items, demonstrates how Italian children, even at the age of five and six, come into contact with British culture and understand that there are other remote and fascinating worlds to be discovered. These tales were translated for the first time in Italy in 1981 by Giulia Niccolai and then in 1988 they were retranslated by Donatella Ziliotto, whose

translations are still in print. Victorian and Edwardian England constitutes the stage on which Potter's creatures move. The furniture, clothes, the landscape, traditional nursery rhymes, limericks, riddles which embellish her narrative scenario, together with her subtle and penetrating irony, are all unmistakably English. As Carpenter and Prichard (*The Oxford Companion to Children's Literature*, 1984: 424) observe: 'Many of Beatrix Potter's books have been translated into French, Dutch, German, Japanese, and Welsh, and some titles have appeared in other languages, but her view of the world is too essentially English to be transposed easily from that language.'

From a comparative analysis of the treatment of culture-specific items in two translations of some Beatrix Potter's *Tales* into Italian, certain generalisations can be proposed concerning the strategies chosen: Giulia Niccolai adopts a target text-oriented translation strategy because she tends to remove the foreign atmosphere; Donatella Ziliotto adopts a much more conservative strategy, even when this means that young readers will encounter pronunciation problems and will not understand the meaning or the allusion. Both translators, however, contribute in different degrees to the evocation of a typically British background.

This analysis shows that Italy accepts the language and culture of the English-speaking world. This thesis is strengthened further by the large amount of translations from English for young readers currently available (according to the Italian Statistics Institute, ISTAT, in 2003 48.3% of children's books published were translations and 33.4% were translations from English), and by the particular attention that the Italian school system pays to the teaching of the English language, which is now compulsory from the first class of primary school.

The *Tales* and the translations that were considered in this study are: Beatrix Potter, *The Tale of Jeremy Fisher*, *The Tale of Benjamin Bunny*, *Tale of Squirrel Nutkin*, *Tale of Mrs. Tiggy-winkle*, Frederick Warne, London, 2002; *La favola del Signor Geremia Pescatore*, *La favola di Costantino Coniglietto*, *La favola dello Scoiattolo Nocciolina*, *La favola della Signora Riccio Rotolò*, translated by Giulia Niccolai, Emme Edizioni, Milano, 1981; *La storia del Signor Jeremy Pescatore*, *La storia di Benjamin Coniglio*, *La storia della Signora Trovatutto*, Sperling & Kupfer, Milano, 1988.

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Daniel Pennac: The Eye of the Wolf

Sue Neale

Daniel Pennac is a renowned and well-respected author for both children and adults in France. His reputation has yet to be made in the UK, as English translations of his books have only recently been available. His five book crime fiction parody that features the Malaussène family suffers in being a rather mid-Atlantic translation that aims to satisfy both UK and US readers. However, I consider that the English translation of *The Eye of the Wolf* by Sarah Adams (winner of the Marsh Award this year) is a different case altogether.

The story is deceptively simple: in a grey northern European place a boy faces a wolf through the bars of a cage. Both are unhappy, displaced from their former lives, and as they share their descriptions of how they arrived here, we understand how they can find mutual joy and a different way of belonging. The wolf is from the cold north – Alaska. The boy, born in Africa, was soon orphaned and homeless, and had to find his way through the different regions of Africa and avoid being misused or killed in the process. His ability to tell stories and make people see things differently saves him and helps him to understand all the animals he meets, including the wolf.

Pennac is very popular in France for his children's and adult books and has been translated into many languages. His aim has always been to pass on to the reader his happiness at writing – finding the 'mot juste' and the right rhythm for the story he has to tell. And he is first and foremost

a storyteller. As a teacher, he accords an important role to storytelling.

The French and English versions of this text are very different. The format of the book, the style and size of the illustrations, the page layout and typography serve to suggest that the French version is aimed at school pupils as part of their education. The English version is intended as a leisure read and is far less tied to an implicit target age group. In addition, Sarah Adams has chosen to include the thoughts of the boy and the wolf into the narrative text rather than appearing in speech marks. Thus the text is more thought provoking and encourages the reader to empathise with each of the main characters as well as making the text appear relevant to a broad readership.

This book that is a delight to look at and read is perceived by many French teachers as a way to analyse and explain how to write. Pennac has come later than British teachers to the idea that children should read 'real books' in order to understand the world around them, but by now he is unhappy that his children's books are dissected and used as work rather than enjoyment. He must be pleased with the very different book that this English translation of *The Eye of the Wolf* is. The illustrations are atmospheric and leave the reader to complete the picture of the lives in Alaska and in Africa. In addition the story encourages readers of all ages to consider what it means to be different or to belong.

Translating for Children and Young Adults

Elena Xenì

This workshop presentation looked at children's needs for literature and problems related to their translation in the field of cross-cultural communication and understanding. The first part discussed children and young adults' needs for literature, based on three books selected according to an age group division (*The Cat in the Hat*, *More William: A*

Busy Day and *The Secret Diary of Adrian Mole, aged 13 3/4*). The second part of the workshop dealt with general and specific issues that translators encounter, looking particularly at the translator's role in an era when cross-cultural communication and understanding is vital. Examples given mainly related to the English-Greek language combination.

Recent Translations of Classics into Neapolitan

Stefania Tondo

In a context of world union and community, I see *love* as the key word for the recent translations of children's classics into Neapolitan by Roberto D'Ajello, a professional judge. He chooses to translate classics because of their 'universal comprehensiveness' and for their 'being part of one's own childhood and of one's own being', and above all for their 'artistic quality'. This is especially true of his encounter with the well-known Neapolitan artist Lello Esposito; because the illustrations are not separated from the translations, the pictures and the words are interdependent, as can be seen in D'Ajello's first experiment, *Pinocchio in Lingua Napoletana* (1997).

This book was followed by the translation of Antoine de Saint-Exupéry's *Le Petit Prince*, *O Principe Piccerillo* (2000). In this case artistic cooperation could not be totally achieved because copyright obligations make it impossible to re-illustrate this text. Nevertheless, an individual touch was conveyed by the device of making a Neapolitan figure, Pulcinella, serve in the text as translator and illustrator.

In *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, however, translated as *Alice int o Paese de Meraveglie* (2002), a complete artistic metamorphosis of the text has been achieved. The translation is both linguistic and visual, as it makes use of the original illustrations by Lewis Carroll for the manuscript version, *Alice's Adventures Underground*. Moving deep into the blue Neapolitan sea, with Vesuvius in the background, as in *Pinocchio*, Carroll's masterpiece

is again mediated by Pulcinella, the symbol of Neapolitan translation and culture. There is no ideological manipulation of the source text or the source culture; rather cultural interfusion, pleasure and *love*, alone, motivate the translation. Translation is made from the original language and compared with Italian versions; there are only a few cases of manipulations when cultural elements from Neapolitan culture linguistically meet and interplay with English culture, as for example in the names of the characters, with the Cheshire Cat becoming 'A Gatta 'E Zi Maria'.

At this point one might ask about the value of these translations into Neapolitan. Who are they for? Publishers might answer that they are for:

- an older generation who are meeting the classics of their childhood in the language of their past – for themselves and for their grandchildren;
- young people who meet the classics of their recent childhood in a language they don't speak, but one that is a part of their culture;
- immigrant communities, such as Neapolitans living abroad, thus occasioning new possibilities of identifying connections in literature across both time and space, as they cross cultural and national boundaries;
- people who are interested in art and don't want to be isolated in their love for children's literature.

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Spanish Translations of Deborah Ellis

Translating children's literature multiculturally

Belén González Cascallana – Sotogrande International School, Cádiz, Spain

In current society, the presence or absence of multicultural literature has a great influence on children's understanding of themselves and of others – on the formation of their own identities and the recognition of those of others. By introducing children to multicultural literature, we are giving everyone an equal voice, since it presents the opportunity for all children to listen to diverse voices. In the past decades, conscious efforts have been made to promote cross-cultural understanding amongst children; translations are undoubtedly a clear medium of facilitating access to previously neglected or invisible cultures and making them present in children's literature worldwide.

Multicultural literature for children, which consists of books that 'deal sensitively and accurately with cultures other than the dominant Anglo-European culture that has until recently assumed unquestioned priority over much of the English-speaking world' (McGillis, R. *Voices of the Other: Children's Literature and the Postcolonial Context*, Garland, 1999: xxv), pays attention to previously invisible or unheard cultures. It contains voices speaking of other ethnicities, other traditions, other religions and other places – speaking for their own culture. In this sense, cultural references are vital since they contribute towards foregrounding the diverse voices in the text. An accurate rendering of culture-bound elements is essential if translators are to provide readers with a valid portrayal of different cultures.

