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Editorial *by Pat Pinsent*

Hardly had we recovered from the pleasure of Anthony Browne being the winner of the Hans Christian Andersen Award two years ago, and the other British entry, Peter Dickinson, being on the short list, than we were confronted with the news that BOTH our nominees, Quentin Blake for illustration and Aidan Chambers for text, had won the Award this year. More information later in these pages. We have been fortunate that Aidan and Quentin, who are both strong supporters of IBBY, have given us their response to this excellent news.

It is appropriate that the current issue of *IBBYlink* is devoted to the theme of translation, for the work of both our award winners has a strong international flavour. Much regret has been expressed at the neglect in recent years by British publishers of children's books from other languages and cultures. That British children's literature is riding high at the moment should not for a moment lead us to ignore the riches which can be drawn from elsewhere. In order to profit from them, we need translators who are not only proficient in the languages concerned but also able to

create texts which are as enjoyable to read as those originally written in English. Two of the most distinguished translators of children's books, Anthea Bell and Patricia Crampton (in alphabetical order!) have written for us this time, combining cautious optimism about an increased public awareness of translated books for children, with a question as to the availability of books from areas beyond Europe.

International understanding is a primary need in the world today, and there can be few better ways for children, and adults, to learn to empathise with people from other cultures, than to experience their literature. Several articles in this *IBBYlink* show how other nations and organisations are facilitating this process—we must ensure we are not slow to do the same!

The next issue of IBBYlink is due out in good time for the November conference. Its main theme will be the controversial and challenging subject of Children's Literature and Religion, with attention certainly not confined to Christianity. Contributions on this subject and on others of general interest are invited by September 1st 2002, to Pat Pinsent, 23 Burcott Rd., Purley, CR8 4AD, email PatPinsent@aol.com

British author and illustrator win Hans Christian Andersen Awards 2002

For only the second time in their history, an author and an illustrator from the same country have won both the Hans Christian Awards, and that country is the UK! The international jury announced at the Bologna Book Fair:

Aidan Chambers as winner of the 2002 Author Award *and*
Quentin Blake as winner of the 2002 Award for Illustration

The Hans Christian Andersen Awards are the highest international recognition given to creators of children's books. They are presented every two years by IBBY to an author and an illustrator whose complete works have made an important and lasting contribution to children's literature. The Awards will be presented to the winners at the opening ceremony of IBBY's 50th Anniversary Jubilee Congress in Basel, Switzerland, 29 September 2002.

In choosing **Aidan Chambers** as the author winner, the jury paid tribute to his literary skill, his handling of varied narrative techniques and his careful choice of topics within the young adult world. His writing shows a clear understanding of the adolescent mind. There is suspense in each gripping storyline with thoroughly real characters. Aidan Chambers' books are for teenage readers who enjoy being led into realms of a deeper appreciation of life.

Vivacious and creative, **Quentin Blake** is a great artist who has clearly made a lasting contribution both to children's literature and to the world of children. This is evident from his many previous awards and his election as the United Kingdom's first Children's Laureate. His originality and sense of humour, together with his skill with line, colours and movement have made Quentin Blake a beloved illustrator with wide international impact.

Aidan Chambers was selected from among 28 authors nominated for the award. The other finalists were Bart Moeyaert (Belgium) and Bjarne Reuter (Denmark).

Quentin Blake was selected from among 27 illustrators nominated for the award. The other finalists were Rotraut Susanne Berner (Germany), Daihachi Ohta (Japan) and Gregoire Solotareff (France).

(Continued on page 2)

IBBY British Section Annual General Meeting

The IBBY British Section AGM for 2002 took place on March 15th at the Centre for Language in Primary Education. The following members of the committee were re-elected: Nikki Gamble, Elizabeth Laird, John Dunne, Pam Robson, Ann Lazim, Pat Pinsent, Ed Zaghini and Fiona Collins, and they have been joined by two new members: Posey Furnish and Roy Flowers. At a subsequent committee meeting, it was agreed that Ann would continue as Chair, and Pam as Vice-Chair and Treasurer. Pat will remain editor of this newsletter, now named *IBBY-link*, with Elisa Oreglia responsible for the design and layout. Nikki is co-ordinator of our bid to hold the IBBY Congress in the UK in 2008, and Posey will be getting our marketing and publicity strategy into shape. John is link person with the Children's Laureate election process.

Since the last AGM took place Anne Fine has been elected Children's Laureate. It was reported that she has been doing keynote speeches and addresses rather than concentrating on school visits. She attended the Bath Festival where there was a Children's Laureate debate. Anne has developed the *Home Library project*, which aims to encourage more children to own more books. It includes such incentives as free bookplates downloadable from the Home Library website www.myhomelibrary.org; a partnership with Oxfam bookshops; and an initiative to provide blind children with brailled books that they can keep and share with sighted parents, carers, friends and siblings. The process to elect the next Children's Laureate will begin later this year. At the time of the AGM, the winners of the Hans Christian Andersen Awards had not yet been announced—the amazing results are headline news in this edition of *IBBYlink*!