In this paper, an examination of how translations reveal voices of other cultures and races, thus promoting cultural diversity, is achieved through a

descriptive-comparative analysis of the Spanish translations of Deborah Ellis's *The Breadwinner* (OUP 2001: *El pan de la guerra*, tr. Herminia Bevia, Edelvives, 2002) and *Parvana's Journey* (OUP 2002: *El viaje de Parvana*, tr. Herminia Bevia, Edelvives, 2004). The approach is that of Translation Studies and, in particular, following Venuti's terminology (*The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation*, Routledge, 1995) with regards to two main methods of translation: foreignisation, which makes visible the presence of the translator by stressing the foreign identity of the Source Text, and domestication, which minimises the foreignness of the Target Text.

By examining the translator's treatment of culturally specific elements on a macro and micro-structural level, our study shows how, in general terms, the foreign identity of the original – the multicultural voice – has been maintained in the translations. Bevia's strategies reveal interaction between the educational aim of introducing a foreign text to the target young audience (resulting in the constant use of a foreignisation strategy such as retention), with the aim of presenting a readable text (hence the use of domesticating strategies, such as generalisation, omission and addition).

The translations analysed show how the presence of culture-specific terms does not necessarily hinder young readers' enjoyment of a book, but can actually further their international and multicultural understanding. Moreover, exposure to translated multicultural literature certainly helps children appreciate the idiosyncrasies of other ethnic groups, eliminate cultural and racial intolerance, and develop multiple perspectives.

Translating Russian Folk Tales

James Riordan

I first encountered Russian folktales after being ‘bitten by the green snake’. As I lay recovering from my first taste of Russian vodka in a Urals hotel, I was visited by a stream of storytellers, all children, who insisted that all I needed was a strong dose of storytelling. Each girl and boy, quite unselfconsciously and without a book in sight, told me stories of flying ships and snow maidens, Baba Yaga and Old Bones the Immortal, frog princesses (yes, the woman is dominant) and red-nose frosts. And each acted out the parts, singing, chanting, mimicking as if they really believed every fantastic word. It was not the best cure for a hang-over, but my books of Russian folk tales (*Tales from Central Russia* (Kestrel, 1976); *Russian Folk-Tales* (OUP, 2000); *Russkie narodnye skazki* (Russky yazyk, Moscow, 1990)) undoubtedly had their origin in those wonderfully fertile young minds.

During my five years, living, working and travelling in Russia, I came upon many more natural story-tellers, in a land where the art and habit of telling tales were not yet lost. I would make it a custom to spend weekends wandering round the Russian countryside, mostly near Moscow, but also as far afield as Yakutia in the frozen north-eastern corner of the country. I would seek out storytellers in their cosy wooden shacks and we would swap yarns, riddles, tongue-twisters and songs (‘Old Macdonald had a Farm’ was my stock-in-trade!) over a steaming bowl of soup and yeasty black bread.

Owing to the dead hand of the Russian Church, it was not until the mid-nineteenth century that the first collections were made of Russian folktales – a century and a half after Charles Perrault’s collection of 1699 and 50 years after that of Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm in 1812. The pioneer collector was Alexander Afanasiev (1826-71). His vast enterprise appeared in eight volumes between 1855 and 1867, containing as many as 640 tales – by far the largest collection of folktales by one person anywhere in the world. Unlike the Grimm tales, most of Afanasiev’s stories were taken down second-hand – from the records of other

people. Yet this modest lawyer from Voronezh became one of the most influential figures in Russian national culture; generations of Russian authors, composers and artists drew upon his subject matter and were inspired by it. Despite this, he was persecuted by the Church and tsarist authorities, his work censored and banned, and he died in virtual obscurity and poverty at the age of 45.

Afanasiev’s interest and pride in the intrinsic beauty of Russian peasant language – at a time when aristocratic society was aping foreign fashions and conversing in French – brought him to admire folklore for its rich musical quality, its poetic artistry, purity and child-like simplicity. Unlike the Grimms, who saw nothing wrong in a stylistic revision of a tale, Afanasiev regarded his texts as sacrosanct, however illiterate they might be. He did not seek to prettify his stories, to make them interesting for children. In at least a third of the tales he does not even indicate where the stories come from. To his mind, folk tale, like language, was a product of collective work over the ages.

The traditional fairy stories are full of fantasy, obsolete words and expressions, rhyming couplets and stock descriptions for a whole range of actions: saddling a horse, the hero’s or heroine’s journey, a hut on hen’s feet (with no windows or door), the witch’s (Baba Yaga’s) words at a new arrival, and so on. All this makes it difficult to convey in another language – much as Pushkin’s poetry is virtually untranslatable. The story sometimes begins and ends with a special prologue/epilogue, on occasion unrelated to the rest of the text. For example, a common postscript is to affirm that the storyteller was witness to the tale, drank mead which flowed down his beard without entering his mouth... So could he have another drink before telling a story...?

It was at the feast I heard this tale,
There it was I drank mead ale.
Though it flowed down my beard,
my mouth stayed dry,
For never a drop passed my lips, swear I.

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Children's Literature Translation in Turn-of-the-Century Poland

Michał Borodo

Kazimierz Wielki University, Bydgoszcz, Poland

My paper examines the constraints and mechanisms governing the production of translations directed at children in Poland at the turn of the twentieth century. It is an attempt to sketch a map of this territory as, though statements on contemporary Polish translations for children now seem to be on the increase, none of them aims at presenting the whole panorama of the related translation phenomena. The major questions posed are: What are the extra-textual mechanisms behind translation, and how do they relate to global translation trends as well as to a larger historical context? Are these extra-textual phenomena paralleled by any major changes in textual norms, especially in regard to translators' treatment of the foreign?

The methodological basis of the present research is situated within a broad systems and norms paradigm which forms a useful basis for analysis; additionally, children's books translation may be useful to the paradigm as a whole, revitalising it through pointing to global mechanisms of translation production. My study also demonstrates how children's literature translation has increasingly been integrated into global publishing systems, through pointing to such phenomena as Total Product (the term coined by Polish researcher Michał Zajac), co-production, proliferation of intermediary adaptations, localisation of children's books series, and generally the large scale import of the visual. It also touches upon phenomena less closely

related to global publishing systems but rather linked with Polish history - making up for lost time and recycling excluded translations - as well as the almost simultaneous production of new translations of children's classics and the appearance of Polish hypertext adaptations.

The focus of the third part of the article is on translators' treatment of the textual. Are the large-scale phenomena paralleled by any textual changes? Is it true that there has been a gradual shift from domesticating towards foreignising tendencies? Judging by translators' treatment of names in many contemporary Polish translations, such as the now marketed *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* or Madonna's *The English Roses*, the answer is in the positive. In the past, many of these names would most probably have been domesticated. Today, they seem to be functioning as brand names, closely integrated into global publishing systems and synchronized with other products such as films and toys. While there are relatively few examples of domestication in the present, those from the past are ample. Some of the most spectacular Polish domestications are the translations of *The Rose and the Ring* at the beginning of the century, *Winnie-the-Pooh* from the 1930s, *My Friend Mr. Leakey* from the 1940s, *Alice's Adventures* from the 1950s, and *The Tailor of Gloucester* from the 1960s. Strikingly, in the very first Polish translation of *Mary Poppins* the character's name was changed to Agnieszka. Would a similar change be possible with Harry Potter?!

Stories for Children

A cross-cultural collaboration

Vasiliki Labitsi & Dorothy Bedford

This paper describes the process undertaken by two art educators, who are also artists and researchers, to create a picture book for young children. We worked together to explore cultural similarities and differences between Greek and English stories and illustrations, with the aim of enriching children's knowledge of the two cultures. This also encouraged us to think reflectively about our own practice and challenge our preconceptions.

We live in an increasingly multicultural world. Over 300 different languages are spoken in London schools, and although Greek society has been more coherent and homogeneous, it is also experiencing increasing incongruity. Understanding, tolerance and respect of culture, beliefs, customs and heritage are important educational aims.

Children's literature can familiarise readers with images of their own and other people's cultures, countries and societies; picture books in particular can show recognisable aspects of the world and expand understanding of things outside their readers' experience. These books are accessible, familiar, inexpensive, compact, portable, available and easy to use alone or in groups, and they can be revisited.