The theme of the next NCRCL/IBBY conference Saturday 16th November will be *Children's Literature and Childhood in Performance* (See Calendar on page 16).

British IBBY has been invited to have a stand at a conference *Magic Carpets: An International Perspective on Children's Books* organised by the Children's Writers and Illustrators Group of The Society of Authors in Leeds on 13th–15th September 2002.

There was a discussion at the AGM about the situation which prevents Palestine and also Scotland from forming IBBY sections, as neither is considered to be a 'sovereign state'. Beverley Naidoo had sent an email expressing concern about the current state of affairs which Elizabeth Laird read aloud. Elizabeth has recently visited Palestine and reported that Palestinians are very upset and concerned about the current situation regarding IBBY. The problem is that according to the IBBY constitution, Palestine can't be a member. Members attending the AGM agreed to put forward a motion in order for Palestine to be represented as a national IBBY member:

"We would like to draw the attention to the committee that the exclusion of Palestine from IBBY is unsatisfactory. We would argue that Palestine falls under the constitution of IBBY and therefore should be accepted as a member on the grounds that it has observer status under the United Nations."

The above is just a draft statement that was suggested during the AGM. It will be revised and sent to other IBBY members with the intention of putting it forward at the next IBBY Congress in Switzerland.

At the end of the AGM our guest speaker, Irish writer Siobhán Parkinson, read from her novel *Call of the Whales* (O'Brien Press) and gave an informal and very interesting talk about her experience as a writer.

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The other author candidates were Zvonimir Balog (Croatia), Kirsten Boie (Germany), Susan Cooper (USA), Luísa Dacosta (Portugal), Werner J. Egli (Switzerland), Juan Farias (Spain), Jostein Gaarder (Norway), Gudrun Helgadóttir (Iceland), Hannele Huovi (Finland), Momoko Ishii (Japan), Muzaffer IZGÜ (Turkey), Manos Kondoleon (Greece), Dennis Lee (Canada), Joke van Leeuwen (Netherlands), Margaret Mahy (New Zealand), Svetlana Makarovic (Slovenia), Jean Paul Nozière (France), Ruth Rocha (Brazil), Milan Rúfus (Slovak Republic), Ulf Stark (Sweden), Rene O. Villanueva (Philippines), Martin Waddell (Ireland), Renate Welsh (Austria), Qin Wenjun (China) and Ema Wolf (Argentina).

The other illustrator candidates were Nicholas Andrikopoulos (Greece), Lilian Brøgger (Denmark), Nelson Cruz (Brazil), Wu Daisheng (China), Niki Daly (South Africa), Boris Diodorov (Russia), Akin Düzakin (Norway), Harrie Geelen (Netherlands), Fibben Hald (Sweden), Istvan (Argentina), Nasrin Khosravi (Iran), Jana Kiselová-Sitekóvá (Slovak Republic), Mika Launis (Finland), Michèle Lemieux (Canada), David Macaulay (USA), Francisco Meléndez (Spain), António Modesto (Portugal), Ümit Ögmel (Turkey), Béatrice Poncelet (Switzerland), Vjekoslav Vojo Radoicic (Croatia), Marija Lucija Stupica (Slovenia), Marie Wabbes (Belgium) and Linda Wolfgruber (Austria).

Jury President Jay Heale (South Africa) chaired the 2002 Hans Christian Andersen Award Jury during its meetings at the IBBY Secretariat in Basel, 26-27 March 2002. For the first time in its history the Hans Christian Andersen Award Jury was divided into two sections, one to judge illustration, another to judge writing. The section for writing consisted of the children's literature specialists Gunilla Born (Sweden), Toin Duijx (Netherlands), Hildegard Grtner (Austria), Marianne Martens (USA) and Laura Sandroni (Brazil). The section for illustration comprised the following children's literature specialists: Silvia Castrillon (Colombia), Virginia Davis (Canada), Claude Hubert-Ganiayre (France), Zohreh Ghaeni (Iran) and Julia Prosalkova (Russia). The President of IBBY Tayo Shima (Japan) and IBBY Executive Director Leena Maissen (Switzerland) participated in both meetings ex officio.

The Award Winners Speak

by Quentin Blake and Aidan Chambers

Quentin Blake writes:

I was absolutely delighted to be informed of the Hans Andersen Award, and also completely surprised, because although I knew I had been shortlisted, I had no expectation that the IBBY lightning would strike twice in the same country. Something that gives me a special pleasure about the award is its international character. First, because it is a reminder of how far one's books can travel. Second, because of the importance which attaches (in my view) to our looking at each other's books across the world. Translation and co-edition should be valuable not in merging us into some kind of homogenised universal fast-food acceptability, but in allowing us to savour the distinctive characteristics of artists and writers from everywhere.