Whereas in Greece almost half of the illustrated children's books are translations from European sources, in the main, it is estimated that in the UK only one percent of books are from non-English speaking countries (Cotton, 2000). The success of English story writing has made readers more insular and nationalistic, depriving them of a range of illustrative styles and genres, and of

cultural plurality. Indeed, mass-production and international cooperation in the publishing industry may result in a bland, uniform pan-European style.

Children are exposed to narrative from a very young age; it is 'a means by which human beings, everywhere, represent and structure their world' (Meek, 1991). 'By first grade the average child has encountered as least two thousand stories' (Stott, 1994). Every culture has myths and legends, which are elements of oral tradition. Stephens and McCallum (1998) alert us that under the guise of offering to audiences access to strange and exciting worlds, myths and legends also embody deeply conservative ideological configurations which refer to power (political and personal), hierarchy, gender, class, and race. As authors, we were conscious of the ideological orientations of the original myths and of our own views, beliefs and assumptions; we were careful about how we dealt and negotiated with them in our retelling. After considerable research, we selected from the rich reservoir of mythologies of our cultures the stories of Theseus and of King Arthur, as they are well known, representative of each cultural tradition and share common patterns and motifs.

The research we undertook has challenged us to develop new design skills and collective practices. Additionally, it has revealed that a visual text with a complex narrative structure and page design will be more demanding on the reader, who will be called to engage in an active search for meaning-making – a process which will surely be of benefit to all our readers.

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About Afterwords

Afterwords in translated children's books in East Germany

Gaby Thomson-Wohlgemuth

Translated texts bring with them a number of unknown cultural concepts and strange ideas with which the audience in the target culture may not be familiar. Paratexts, the category to which afterwords belong, aid in placing a translated work in its cultural context. They point out reasons for a text's cultural importance, and they explain textual elements which would otherwise cause problems of interpretation for target text readers; in short, they smooth out things which generally disturb the reading experience.

Given a child's limited knowledge of life, annotation can help child readers to comprehend the text in front of them. In the case of the German Democratic Republic (GDR), paratexts (and in particular afterwords) without doubt fulfilled a major function in making texts more accessible to children. A vast portion of the books published in the GDR needed annotation because they originated from periods long gone. Additionally, because of the Iron Curtain, the country was cut off from a large part of the globe, and the cultural distance between East Germany and other areas of the world was relatively wide. Books from abroad or from the past brought with them unfamiliar terms and thoughts, and afterwords made the foreignness less of an obstacle for East German child readers.

However, as a country belonging to the Eastern Bloc, the GDR was socialist in nature and ideology. As a consequence, the afterwords in East German books were written from a socialist standpoint, as placing a translated work in its cultural context meant supplying a Marxist perspective and pointing out reasons for the relevance of the text to socialist society. It was the task of authors of afterwords to guide the young readers to the proper interpretation and to show them how to read the story.

East Germany was also a country with a societal mission, namely to move its

populace forward to the utopia of communism. Every section of society was conscripted for this purpose and literature was seen as a tool for it. An elaborate censorship apparatus was employed to ensure the best possible guidance and control of the book industry. The entire country's production was vetted with the aim of separating desired texts from the undesirable, and shielding the internal market from non-socialist and allegedly harmful thoughts. Publishers were made personally responsible for the suitability of every individual book. Afterwords therefore served as a mechanism of protection. By pointing to socialist concepts and characteristics in the text and, hence, appropriating the text to the East German political system, books were made acceptable and the decision of the publishers to produce the books was legitimised. While afterwords were used by the publishers to appease the censors, the censors themselves used them to appease the Party functionaries and to protect themselves from those higher up in the system because the censors in turn were fully accountable to the Party for their decisions. The necessity of addressing the next-higher level hierarchy and defending one's own position is evidenced in the afterwords through two features: ideological objections are anticipated and minimised; while intertextual references to distinguished people who had also appreciated the text's significance are used to support its worth.

From the standpoint of researching the cultural aspects of translation, paratexts provide additional information that helps situate the text in its proper position within the literary system of that culture. This brief investigation has attempted to show that East German afterwords demonstrate the values of their (socialist) society and the restrictions that this society placed on publishers, editors and even censors.

Wanda Gág

First 'innovative' translator of the Grimms' *Kinder- und Hausmärchen*

Maria Venetia Kyritsi

Wanda Gág produced the first non-comprehensive collection of translated tales from the Grimms' *Kinder- und Hausmärchen (KHM)* to stand out from the multitude of 19th and 20th century translations, versions and adaptations of these stories. It achieves this distinctiveness through both style and translation approach. It was the first translation to be made and published in the USA by an American translator. Gág's first volume of translations, entitled *Tales from Grimm*, was published in the UK in 1937, only a year after its American release, although the follow-up, *More Tales from Grimm*, published in the USA after Gág's death in 1946, appeared in the UK for the first time in 1962, a full 15 years after its American publication.

The importance of Gág's books lies not only in the novelty of the dual publication but also in the originality of the translation itself. Although her books were clearly intended for an audience of children, she does not refrain from prefacing her first volume with an 'Introduction'. In this she states at some length that she has made changes to the original stories, and explains the reasons for those interventions. Gág's translation was published at a time when the religious superstition of American audiences had already started to wane, though there is still a definite avoidance of religious allusions in her work.

In her Introduction, Gág does not reveal any views on matters of sexuality or violence in children's literature, but she does appear to be quite concerned about

the aspect of 'goriness', as she terms it, a subject which had provoked 'conflicting opinions' in relation to 'juvenile literature'. Her treatment of violence and terror is not particularly noteworthy, since in neither volume do the stories appear to contain any such elements. This lack may result from a conscious choice by the translator herself or the fact that the stories she chooses to translate and provide illustrations for happen to be the neutral 'innocent' ones she was already acquainted with from her own childhood.

Although Gág translated a total of only 47 of the Grimms' original stories, her translation is a landmark in the translation history of the *KHM*, since it was the first to be published and achieve success in two different English-speaking countries. Before Gág's translation, many people in the US considered fairy tales 'frivolous, subversive, pagan, escapist, and potentially dangerous for the health and sanity of children' – attitudes that mirrored puritanical sentiments in England – but her translation helped in 'making fairy tales popular for an American public during the 1930s and 1940s just at a point when anti-German sentiment was once again on the rise'. Overall, Gág was true to her intention of creating brand new translations – even if they were of a highly adaptive character and could be classified as versions of the original *KHM* – since, unlike her predecessors, she was the only translator who did not extensively copy elements from other 19th and 20th century translations.

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Brazilian Ugly Duckling

Diversity and tradition in the Hans Christian Andersen classic

André Muniz de Moura & Renata Junqueira de Souza

The most read and best-known story of Hans Christian Andersen in Brazil is definitely 'The Ugly Duckling'. There are many versions of this story but there is a unique book, by José Francisco Borges and illustrated by Jô Oliveira, that is much more than a bicentennial act of homage. Its uniqueness does not so much lie in its taking the classic story to the different environment of Brazil but rather in the fact that it is an adaptation written in verses in a very typical Brazilian form, the 'cordel'. 'Literatura de Cordel' are booklets that hang on pieces of string (cordel) in the places where they are sold. They are long narrative poems with woodcut illustrations on the cover, often done by the poet himself. The largest concentration of this type of popular literature is in the North Eastern region of Brazil. Recent studies have investigated its European background: it was originally found from the Middle Ages to the seventeenth century in France, Spain, Netherlands and England.

José Francisco Borges, better known as J. Borges, is one of the most important artists of the 'Literatura de cordel'. He is a Brazilian wood-carver and poet, born in 1935, who has sold one hundred thousand copies of his cordel book, *The Arrival of the Prostitute in Heaven*. He also made the cover illustration for *Walking Words* by Uruguayan writer and essayist, Eduardo Galeano. In his version of 'The Ugly Duckling', he is responsible for the adaptation of Andersen's text, and the illustrations were made by Jô Oliveira, using the style of typical woodcarvings.

Three aspects of the book's diversity are of interest: its form, its language and its setting. This text is unique because it changes the original form radically, maintaining the main plot and contributing to a new reading of Andersen's classical tale. It is organised in six-line stanzas. The language style is very Brazilian, characteristic of the Northeast Region, and this can make connections with children who live so far from Denmark. This Brazilian adaptation is set in a region of drought, which has only two seasons: the summer with dry air, high temperatures and low humidity, and the so-called winter, with rain, but with temperatures different from those in the Northern Hemisphere. Altogether this is unlike the original Danish environment or indeed that of any European country.

Although it has differences from the original and is seen from a brand new point of view, this Brazilian version of 'The Ugly Duckling' has also some characteristics that mark it as a traditional retelling or adaptation. The artist does not provide rupture, carnivalisation or deconstruction of the original version – unlike for instance the humorous version by Jon Scieszka ('The really ugly duckling' in *The Stinky Cheese Man*). No deconstruction of the happy ending happens in Borges' text. The main goal of this writer seems to be to make Andersen's tale known to a wider group of children and also to make them aware of a traditional aspect of Brazilian culture that has become almost unknown to people today.

Roadblocks and Broken Bridges

Translating picture books into Chinese

Mieke K.T. Desmet – *Feng Chia University*

Translations are often seen as a way to bridge language and cultural gaps. On the surface it may seem that countries that translate many books have an open attitude towards other cultures. However, this view may actually be misleading because it hinges on a misconception about what happens in the translation process. Translation is seen as transparent, as bringing the original text (source culture text) to the target culture without any loss of meaning, but that is almost never the case. Translation is often an important strategy to establish children's literature in a culture without a strong children's literature tradition. What is missing in the target culture can be imported and translated and be the impetus for the development of the local children's literature. Yet the target culture also holds the power over how they want to shape their own children's literature, which means that translated children's literature may be shaped to fit the target culture mould. A closer analysis of what exactly happens in translation shows the fissures between the cultures and sometimes the impossibility of bridging the gap.

Two case studies of picture books translated into Chinese, Babette Cole's *Princess Smartypants* and Anthony Browne's *Voices in the Park*, show that the translator uses a number of strategies which significantly diminish the creativity of the target text versions, even though the reason to select these books for translation into Chinese in the first place was the creativity displayed in them. In the Chinese version of *Princess Smartypants*, much of the humour of the names of the suitors has disappeared because names have been transliterated into Chinese with attention only to their sounds and not

to their meaning. Furthermore, explication of features in the visual part of the text and additions explaining part of the story also make the book less of a challenge for readers. In this case, the translation process has smothered the creativity of the source text. The fate of Anthony Browne's *Voices in the Park* is similar. Although there are only minor changes in the target text, their effect is as far-reaching as the more drastic changes in *Princess Smartypants*. Again, names are changed, losing their cultural specificity and reference to social class. At times the translated text contradicts and undermines the visual images, as when the translated text says the mother looks at her son, but the picture shows them looking in different directions to express their loneliness and distance. These translation strategies show that the Taiwanese publisher lacks faith in the ability of Taiwanese children (and parents) to make sense of the text and to explore the visual and written text on their own, and has in some cases also narrowed down the interpretation possibilities.

Although the shifts in the translated case studies do not really neutralize cultural differences in an extreme way and the pictures still allow for celebration of cultural differences, it would be easy to argue that these changes are extremely regrettable and that the translations are betraying their sources. Yet we should not forget that translations are part of the target culture system and function within that system. What seems a betrayal of the source text may well be an astute commercial move by the local publisher, who needs to sell the product in the Taiwanese market and perhaps has a realistic view of the way Taiwanese parents select books for children.

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Returning Home

Creating children's books in Alaska's first languages

Tricia Brown and Teri Sloat

Co-presenters Teri Sloat and Tricia Brown have lived and worked in Alaska, home to over forty indigenous languages, during a period of cultural reawakening. After many decades of language and cultural oppression, the First People groups have been gradually reclaiming their rights to express their diverse cultures through language, dance, potlatch, art, theatre and storytelling. The Yup'ik people of the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta were the first to collaborate with the state education system to bring the use of heritage language back into the schools. In the late 1960s a standardized orthography was developed, and a bi-lingual education programme was developed. Yup'ik was recognized as the first language in 22 villages and a strong second language in over 30 other villages in the delta. In the 1970s a bilingual programme was set up throughout the delta and this called for the development of reading materials to go with a new curriculum that coordinated regional and state mandates.

Today nearly every village school offers formal native language training, as well as cultural training from elders. The need for materials to shore up the connection with language, culture and curriculum has been filled as rapidly as possible with bi-lingual material production within the state, and also cooperatively with Canada. But for years it has been agreed that there has been a lack of trade-quality books printed in the children's native language. There has been a growing awareness that when children are placed in an immersion programme, they need to see a comparable quality between books in their language and other commercially printed materials.

Author and illustrator, Teri Sloat, who taught in village schools and worked with the bi-lingual programme, and Betty Huffmon, a Yup'ik teacher and storyteller working within the bi-lingual programme, began a collaborative effort to find and retell native stories with universal appeal and to print them in commercial quality. It was a collaboration between oral and printed, and between native and non-native, storytelling forms. The goal was to provide a book for the children of Alaska that represented their folklore with a

higher quality of printing than could be offered at the regional level. The result was *The Eye of the Needles* (Dutton). The book was printed in English, and, at the time, paste-overs were the only solution to presenting companion books in the Yup'ik languages. Slowly more stories from the culturally rich rural areas of Alaska became published through mainstream US publishers. But the long range goal was to have this quality of story and printing provided in the heritage languages themselves, without the visual interference of paste-overs.

Over the past thirty years, the Yup'ik language and others in Alaska have developed a standardised orthography. Educator Helen Morris, aware of the growing confidence among translators, and the ongoing lack of quality literary materials in the classroom, approached Tricia Brown, editor of Alaska Northwest Books, about the lack of quality trade books in indigenous languages. Tricia Brown began taking steps to meet the need, and developed the First Language Program, which, uniquely, now publishes short runs of children's books in indigenous languages in cooperation with native groups, school districts and regional corporations. These books are chosen because of their universal appeal as well as that to the indigenous children of the north; they meet the standards of commercial publishing. *Berry Magic*, a collaboration of imagination between authors Teri Sloat and Betty Huffmon, is the first of many books made available in English and in the Yup'ik language through the programme. Translations in other dialects and languages throughout the north are currently in development, and *The Eye of the Needle*, *Kitaq goes Ice-Fishing*, *The Hungry Giant of the Tundra*, *Children of the Midnight Sun* and many others are being translated.

The programme allows a group to buy in at a minimum print run of 1500 copies per title. The benefits are many: children have books to share with grandparents who were told the stories orally; books that represent their culture are of the same quality as those on the shelves representing other cultures; children see their own environment reflected in the illustrations; translations allow compari-

son between English and the indigenous language of the story; people who have moved away from the villages can see and hear their stories in the languages that are their heritage, since books can be distributed beyond the regional level; and there is an increase in the variety of books available in the native languages. As translators step forward to work with a larger pool of professional writers and illustrators and a greater variety of content, the books will continue to develop a level of printed language that equals that of oral language use. This will trigger a more literary use of language and lead to language pleasure.

We feel that the First Language Program can serve as a cultural and economic role model for other publishers willing to step forward to serve the need for quality books in other recognized indigenous

languages. It is a need that is rising on a global level.

The reaction to the efforts of the translators and to the first books presented in the villages has been emotionally uplifting. Translators willing to put their words into commercial materials will always face criticism. However, as the quantity of quality work increases, the translators will find that they have a bulk of successful work behind them that buffers that criticism, allowing their work to be a learning tool. It is our hope that the continuation of the program will encourage native writers, as well as the process of creative, literary translation that relates to the pleasure derived from language in the oral form. It is also our hope that the First Language Program will create a network for sharing stories throughout the North as the number of indigenous groups joining the programme increases.

Cultural Dialogue and the Language of the Neighbour's Child

Lessons from Barbara Kimenye's writing

Abasi Kiyimba – Makerere University

Barbara Kimenye, the leading writer of children's literature in Uganda, has published more than 25 children's stories. The majority of these are part of a series featuring the escapades of a schoolboy named Moses, and are intended for children in the lower primary section. They are well written and offer social entertainment and linguistic instruction to children, and also teach them something about the culture which provides the specific cultural roots for the stories. *The Gemstone Affair* (1978) and *The Scoop* (1978) are addressed to older children, while two collections of short stories, *Kalasanda* (1965) and *Kalasanda Revisited* (1966), which contain humorous glimpses of life in a Buganda village, can be read and enjoyed by both older children and adults. One of the stories in these collections, 'The Battle of the Sacred Tree', has been made into a feature film.