Aidan Chambers writes:

It seems to me that being nominated for the Hans Christian Andersen Award by one's own nation is at least as important and gratifying as receiving the Award itself. You certainly can't have one without the other, and the national nomination serves as a notable honour in itself. Among the twenty-eight nominees were writers whose books I knew were outstanding in every way, so the good news in Jay Heale's phone call at the end of March came as a complete surprise—shock might be a better word. That Quentin Blake received the illustrator's award at the same time gave me great pleasure and was entirely inevitable and right. Both recipients belonging to the same country had happened only twice before, in 1986, when both were Australian, and in 1998, when both were U.S. Americans. What's more, Quentin and I are

published by the same company, Random House, a first in the history of the Award.

I keep wondering, 'Why me?' For the jury, choosing the illustration award is easier, in the sense that pictures do not need translation to be understood and admired. Does selecting the author depend in part on how widely he or she is translated? Translation is itself taken as an indication of worth and stature. To date, translations of my books total fifteen languages. Perhaps if some of the other nominees had been more widely translated than they are, and had been translated into the dominant languages, especially English, they would have been preferred over me.

Certainly, as I walked round the Bologna Book Fair after the announcement of this year's award, what struck me again was just how much translation goes on in other countries and how little goes on in my own. It really is shaming that, generally speaking, the British are ignorant of the best being produced in other languages. I couldn't help thinking how ironic it was for me to receive the only international honour for writers for the young when I belong to a nation that pays so little attention to books produced for the young in other languages.

The experience of trying to do something about the situation by publishing translations as Turton & Chambers in the early 90s proved to me that what is needed is for a major publishing house to bring out five or six translations a year—books that are the best and the most unlike our own that can be found. And that a big fuss should be made in order to raise people's awareness of them, especially the awareness of teachers and librarians, who can present them to young readers.

Thanks again to the IBBY committee for nominating me. And more power to UKIBBY in their efforts to raise interest in translated books for the young.

* * * * *

A Book to Buy: The Story of the Founder of IBBY

Jella Lepman, a children's writer born in 1891 of German Jewish origin, returned to Germany after the war, and established the International Board on Books for Young People to further her vision of 'international understanding through children's books.' Her autobiography, *A Bridge of Children's Books*, is published by O'Brien Press in association with IBBY Ireland and USBBY. It includes photographs from the 1940s and 1950s, an introduction by Tayo Shima, current President, and a preface by Mary Robinson, UN commissioner for Human Rights. Copies can be obtained for £12 (17 Euros), plus 15% p.& p., from IBBY Ireland, 20 Victoria Rd., Rathgar, Dublin 6, or USBBY, Barksdale Rd., Newark, Delaware 19714 USA.

Probably the simplest way to pay is by credit card—remember to give expiry date!

Foreign Books for Children

by Anthea Bell

Until quite recently I'd have begun any comments on the translation of literature for young people by lamenting the notorious insularity of the British in their approach to foreign books.

I say British advisedly: I have seen lists of entries for the Mildred Batchelder award for a translated children's book which suggest that minds are more open in the USA. Even so, it is well known that the number of all books translated out of English far exceeds those translated into English from other languages, and the disproportion is even more marked in the case of children's literature.

The usual explanation, to the effect that the sheer wealth of our literary tradition for the young in the English-speaking world means we don't need imports, may look reasonable at first sight but won't do. Yes, it is a fine tradition, but that is no real excuse for ignoring the ideals of international understanding fostered by IBBY and failing to give English-speaking children the best literature for young people written in other languages. If they are to read that literature while they are still young themselves, the vast majority of them will need translations. Rapid modern communications ought to be making insularity a thing of the past, and fifty years after Jella Lepman's founding of IBBY her ideal of a 'bridge of children's books' is more relevant and important than ever.

I began my translating career—into which I admittedly fell entirely by accident, but which I find hugely enjoyable—by translating books for children.

In recent years, in fact for some two decades, I was very busy with other translations but translated hardly anything for the younger market, except for classic texts from, for instance, Grimm and Andersen for new picture books by noted artists. But rather to my surprise, and greatly to my pleasure, I realize that over the last couple of years I have translated several books for older children, and one volume of stories, quite short, which utterly eludes pigeonholing for any age group at all. At present I am translating a fantasy for readers of about ten and upwards, I shall soon begin work on a young adult story, and there is a highly entertaining and sophisticated crossover novel in prospect. What has happened? Do we ascribe this turn in the tide to the Harry Potter factor? Or perhaps to the *Dark Materials* factor? Philip Pullman and J.K. Rowling have shown very conspicuously that

imaginative novels originally written for the young are by no means beneath adult consideration and, in Pullman's case particularly, are far from escapist and can engender fruitful controversy. Serious novels tackling the grave problems confronting modern young people are also flourishing, as for instance in the fine work of Aidan Chambers, the winner of this year's *Hans Christian Andersen Award*.

The names I have just cited are, you may have noticed, those of authors writing in English (and much translated into other languages), and see my remarks about the English-language tradition above. But I don't think I am contradicting myself; I suspect that it is very likely due in part to the recent success of such authors that publishers in the English-speaking world have begun to look beyond their own boundaries again. The biennial *Marsh Award for Children's Literature in Translation*, which aims to be a UK counterpart of the *Mildred Batchelder Award*, was set up with the generous backing of the Marsh Christian Trust a few years ago, on the

initiative (yet again) of Aidan Chambers, working with Kim Reynolds of the NCRCL at the University of Surrey Roehampton. The numbers of entries were few at first, but have been steadily rising since the first award, and it is to be hoped they will go on increasing. A couple of years ago I first, cautiously, thought I detected a change in the willingness of publishers here to consider foreign children's books, and I really do think now that it wasn't just a flash in the pan. That is a good and hopeful thing to be able to say as IBBY celebrates its fiftieth anniversary. Long may the same trend continue.

Anthea Bell's translation of Hans Magnus Enzensberger's Where were You Robert? has been included on the IBBY Honour List as British IBBY's translated book of 2002.

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Italian Children's Books

by Ed Zaghini

Unfortunately these days not many Italian children's books get translated into English. One writer I have come across is Gianni Rodari, born in 1920, and one of the first Italian writers of contemporary children's fiction. He is also a professor of children's literature at the University of Bologna. *Telephone Tales*, a collection of short stories told by a commercial traveller to his daughter, was translated into English in 1965. Another translation I have encountered is a collection of folk tales (*Fiabe Italiane*) by Italo Calvino, originally published in Italian in 1955. Calvino is an eminent figure, highly regarded in the literature world.

Only fifty percent of Italian children's literature is of native extraction and Italian publishers seem happy to translate books from other countries. While the Italian interest in books from the English speaking world is pleasing, it is disappointing not to see the reverse phenomenon, since very few Italian books get to the hands of English speaking children. Recently in Italy, I visited some local bookshops and was thrilled to see the number of high quality translated children's books. It's sad that such books, together with the Italian ones, are not available in the UK.

Italy is the host country of one of the most important events in the world of children's books, the Bologna Book Fair. This annual event has made Italians aware of the importance of books in the lives of children and has also generated much interest in this subject among parents, students, educators, librarians, publishers and the media.

Italians take illustration very seriously, and there are often interviews with children's book artists in specialist magazines (*Andersen, LG Argomenti, Liber*). Many exhibitions, talks and competitions for children's book illustrators are organised throughout

the country. Italy has many talented artists. Roberto Innocenti is one of my all time favourites, *Rose Blanche* and *Pinocchio* being two of his unforgettable titles. Another is the highly original Bruno Munari, whose prolific work remains practically unknown in Britain. Many other contemporary artists not known in the UK deserve recognition, such as Chiara Rapaccini, Eva Montanari, Pia Valentini and Chiara Carrer. To all those who question why we need more books in this country, I would answer that we need a diet rich in variety, in order to grow even healthier and broaden our horizons, avoiding the risk of becoming isolated and narrow-minded.

Roberto Piumini is one of the most talented and prolific Italian children's authors of recent years. His latest book *Fiabe per Occhi e Bocca (Tales for the Eyes and Mouth)* published by Einaudi is a collection of three traditional tales written in rhyme for primary school children. Pinin Carpi is another author who deserves mention; his first book, *Susanna e il Soldato (Susan and the Soldier)* was published in 1977 and subsequently he has published more than fifty books, generally illustrating his own text.

There are many Italian children's books that I would love to see translated into English. *Seduto Nell'Erba, al Buio: Diario di un Ragazzo Italiano (Sitting on the Grass, in the Darkness: Nino's War Diary)* by Mino Milani (Fabbri Editori) is the story of a fourteen-year-old boy who records his life during the tragic year of 1944. This book would offer British children the opportunity to learn about the war from an Italian perspective.

A picture book that recently caught my eye is: *Chissà com'è il Cocodrillo... (I wonder what Crocodile Looks Like)* written and illustrated by Eva Montanari

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British Literature on the Slovenian Children's Book List by Darja Leskovar

The Slovenian reading audience has been traditionally open to foreign literature, something which has become even more evident in the period after the acquisition of independence and sovereignty by the Slovenian state. After 1991, the social climate has become more liberal, so that books dealing with topics not very welcome to the previous regime, like the abuse of power and authority, have been granted the right to appear in the market.