Kimenye's writings, like those of many African writers, are composed in English. But the influence of her linguistic and cultural background is in evidence throughout the work in the form of direct reference to Ganda culture, non-native-English-speaker thought patterns, untranslatable words, names of characters, etc. The glimpses of Ganda culture in Kimenye's work enrich the language of her writing, but the question arises as to whether this culturally enriched (English) language has the capacity to communicate with the neighbour's child (the child with a different cultural background), and whether Kimenye's work is the richer for it. Most of the illustrations in the paper are drawn from *Kalasanda* and *Kalasanda Revisited*, which have been more widely read outside Uganda than her other works.

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The Teaching Story from Afghanistan

Robert Ornstein

*The presentation began with a reading of the tale **Neem the Half-Boy** (Idries Shah, published by Hoopoe Books, ISBN: 1-883536-76-6), in which the Queen of Hich-Hich neglects the instruction of Arif the Wise Man and consequently gives birth to a half-boy. Nevertheless he grows up to be very clever and confronts a dragon in an effort to become whole.*

Stories are part of our basic cognitive development, leading children and then adults to learn more about what happens in the world, and when and how events come together. We create meaning through stories. Certain stories of all cultures, in their original telling, share more in this regard than they differ (See *World Tales*, also by Idries Shah, published by Octagon Press, ISBN: 0-863040-36-5). An analysis of these ancient stories throughout the world shows that the same story occurs time and again in different cultures, because it fills this universal need for what I call 'context': the essential function of putting together the different components of experience. This form of literature is currently little-known in the West, but is common in Afghanistan, Central Asia and the Middle East. Only recently has the psychological significance of these 'Teaching-Stories' been re-discovered in the West.

Teaching-stories often appear to be little more than fairy or folk tales. But they are designed to embody – in their characters, plots and imagery – patterns and relationships that nurture a part of the mind that is not reachable in more direct ways, thus increasing our understanding and breadth of vision, in addition to fostering our abil-

ity to think differently, to expand our horizons. These are stories whose improbable events lead readers' minds into new and unexplored venues and allow them to develop more flexibility, and thus to understand this complex world better.

*There followed a reading of **The Clever Boy and The Terrible, Dangerous Animal** by Idries Shah, (Hoopoe Books, ISBN: 1-883536-18-9), a Sufi Teaching Story of how a boy visiting a village helps the people there to deal with their fear of what they have mistakenly taken for a terrifying animal.*

In my research I have found that reading Teaching-Stories activates the right side of the brain much more than does reading normal prose. The right side of the brain provides this 'context': how to link the pieces together as a whole. The left side provides the 'text', or the pieces themselves: such as the words, the elements in the drawings, etc. It's the difference between having the pieces of a kit (left side), and the knowledge of how to assemble the bicycle, the ability to ride it, where to go, etc., which is what the stories teach us (see my book *The Right Mind*, Harcourt Brace International, ISBN: 0-156006-27-8). What these stories provide is context, how to link items together, giving a child or adult a clearer picture of what is going on, the ability to see alternative ways to do things, and make more productive choices. Teaching-Stories help put the individual pieces of life's complexities together, as a whole, and in relationship to oneself. They prepare us to know how to act productively in unfamiliar situations.

Having it Both Ways

Metaphors, puns and translating children's literature

Murray Knowles and Dorota Pacek – University of Birmingham

The relationship between culture and translation is fascinating and often complex. For the translator, it can be a fraught relationship, not least because the cultural settings of the source and target languages may represent significant differences. Furthermore, as Oittinen points out, 'the dialogic way of translating for children differs in significant ways from that of translating for adults' (2000: 5). The actual process of translating itself is, of course, not simply replacing the word of one language with another. By 'children' here, we refer to the older child reader, the reader who can and does read for their own pleasure rather than being read to.

Figurative language such as metaphors, metonyms and puns are frequent carriers of humour in children's narratives and can be problematic for the translator. Words and groups of words or fixed expressions such as idioms can present problems of equivalence/non-equivalence (see Baker, 1992: chapters 2 and 3). Our levels of awareness of figurative language when learning other languages differs from that in our first language. Sometimes there may be direct or similar equivalents in figurative language; French and German for example, have similar metaphorical expressions for the 'crafty person' sense of *fox* that we have in English, so that this would be recognised by child readers of these languages. In other cases, however, there may be no figurative equivalents; some metaphorical expressions may be universal while others are specific to a language/culture.

The selection of a translation is not just lexical or semantic, but is also evaluative and ideological: switching one metaphor for another may change the reading of the original in significant ways. The translator needs to be aware of the discourse function of the original metaphor – in other words, the evaluative role of the metaphor (or pun or metonym) and whether it is being used to explain something more clearly or perhaps to conceal the real meaning.

The paper examines some of the problems that exist in the relationship between culture, humour and translating figurative language in children's literature and across languages, citing a number of examples from children's books that appear, on the surface, to be problematic. These examples include a very recent translation into Chinese of Arthur Ransome's *Swallows and Amazons* and the strategies employed by several Polish translators of the *Alice* books as well as translations of more recent books. Finally, it raises the question as to whether there is a difference between translating children's literature and translating *for* children.

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Translating Sound in Children's Literature

Gillian Lathey

Sound and rhythm play a fundamental role in children's discovery of the powers of language and narrative. Young children *hear* stories rather than read them; indeed, Cay Dollerup has argued that translating for reading aloud 'is an art requiring great competence of translators' (2003: 82). Moreover, young children are eager imitators of whatever sound-systems surround them; they learn language naturally through practice and play, with the encouragement of their fluent elders. Repetition, rhyme, onomatopoeia, wordplay and nonsense are, therefore, all common features of children's texts and require a linguistic creativity that is a challenge to any translator.

Take, for instance, the representation of animal noises that is a common feature of children's rhymes and stories. When translating literary effects that depend on aural qualities, as in the case of animal sounds, translators have to switch from one phonological system to another, transposing the barks, squeals, roars and neighs of a complete menagerie into the commonly accepted equivalents in their own tongues. Workshop delegates offered animal sounds in a range of languages, and considered whether it is always necessary to translate, for example, the German 'kikeriki' into the conventional English 'cock-a-doodle-doo'. In the UK, at any rate, a touch of 'foreignisation' might spark an interest in language and enhance the meta-linguistic awareness that so many monolingual British children sadly lack.

Nonsense and sound poetry for the young present an even greater challenge. Can pure sound poetry be translated? Umberto Eco gives a negative answer since there is an 'absence of any semantic level – and therefore it is pointless to translate' (2001:108). Yet Anthea Bell's

translation for children of Christian Morgenstern's (1871-1914) sound poem 'Das grosse Lallula' ('The Big Laloola') ensures that at least some of the sounds uttered in English will replicate the qualities of the German original. Delegates compared original German and translated English versions both on the page and aurally, with the help of a native German speaker in the workshop. The first three lines read as follows (German rendition on left, English on right on next line):

Kroklok wafzi? Sēmemēmi!
Kroklok woffzie? Seemimeemi!

Seikronto – prafriplo:
Siyokronto – prufli plo:

Bifzi, bafzi; hulalemi:
Bifsi baftsi; hulaleemi:

(Morgenstern 1992, 1995: 21)

In the third line of the poem, Bell renders the German 'Bifzi, bafzi' as 'Bifsi, baftsi', thereby reproducing in English the 'ts' sound of the German 'z', but she does not adopt this strategy throughout the poem. Yet, to return to Eco's comment, surely this process can be called translation, since Bell *is* operating between two languages, making choices that are appropriate both to the aural and visual qualities of Morgenstern's original poem, and to the needs of its target-language audience.

Bell's idiosyncratic translation indicates that there can be no hard and fast rules that will ensure a child-friendly translation of sound; the only sure test is the response of children to a trial reading or performance.

'Translating sound in children's literature' will appear in the forthcoming issue of *Translating Today Magazine*.

Found in Translation

How US children's publishers select children's books in foreign languages

Annette Goldsmith

What factors do US publishers take into account when deciding whether to publish a translation of a children's book from another country? There is anecdotal information on the subject, but no systematic research. Conventional wisdom says that such books are much harder to sell than books written by US authors, making publishers more reluctant to publish them. Yet translations are valued by the library profession in the US to the extent that the American Library Association's Mildred L. Batchelder Award, administered by the Association of Library Service to Children, annually recognizes the publisher of an outstanding book translated into English for the US market. How do acquisitions editors, the gatekeepers most directly responsible for publishing translations, approach this complex task?

'Found in Translation' is a qualitative, exploratory examination of how and why acquisitions editors whose houses have been awarded the Batchelder Award decide to publish translations. The Batchelder Award indicates success at the task. These editors constitute an elite, and the study's interview guide was pre-tested with two Canadian editors of comparable status. Confidential interviews averaging 40 minutes were conducted by phone with a purposive sample of five key informants, three men and two women, drawn from among the houses that had won the Batchelder Award. The editors were queried about five Batchelder Award-winning or honour books from the period 1995-2004. The books were originally written in four different languages (Dutch, German, Hebrew and Turkish) and were published by five different publishing houses. The interviews were transcribed and organized into themes.

Preliminary findings suggest that the editor's experience, clout, personal taste, and established channels for locating books to translate figure strongly in the process. Editors expressed frustration at not being able to read in the original language, thereby having to place more trust than usual in readers' reports. Though the recognition of a Batchelder winner or honour book does improve sales, the increased revenue is nowhere near what might be expected from winning a major US award such as the Newbery or Caldecott. One editor reported that some of his other translations actually sold better than his Batchelder book. Another's Batchelder book was out of print. Several editors decried what they saw as a lack of trust on the part of reviewers and librarians in the ability of young readers to understand new or different concepts in a book from another country; reviews which flag such elements as potentially controversial hurt sales. In addition, there is the perception that some librarians treat Batchelder books as 'worthy', like medicine, rather than as exciting books in their own right. In spite of all the difficulties inherent in the process, editors perceive houses as being more open to publishing translations now than they were five years ago.

The next step in this research, the dissertation, has the objective of extending the investigation by quantitative means: a web-based survey with questions developed from the qualitative data will be sent to a representative sample of US children's publishers. Future research will include interviewing two other important sets of gatekeepers: children's librarians, and buyers for the chain bookstores.

no child
is an island
conference
translation
issues

Vocabulary, Pictures... Market?

Expanding textual and visual vocabularies with children's picture books in translation, and expanding the market...

Patricia Billings – Director, Milet Publishing

The decoding skills that children use to understand picture books are adaptable and expandable; children are eminently able to interpret and enjoy translated texts as much as 'native' texts. Translated picture books offer children rich opportunities for expanding their textual and visual vocabularies, which can enhance their reading and perception skills in general. Translated picture books present a unique case of translated text, in that their component text and illustrations are so deeply and crucially linked. In effect, the reader is 'translating' both the text and the images, and the overall concept of the book. This presents a paradox: the translation is at the same time more difficult (the translated text must relate accurately to the pictures on the page) and easier (the pictures on the page are visual cues to the meanings of the words).

At Milet, when we select a picture book for translation, we do not look so much at what the book may say about the culture from which it derives as about the way in which it employs and enlarges a range of visual vocabularies, how it presents new ways of representing and seeing, and the benefits of this for children reading in English. We are most interested in books that enable children to expand their visual and textual vocabularies, and thus open up pathways to understanding a wider range of books and art forms, as well as building overall cognitive skills. Four picture books by French author/illustrator Hervé Tullet published in English by Milet (*Night & Day*, *Pink Lemon*, *Yellow & Round*, *Blue & Square*) present a good example of the opportunities for children offered by translated books. With

their vibrant, often abstract illustration style and their clever, philosophical plays on words, Tullet's books present British children with different and expanded ways of reading and representing.

Tullet's first translated title, *Night & Day*, met with opposition from some bookshop buyers for its perceived 'Frenchness', yet this same Frenchness was celebrated in reviews of *Night & Day* and of the other Tullet titles. How can publishers tackle the conservatism and fear of difference in the market, to allow children access to the widest range of reading and visual pleasures? In Milet's experience, it is neither the readers – the children, parents and teachers – nor the reviewers who are resistant to translated books. Rather, it is the bookshop buyers who are the 'gatekeepers', and who, in their decisions on which books will appear on the shelves and which ones will not, can act as a barrier between the books and their potential and willing readers. As publishers of translated books, this is perhaps our biggest challenge: to influence buyers so that children are allowed access to 'foreign' stories and styles, which they are eminently able to understand, interpret, appreciate and love.

Milet's bilingual books, particularly those in community languages, may appear more difficult to market and sell than books translated to English. Yet the buyers for these books, in the educational sector but also increasingly in the trade, seem not the least bit daunted by their 'strangeness' and do not raise the same barriers. This proves that there is a 'way in' to the trade, which we can work to widen.

WingedChariot Press

Bringing the best of translated children's books to the UK

Neal Hoskins – WingedChariot Press

Only three percent of books published in the UK are translations, and of these, only around ten translated picture books for children are printed. Before WingedChariot set up its new imprint, we tried to find out the reasons for this situation. The answers we found included: a perceived lack of interest from the general public; the fact that translated books were costlier to make; the difficulty of knowing from a UK perspective whether a book will do well; the abundance of good UK illustrators; and, most important, a lack of real interest on the part of bookshops in stocking them. Despite this, WingedChariot took the view that there are so many gems published abroad that there is space for a well-honed list of fine books. Working with the authors and translators who are sometimes themselves writers, we produced four titles in 2005.

Alongside the books and very much at the forefront of our work, we also produced support documents telling readers more about the authors, country of origin and other aspects of the books. We also recorded the stories in the original languages and put all these files online at wingedchariot.com. This was a first from a UK publisher. We have just begun and know we need to fight hard to make our niche in the market place, but we think the books stand out. With the support of word-of-mouth recommendations from enthusiasts, we hope to bring to UK readers a new and vibrant collection of stories and pictures from other countries and cultures. Indeed we have found our collaboration with various European literature foundations to be very fruitful and helpful to our endeavours.

Visuals of the books and audios were shown in the second half of the talk.

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East Meets West in Children's Literature

Pat Pinsent, (ed.) Pied Piper Publishing, 2005. £15. ISBN: 0 9546384 6 8.

At the 11th annual conference of the British Section of IBBY, held at Roehampton in November, 2004, a look at the way in which eastern countries are represented in western children's books was combined with the celebration of Diana Wynne Jones's 70th birthday. Although it has not been possible to include all the papers that were given there, an overall picture of the proceedings, including the many workshops, emerges from the editor's preface and introduction. There is obviously much food for thought in the papers presented and the discussions that took place, and it must have been difficult for those who attended on the day to digest it all. *East meets West* is therefore doubly welcome: both to those who were present and to those who were not. (Summaries of some of the papers and workshops appeared in the Spring, 2005, issue of *IBBYLink*.)

The four papers included in the first part, 'Mostly India', show how books set in India or with Indian characters changed over a century and a half. Pat Pinsent provides an excellent account of the evangelical writers of the nineteenth century, including Mrs. Sherwood and Charlotte Tucker (A.L.O.E., a Lady of England), both of whom spent time in India and were interested in supporting efforts to convert the Indian population to Christianity. Mary Cadogan, an expert on popular children's literature, shows how British writers, most famously P.G. Wodehouse and Frank Richards, had by the turn of the century recognised the potential of eastern characters for enriching the plots of school stories. However, as the popularity of school stories declined and Britain became a multi-ethnic society, things changed, and she quotes examples of more recent children's books that reflect that society. I found Preetha Leela's paper on the influence of British children's fiction in India particularly interesting. Growing up in Madras (now Chennai), her childhood reading was dominated by Enid Blyton to the extent that Blyton's books also influenced her creative writing. Blyton's books are still very popular alongside the traditional tales and stories by Indian writers.

The second part, covering the Middle and Far East and touching on parts of Africa, is a rather mixed bag, and I know from personal experience how difficult it is to obtain a clear picture of children's literature in many of these countries. However, Ann Lazim's contribution on the representation of Arabs in western children's literature reflects the theme of the conference very well. Married to an Iraqi, whom she met when a student in the 1970s, she has made a long-term study of this topic and writes with authority, quoting a wide range of examples, including British editions of Arabian folk tales.