The second translation of J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* has thus addressed anew the reading public at the threshold of the third millennium. The translation of this classic has been subject to exceptional attention from both experts and the general readership. The former have dealt with the book above all with reference to the translation, particularly in light of the typically English qualities of the work, as noted by the author himself. Admitting that the masterpiece is generally acknowledged to be not only one of the best 20th century novels but also one of the most demanding texts to be translated into another language, especially a non-Germanic one, the connoisseurs have particularly discussed the solutions adopted in the new translation.

Non-specialist readers have been at least partly induced to pay attention to this huge text by the immense success of the film. The general audience seems to be strongly influenced by the film industry and tends to be prone to reading fiction which has served as a script for Oscar winners. The printed masterpiece is widely read and the worldwide phenomenon of it as a bestseller seems to be repeated in this country. The Slovenian reading public, transcending age boundaries, has been attracted by the magic, to a large extent foreign to the Slavonic tradition, but still so European that it can appeal to the imagination of those who may have been surprised by the enthusiasm expressed for the Harry Potter books. In the case of Rowling's books, however, it is clear that the books paved the way to the success of the film in Slovenia. Whatever the primary impetus, British fiction is in the limelight in the Slovenian literary scene—thanks to Tolkien and Rowling!

Italian Children's Books

Ed Zaghini

Slovenia

Darja Leskovar

Team-Work

by Rachel Anderson

***La Chanson de Roland* is an anonymous account of the defeat of Charlemagne's armies in Spain during the 9th century** which had been composed, two centuries later, to be declaimed as oral poetry. In 1983, my editor at OUP suggested it might prove to be useful addition for the Oxford Myths and Legends series and would I like to translate it.

I knew no medieval French. However, most conveniently, I was married to a man who did. Moreover, *La Chanson de Roland* had been his standard starting text at university. He went back to it enthusiastically, only to find that, far from the jolly romp he'd remembered, it seemed tediously long-winded. He proposed something different, from a later medieval period. *Le Roman de Renart* is an ironic mock-epic, in rhyming verse, parodying the earlier epics, satirising life and customs in medieval France. It was one of the most popular texts after the invention of the printing press. It consists of an accumulation of episodes, composed by various poets, priests, and clerks over the previous two centuries and established Renard as ancestor of all subsequent wily-foxy tales.

Initially, we intended to present our prose translation as a satire on the current government. The only detail I can remember from that version was the re-naming of the scheming cat, Tybalt, who climbed the cross with a stolen fatty sausage, as 'Mr Tebbit'. We soon discarded the political device. It distracted from the broader satire which was already acutely sharp. Our working method was, from my point of view, ideal for the free-lance writer. My co-translator was at that time, on secondment to the university of

Caen. (The Normandy countryside was superbly captured by Bob Dewar's illustrations, so good they got a special mention in a seriously academic journal of *Roman de Renart* studies.)

Each morning, before leaving for lectures, my beloved brought me a café au lait and a fresh croissant in bed, also our copy of *le Roman de Renart*. Together we read through the day's tale, or rather, he read aloud and I did my best to follow. He then gave a rough verbal translation and I spent the day writing. I had only A-level French, but once I knew what the medieval verse was meant to be saying, it wasn't half as obscure as I'd feared.

In the evenings, after our *steak frites*, we went through what I'd produced, my co-worker spotting the gross mistranslations or misunderstandings.

The original *Renart* runs to thousands of lines. We left out many escapades, such as when Renard gathers for himself an army and goes to find a war. The military tales were as tedious as the earlier ones they were parodying. We also (reluctantly) felt obliged to abandon the many stories of sexual revenge or erotic titillation, however hilarious they seemed to us.

We worked on Renard nearly 20 years ago. I'm still married to my co-translator. We haven't translated anything together since. What a pity. I enjoyed it so much. Specially the fresh croissant in bed.

Renard the Fox by Rachel Anderson and David Bradby, illustrated by Bob Dewar (OUP, 1986, ISBN: 0 19 274129 2)

* * * * *

Translated Children's Books and IBBY by Patricia Crompton

The editor suggested a personal approach, so—let's see. I don't remember a time when I wasn't translating. Born in India, I had the advantage of speaking two languages on equal terms—but so did my best friend, and she's turned into a painter. Coming 'home' aged 5, we went to a probably unique kindergarten, where we learned French, as well as the usual subjects, from the start. Another boon for me, a bore for her. What's that argument about whether translators are born or bred? At my 'big' school, aged 10, I had the chance to add German, which I loved so much that I begged my parents to learn it, too.