Gillian Lathey looks at the various concepts of children's literature throughout the world. While all countries and peoples have an oral literature, the attitudes to children's reading matter vary. There may be an influence from a colonial past, there may be a wide range of cheap and popular comics, and books may be seen only as part of the educational process rather than as a source of enjoyment. Recent years have seen the globalisation of children's films and books, so that government-funded projects, internal lobbies, or external agencies are necessary if an indigenous children's literature is going to develop in the face of social attitudes and economic pressures. Yuki Ito contributes a paper on one such external agency, a non-governmental organisation, Deknoylao (Action with Lao Children), established in Tokyo in 1982 and operating in Laos, where there are many problems. Few children's books are published in the Lao language and, as well as trying to encourage the production of indigenous stories, the agency has arranged for well-known picture books, such as Sendak's *Where the Wild Things Are* and Carle's *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* to be translated into Lao – most of the titles listed as examples originated in the United States.

There is no biographical note on Taraneh Matloob, who hints at the richness of Iranian children's literature in an account of a current research project responsible for producing a ten volume work on its history (six volumes have already been published). However none of this information ties in with the essay on children's literature in Iran by Morteza Khosronejad of Shiraz University in the *International*

Companion Encyclopedia of Children's Literature, edited by Peter Hunt (2nd ed., 2004, Routledge). Are there really two Institutes of children's literature operating within Iran, each unaware of what the other is doing?

Marian Allsobrook's account of texts and pictures for young audiences in China between 1918 and 1947 seems to rely heavily on secondary sources and it would have been interesting to hear of how the Chinese have been portrayed in western children's literature, a subject that offers a wealth of primary sources, or to know more about the English language children's books published in China in the 1970s (much admired by feminists at the time) and exported to India and Britain – and no doubt elsewhere.

Pat Pinsent, as editor, points out that Diana Wynne Jones's fantasies are often characterised by 'the kind of strangeness which was felt by early western explorers of eastern lands' and thus sets the celebration of Jones's 70th birthday firmly in the context of the conference. A paper by Nicki Humble and a report on the contributions people made to a discussion of Jones's work constitute the third section. Humble shows how Diana Wynne Jones makes use of folklore and legend from around the world, including the Arabian Nights, and then looks at three titles in detail. *Eight Days of Luke* is one of my personal favourites – I must confess I most enjoy fantasy where there are strong links to the real world – and in this, Jones draws on the Norse legends: Luke, who suddenly appears in David's life, the new gardener, Mr. Chew, who turns up on Chewsdays, a new neighbour, Mr. Fry, and the charismatic Mr. Wedding are easy to identify as Norse gods intruding into David's life in suburban England. *The Homeward Bounders*, discovered in the school library when she was sixteen, turned Humble into 'an enormous fan' of Diana Wynne Jones, who, she suggests, writes 'humanist mythology'. She goes on to show how *Fire and Hemlock* is influenced by Fraser's *The Golden Bough*, T.S. Eliot's *Four Quartets* and a score of folk tales and ballads, including those about Thomas the Rhymer and Tam Lin. On the printed page Humble's paper turns into an almost perfect critical essay, making this reader at least glad to have read one of the books discussed and wanting to read the other two.

Finally, in the summary of responses to Diana Wynne Jones's work, we are told how Nicholas Tucker met her, when they were both children and evacuated to the Lake District, and has wondered since how important this experience had been in causing Diana to become a novelist herself – they briefly met Arthur Ransome who lived near the house where they were staying but the life they led was far removed from the fictional adventures of the Swallows and Amazons. Charlie Butler talks about the range of Jones's work while Farah Mendlesohn speaks of the way in which Jones's fantasy throws the world of her readers into a new perspective.

Another workshop, summarised in the Preface, provided an opportunity to look at the work of Hayao Miyazaki, one of the founders of Studio Ghibli, who has been involved with some of the most influential animated films in Japan and whose choice of locations suggests an interest in a cultural fusion of East and West. Making a film based on Jones's *Howl's Moving Castle* has enabled him to explore many of the themes that interest him. As the editor says in her introduction, Japan is an eastern country that has its 'own cultural modes but has been prepared to make use of Western models ... in a form which has seemed appropriate to Japanese authors'; the fact that Miyazaki is making use of a novel by Diana Wynne Jones is a good example of how literature can bridge cultures. This seems a good note on which to end a review of *East Meets West*, which provides a readable source of information about an interesting conference and should also be of value to students of children's literature in the future.

Sheila Ray

Winning Books: An evaluation and history of major awards for children's books in the English-speaking world

Ruth Allen, Lichfield: Pied Piper Publishing, 2005. £20.00, paperback. ISBN: 095463845X

Ruth Allen's book claims to be the first comprehensive survey of the awards made for children's literature in English, and covers more than seventy prizes – from those long established, such as the Newbery Medal, to the newest. She also includes prizes which no longer exist.

Allen has organized her book firstly into chapters specific to major prizes – the Newbery, Carnegie, Caldecott, Kate Greenaway and Boston Globe-Horn Book – and then by categories: those for picture books; awards complementary to mainstream prizes; those offered by commercial sponsors; and those from Australia, Canada, Eire, South Africa and New Zealand, some of which are far less familiar to UK readers. These chapters are surrounded by others which are discursive in nature, outlining the philosophy behind award decisions, and considering whether indeed the right book always wins. She reflects that changing attitudes and opinions may render earlier prize-winners less palatable to modern critics – as was the fate of the second Carnegie Medal winner, Eve Garnett's *The Family from One End Street* (published 1936, award 1937). Allen finishes with a chapter titled 'Reactions' compiled from the responses to a questionnaire sent to selected award winning authors and artists, as well as to critics and librarians.

Comprehensively indexed by award, title and author, this is a useful compendium of information about the history of these awards, together with lists of the winners and commended/honour books. The greatest shortcoming is that throughout the text the pages bear no information allowing readers to identify which chapter it is, merely carrying the heading 'Winning Books' or 'Ruth Allen'. This is extremely irritating, as readers must then turn back to the first page of the chapter to find out which award is the subject. I hope that any further edition would remedy this. It would also be useful if indication was given as to whether the dates given of prize-winning titles are those of publication or of the award itself. It is in fact possible to work out from other information that the dates are those of the awards, but it would help to have that information made obvious.

These shortcomings apart, by collecting all this information into one large volume, Ruth Allen has made a significant contribution to libraries and to the book collections of encyclopaedically inclined children's literature enthusiasts.

Bridget Carrington

Outside In: Children's Books in Translation

Deborah Hallford & Edgardo Zaghini, Chicago: Milet Publishing, 2005, £6.99. (ISBN 1 84059 487 X)

This book could hardly have come at a more appropriate time from the point of view of the IBBY Conference. It is published by Milet, who were among the sponsors of the conference and also have generously contributed towards the production of this issue of *IBBYLink*. Its very reasonable price, which should really clinch the motivation of everyone interested in children's literature to buy a copy, is partly due to the additional sponsorship of Arts Council England. The book has also been supported by the Children's Bookshow with its touring exhibition on the same theme, and a range of international speakers.

After an Introduction by the editors and a Foreword by Philip Pullman, the book combines articles by authors, academics, translators and publishers, with an extensive section of reviews of translated books for young people of all ages. There are useful biographies of authors, illustrators and translators, and a resources guide,

including information about grants, awards and relevant organisations. Its attractive appearance, a result of the artistry of Pablo Bernasconi, is enhanced by reproductions of the books reviewed.

The writers of the articles are unanimous in deploring the paucity of books from other countries available in English translation. As Philip Pullman points out, this is partly a result of the universality of the English language, and the profit-driven motives of larger corporations; he applauds the pioneering rôle of the smaller publishers, who have a disproportionately large representation in this list of translated books. In his article, Nicholas Tucker notes how 'abroad ... is about different ways of seeing, feeling and behaving.' Clearly English speaking children will be enriched by the perspectives they can gain from translated books. The other writers of additional material are: award-winning translator Sarah Adams; author and translator Lene Kaaberbol; publishers Patricia Billings, Neal Hoskins and Klaus Flugge; the two editors; and Gillian Lathey, writing out of her experience of teaching children's literature in translation.

As Deborah Hallford remarks at the conclusion of her 'Afterword': 'There are a great many wonderful books out there waiting to be brought to a UK audience. We hope that this guide will go some way to encourage publishers to identify gaps in this area and to translate more children's literature.' I am sure that everyone reading this book will be strongly motivated to extend their knowledge of literature in a range of different languages and from cultures unlike our own. This is an indispensable reference book which is also a thing of beauty and a delight to possess.

(UK distributors Turnaround Publisher Services, Unit 3, Olympia Trading Estate, Coburg Rd., London N22 6TZ)

Pat Pinsent

Postscript to the Hans Christian Andersen Conference (August 2005)

Having attended the third and final day only of the Hans Christian Andersen Conference at the British Library in London, and having made copious notes over which I could ponder for some time to come, I wished that I had been able to be present on the previous two days also. As often happens on such occasions, it is the sheer enthusiasm with which the speakers share their ideas as well as their wide knowledge of their subjects which carry the listener along.

Although my day at the British Library began later than planned, owing to the vagaries of public transport, I was fortunate to arrive in time to attend Maria Tatar's talk 'Shadows and Shattered Mirrors: The Cult of the Self in Andersen's Fairy Tales'. Stating that 'It's not easy to predict what in a story will capture the imagination of a child,' Tatar proposed some of those 'luminously engaging objects' in Andersen which might do just that: the match flame through which the little match girl conjures up the image of her beloved grandmother; the water in which the ugly duckling sees his reflection while also reflecting on his condition; and the mirror which reflects but also distorts in 'The Snow Queen'. These objects, she reminded us, produce effects which do not have a tactile quality and, like the shadow which features in another of Andersen's stories, are as elusive as the self. These and other examples highlighted the essential differences between Andersen's work and that of the Brothers Grimm: whereas the former often has a poignancy and a light ethereal quality which plays directly to the reader's emotions, the latter reveals a more robust earthiness which perhaps reflects its origins in the oral tradition of storytelling.

The optional Research Training session which was jointly organised by the British Library, the Institute of English Studies at the University of London and the University of Newcastle, guided participants on effective ways of researching children's literature in the British Library by using special collections or working with sound archives and manuscripts. It was fascinating to hear, for instance, Thomas Edison's very first recording, made originally on a wax cylinder, of the nursery rhyme 'Mary had a little lamb'. Matthew Grenby of the University of Newcastle and Ruth Bottigheimer of the State University of New York at Stony Brook proposed ways of analysing and assessing fairy tales.

One argument put forward was especially noteworthy: in his talk on 'Accumulating, verifying and assessing evidence based on the reception of fairy tales', Grenby challenged the widely-held view that there was a lull in the interest in, and publication of, fairy stories between the 1750s and the 1790s. He suggested that Maria Edgeworth's assertion, which appeared in a 1798 edition of *Practical Education*, that fairy tales 'are not now much read', and similar views expressed by other commentators, were possibly influenced by the writings of the English philosopher and educationalist John Locke who 'rubbished' the genre. In 1788 alone, Grenby pointed out, there were several editions of fairy tales published, some going into a second printing. Moreover, the same tales were sometimes re-branded, that is, reissued with different titles or redesigned title pages, etc. As a publisher's prime objective has always been commercial, Grenby argued, it is hardly likely that such books would have continued to be marketed if good sales had not been anticipated. Grenby also cited the inscriptions to be found in many of these books as a way of assessing ownership and usage, or who read what and when.

The two-hour session ended with Bottigheimer's talk on 'Using a thematic approach to analyse and confirm readings of fairy tales'. She advocated the reading of different versions which tend to reveal, for instance, the use of simple syntax and vocabulary for the tales of Perrault and Straparola while for those of d'Aulnoy et al a more ornate style is implemented. Bottigheimer found, however, that the tales of Andersen and Basile did not appear to fit in either category. By the end of the conference, with so many thought-provoking ideas in the air and having gained some fresh insights into the fairy tales, I had made a mental note to re-read my Andersen collection as soon as possible.

June Hopper

E.L. Konigsburg

In connection with the nominations for the 2006 Hans Andersen Award, Ann Thwaite would like to add a few thoughts about the distinguished American nominee. She writes:

I was interested to read Ann Lazim's comments on the nominations for the 2006 Andersen Awards. She is probably too young to remember how very well known and well regarded E.L. Konigsburg was in children's book circles in England over thirty years ago. Dozens of children (perhaps even hundreds) enjoyed my own copies of her two most successful books, which I constantly recommended to members of my children's library in Norfolk. Jennifer, Hecate, Macbeth, [William McKinley] and Me, [Elizabeth] (1967) [these two names were omitted from the UK version of the title] and From the Mixed-Up Files of Mrs Basil E. Frankweiler (1968) were published by Macmillan, in each case only a year after their US publication. The earlier book was runner-up to the later one for the 1968 Newbery Medal, E.L. Konigsburg being the first author ever to have achieved such a notable 'double'.

However deserving Philip Pullman is and however much we like to see British books honoured, there must be many of us who would like to see Konigsburg win the Author's award this year. I would love to see both books back in print and widely translated. I liked her George (1970) a lot too. As the critic in the St James' Press Twentieth Century Children's Writers put it: 'When she is good she is extraordinarily so.'

Children's Poetry Bookshelf

The Poetry Book Society has relaunched its highly regarded Children's Poetry Bookshelf (CPB), a book club for children aged 7 – 11 designed to make the best children's poetry available to young readers in an exciting and enjoyable way. The CPB provides support for teachers and libraries, including teachers' activity sheets and posters, to encourage children to read and enjoy poetry, with quizzes, puzzles and the chance to post reviews and poems on the site. There are also poetry events.

www.childrenspoetrybookshelf.co.uk For further information regarding the Children's Poetry Bookshelf please contact Chris Holifield, chris@poetrybooks.co.uk, or Christopher Simon, christopher@poetrybooks.co.uk at the Poetry Book Society on 020 7833 9247.

The Electronic Digital Media Reporter

This is a UK network of colleagues who are working together to help children and teachers to find better ways of using children's literature web sites. Penni Cotton, as UK representative, has been working with Lilia Ratcheva from Austria and other Europeans to develop a project which will create a tool for analysing children's literature web sites (EDMR). A small grant from the European Commission will facilitate this work. Initially, involvement with the network would necessitate filling in a short questionnaire about which children's literature web sites you use. Later it could mean helping with the development of this 'tool' or trialling it in schools/teacher training establishments. The idea is to develop some way of helping European teachers and children to make the best use of websites, and to try also to evaluate them. The network should enable young Europeans to share their knowledge and expertise about their own 'favourite' web sites and possibly further develop cross-cultural relations. The most important part, however, at this early stage in the project is to create a UK e.mail network of people who are interested. After this, everybody will be able to keep up-to-date with developments on an EDMR discussion web site. If you are interested, please contact Penni Cotton (p.cotton@roehampton.ac.uk)

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Translate a Poem from any Language, Classical or Modern, into English

The Times Stephen Spender Prize for poetry in translation is up and running in its third year. There is no age limit and any British resident is eligible to enter. There are three categories – Open, 18-and-Under and 14-and-Under – and, as before, cash prizes, with all winning entries published in a booklet. The last posting date for entries is Friday 26 May 2006. For details and entry forms go to www.stephen-spender.org. If you want to read last year's winning entries visit the website or email r.pelhamburn@eastbourne-college.co.uk for a free copy of the booklet.

In Memoriam: Jan Mark (1941-2006)

Lovers of children's literature were saddened to learn of the untimely death of this distinguished and prolific writer, perhaps best known for *Thunder and Lightnings* (1976) but always to the fore in the vitality of her creative imagination. Recent novels such as *The Eclipse of the Century* (1999) and *Riding Tycho* (2005) have also made an impact. She will be much missed.

CONFERENCES

Time and History in Children's Literature

The next IBBY/MA conference will be held at Froebel College, Roehampton University, on Saturday November 11th 2006.

Astrid Lindgren Centennial Conference

'The Liberated Child – Childhood in the Works of Astrid Lindgren'
May 23-25, 2007, Stockholm, Sweden

Papers are invited for this international interdisciplinary conference at which confirmed keynote speakers Karen Coats (Illinois State University), Ulla Lundqvist (literary critic & author) and David Rudd (Bolton Institute). Papers, which must be personally presented, might discuss the life and works of Astrid Lindgren, the child and society, non-violence and children's rights, reception and translation of Astrid Lindgren's works, illustrations, transmediations, adaptations, children's literature, modernity and modernism. Proposals for papers and for panels should be emailed to alcc@sbi.kb.se. We welcome further ideas for mini-seminars, workshops, poster sessions and other academic activities.

Deadline for all proposals is May 1, 2006 (decisions by September 1, 2006). Further information: The Swedish Institute for Children's Books, Lillemor Torstensson, Odengatan 61, 113 22 Stockholm, Phone: +46(0)8 54 54 20 51, E-mail: lillemor.torstensson@sbi.kb.se