At Oxford, my Principal asked me what I intended to do next, greeting my obvious answer with 'Is there such a profession?' Covertly—who wants to be called a swot?—I had been translating all the time, at school and university, and continued to do so, concentrating on poetry, through a succession of markedly unpoetic jobs. Then I got married, and translated my first book, at home.

But it was in the 70s, the glory days of book translation in Britain (when I translated 29 books for adults and 80 for children) that that wonderful editor, Gwen Marsh, suggested that my passion might enjoy a more focused outlet, in IBBY. Perhaps part of the reason was that we both cared very much about the content of the children's books we translated. For me, in the 70s, these included the refreshing, entirely realistic, books by Inger and Lasse Sandberg, in Sweden (I went to Sweden to learn the language, after Oxford); the series about *The Dwarfs of Nosegay* and *The Little Captain* by Holland's Paul Biegel (Dutch arrived on an otherwise uneventful voyage from Mexico with the Holland-America Line); the very popular *Eight Children* books by Anne-Cath Vestly, about an indigent but resourceful Norwegian family; and Astrid Lindgren's *Karlson* and *Mardie* books, among many others.

In the context of IBBY's aim—international understanding through children's books—they were all valuable. But where are the translations from Chinese, Russian, Arabic, that could carry our aim much further? How far do the books of the Hans Christian Andersen prize-winning authors travel through IBBY member countries, via translation? What a wonderful research project for an MA in children's literature! Is there a very brave publisher out there?

Team-Work

Rachel Anderson

Translations and IBBY

Patricia Crompton

The Apple and the Hyena

by Liz Laird

I'm sitting under a tree in rural Ethiopia. An old story teller in a battered straw hat has just finished his tale, and now the translator is trying to decode it for me.

'In the old day,' he begins, 'there was apple and hyena.'

'An apple?'

'Yes. You know apple.'

'You eat it.'

'Some people like, but in our culture it is forbidden.'

'You can't eat apples? Why not?'

'It is not clean for us. The meat is dirty.'

'But apples aren't meat. They're fruit.'

Impasse. The translator and I stare at each other, baffled. There's a sound in the dense green mass of leaves overhead, a shaking of leaves and an irritated chattering.

'Look,' he says. 'An apple.'

'But that's a baboon.'

'Baboon is apple.'

Light dawns.

'You mean an ape. It's an ape!'

'Yes, yes. Ape.'

We both laugh.

'OK,' he says, beginning the story again. 'In old time there was baboon, ape, you know? And hyena.'

And then the story unfolds. It's a terrific one, with a sophisticated and subversive meaning, delicious to anyone versed in Ethiopian politics.

For the last five years I've been undertaking vast journeys throughout Ethiopia to collect folk stories from the farthest reaches of that fascinating country. Apart from the more obvious problems of dysentery, heat, banditry, mud (during the Big Rains) and malaria, finding good translators is the overriding difficulty.

There are at least seventy-five languages in Ethiopia, though that number is declining all the time. Last year in a place called Ky Afer, a small dusty town not far from the Kenyan border, I met a man who was among the last nine speakers of his mother tongue. We sat together for a while and he tried (using the language of the larger, but still small language group adjacent to his own) to remember one of the stories he'd known as a child. He couldn't, and I watched him disappear into the dry scrub

land towards the tiny hamlet, five hours walk away, where he and his people lived, with infinite regret.

Amharic, the lingua franca of Ethiopia, is not by any means spoken by everyone, but is much more likely to be known than English. This means that in many outlying regions a story has to be translated first into Amharic and then into English before I can understand it. Obviously this leads to awful confusions, but it is surprising how a final version of a story, after it's been translated back and forth, checked and rechecked, can be hammered out to everyone's satisfaction. (Though I still wonder if I quite understood the one where the traveller turns a corner and finds God, sitting on a stone, splitting his penis with a knife).

Two things have made the process of translation easier for me as time has gone by. The first is that at last I have a really excellent Amharic/ English translator, a witty, urbane (though unfortunately bibulous) Amhara of the old school, with a great knowledge of Ethiopian literature. We have travelled together over thousands of

miles of terrible roads in search of stories, and will be friends for life. The second thing is the nature of the stories themselves. Understanding the internal logic of folk tales, knowing the recurring cast of characters, and above all becoming familiar with the cultures from which they spring, makes it increasingly easy for me to understand them. Best of all, the style of the stories, the classic, understated, rugged simplicity of them, helps them to leap

across language barriers. This is what oral tales have always done - they have been swapped by herdsmen, merchants, camel drivers, nomads, conquerors and slaves, in every tongue under the sun.

'Once there was a merchant,' the story begins, with no floweriness or flummery. Or, 'The lion and the ostrich lived together.' Or, 'At the beginning of time, man and the animals were the same.'

'In the old day, there was apple and hyena' becomes eventually not such a hard nut to crack.

Elizabeth Laird's Jake's Tower (Macmillan) has been included on the 2002 Carnegie short list.

**"In the old days,
there was apple
and hyena..."**

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Italian Books - continued from page 5

(Edizioni Arka 2002 Milano). With irony and simplicity, the author uses the story as a device to introduce readers to the wonderful world of modern art; Expressionism, Cubism, Futurism and Abstract art are all tackled in this book. All the animals at a school by the river perceive the dangerous presence of a crocodile and each one decides to make a painting of him. The result is a collection of disparate and funny interpretations. Another attractive picture book is *Il Gobba dei Randagi*, written and illustrated by Arianna Papini (Fatatrac, 2002, Firenze). This is a short story suitable for most age groups. The Gobba is a homeless man who refuses to grow up and lives under a bridge. He welcomes all those animals that, like him, have no home. The illustrations are delicate and convey an extraordinary feeling of warmth.

This is only a small selection of Italian children's literature. I would like to see some of these books available in English, so that children in this country can be enriched by a diversity of styles, genres and themes from another culture.

Apple and Hyena

Liz Laird

The Marsh Award for Children's Literature in Translation

by Gillian Lathey

The Marsh Award
Gillian Lathey

By the mid-1990s the number of children's books translated into English had dwindled to a tiny proportion of the annual number of publications for children in the UK (between one and three percent). Deliberations on the causes of this decline, with suggestions ranging from wary insularity to the healthy state of British children's literature, did nothing to improve the situation. Without translations, how were British children to gain access to new, different voices and pioneering children's writers who didn't happen to write in English? It took the energy of Kim Reynolds of NCRCL (University of Surrey Roehampton), to set in motion discussions with the Arts Council, the British Council and a potential sponsor. As a result, the biennial Marsh Award for Children's Literature in Translation was established in 1995, sponsored by the Marsh Christian Trust and administered by Gillian Lathey of NCRCL. Judges (Anthea Bell, Julia Eccleshare, Patricia Crampton, Wendy Cooling and Elizabeth Hammill have all joined the panel at different times), have generously devoted their time, patience and expertise to the task of selecting winning translations; the Award will be presented for the fourth time in January 2003.

Marsh Award prize money goes to the translator in recognition of the work of dedicated professionals whose role in our cultural lives is so often overlooked. The three past winners, Anthea Bell for her translation of Christine Nöstlinger's *A Dog's Life* (Andersen Press), Patricia Crampton for her translation of Gudrun Pausewang's *A Final Journey* (Penguin), and Betsy Rosenberg for her translation of David Grossman's *Duel* (Bloomsbury), have all demonstrated that translating for children is a particular art, requiring an understanding of the rhythms and modes of address best suited to child readers. Submissions in the first three years have covered the full range of writing for children, from poetry to prose fiction and picture books, and striking differences in content: books on the 2001 list included Jostein Gaarder's whimsical *The Frog Castle* (Orion, trans. James Anderson) and Pausewang's distressing account of a child's journey towards the gas chambers of Auschwitz. It would be foolish to point to trends when the number of entries remains small, but children's fiction on war is a theme common to several books on the last two submission lists. The aftermath of World War Two continues to echo in European

children's fiction, while Patricia Crampton's translation of Els de Groen's *No Roof in Bosnia* (Spindlewood), submitted in 1998, offers an insight into the lives of adolescents caught up in a more recent conflict.

So has the Award made a difference? Firstly, it has raised public awareness of translations for children—thanks to articles in the national and children's literature press co-ordinated by the Award's excellent publicist, Nicky Potter. Secondly, we have been lucky to attract passionate advocates of translated literature to present the prize, and to write the speeches that have become such a distinctive feature of the presentation party. Penelope Lively, Michael Morpurgo, and Philip Pullman have all addressed the elusive qualities of difference, and the magical, unpredictable travels of tales. Philip Pullman, presenter of the 2001 Award, reflected on his own childhood reading of Tove Jansson, Erich Kästner and Paul Berna's *A Hundred Million Francs*—reading which, Pullman claimed, had made him European before he

**“There is no doubt
that the Award has
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children's publishing”**

knew whether he was English or British. Thanks to Battersea Public Library Pullman got to know the world-class children's writers of his day: it is the potential for this kind of enlightenment that drives the Marsh Award. There is no doubt that the Award has gained momentum and is now widely recognised in children's publishing—it is no longer necessary, thank goodness, to chase submissions at the eleventh hour. As for the publication of translations, there are hopeful signs in the recent introduction of Egmont's World Mammoth list and the commitment of new children's publishers such as ChickenHouse to translated fiction. As this article goes to press entries for the 2003 Award arrive at NCRCL daily (closing date 30 June 2002); it is heartening and exciting to see in the steadily growing pile such thought-provoking books as Hans Magnus Enzensberger's *Where Were You Robert?* (Hamish Hamilton, trans. Anthea Bell), and Ted van Lieshout's *Brothers* (Collinsflamingo, trans. Lance Salway).

(The Marsh Award presentation speeches of Michael Morpurgo in 1999 and Philip Pullman in 2001 were reprinted in School Librarian).

Not only translations: PaperTigers.org

A gateway to children's books from the Pacific Rim and South Asia

by Elisa Oreglia

I have an American friend who is a teacher in an elementary school in Colorado. Last year, in the middle of the school year, two new pupils showed up in class: Hmong brothers, 6 and 8 years old. They had arrived in the country the week before, like their parents didn't speak a word of English and nobody knew exactly what kind of schooling had they had before. The class, where many of the pupils were children of immigrants whose native language was not English, was very welcoming, and showed a good deal of curiosity towards the new arrivals, but communication was difficult. Eventually the boys learned enough English to communicate with their teacher and classmates, but real integration was still complicated. Every now and then the children would revert back to speaking Hmong, and their progress in anything related to English would stop. Learning the language was very frustrating for them and at home their parents discouraged them from speaking English, seeing this as 'Americanization', and wanting the boys to grow up as 'real' Hmong. Sounds like a situation that is more and more familiar to many UK teachers, doesn't it? Anyway, my friend the teacher was looking for something—a book, perhaps—that could make the boys feel proud of their cultural tradition, and that they could share with their classmates. I was just gathering content for PaperTigers.org, a website designed to offer a guide to children's books and resources related to Asian Pacific and South Asian cultures, and in my lists of books I found just what she needed: *Dia's Story Cloth: The Hmong People's Journey to Freedom*, (by Dia Cha, illustrated by Chue and Nhia Thao Cha, published in the United States by Lee&Low). We tracked the book down, and she brought it to school, much to the delight of the boys who found a book about their people, and of the class who could find out more about the 'mysterious' Hmong.

PaperTigers has been created to address the needs, or even just the curiosity of those who want to find out more about people in the Pacific Rim or South Asia. There are quite a few books, either published in these regions (often in English) or in western countries, but they are often difficult to track down, and we felt that we could provide a real service in this niche. The site is the brainchild of the Kiriya Pacific Rim Institute, that has been organizing for several years an international book prize dedicated to books in English that promote greater understanding of and among the peoples and the nations of the Pacific Rim and

South Asia. We wondered whether there was any way we could enlarge the field to include children's books, without necessarily adding a children's books category to the prize, and perhaps thus doing something that would be particularly useful to teachers and librarians, who are such an important influence in what children read (or have to read!). The idea of creating a website was born, and after much brainstorming with teachers, librarians, publishers, and anyone who showed any interest in the topic at all, we are almost ready to launch it.

In brief, the main sections of the site will be:

Panorama: featuring children's and young adults' books in English that have a Pacific Rim/South Asian theme or connection, or help readers understand better the peoples and cultures of the area. This section will give users an idea of all that is being published in this specific field in as many countries as possible, covering both fiction and non-fiction books from picture books to young adults' books.

Book Reviews: visitors will be able to read reviews of many of the books listed in *Panorama*. The reviews posted will have already been published in various national specialized children's magazines.

Interviews with authors/illustrators who are particularly attentive towards multicultural issues in children's books, or authors from the Pacific Rim and South Asia.

New Illustrators' Gallery will introduce new illustrators from the Pacific Rim and South Asia, through an online exhibit of their portfolio. New and 'undiscovered' artists will be given special prominence.

Essential Reading: many organizations (libraries, schools, magazines, publishers, etc.) publish excellent reading guides for multicultural books, or books that feature characters that belong to minorities, etc. It is often difficult to find these guides outside the context where they are published, so we will post them on our website. The section also features 'personal favourites', i.e. pieces about favourite books with a Pacific Rim/South Asian focus and written for the website by librarians, booksellers, teachers, authors, parents, etc.

Resources will list organizations, children's book magazines, associations, and the like, with information about their activities, contact information, etc. All the entries are annotated and 'reviewed', to make it easier for our visitors to determine whether a certain resource is really what they are looking for.

We hope this site will soon find a place in your favorites. Check out www.papertigers.org, or send me an email (elisa@papertigers.org) if you want to be alerted on news from the site. Feedback, critiques, ideas and proposals for collaboration are welcome!

PaperTigers.org

Elisa Oreglia

Re-education of a Society: Translating in the GDR

by Gaby Asgard

As something that traditionally is attributed only marginal significance, children's literature and its translation played a major role in the German Democratic Republic (GDR). Drawing on Marxist-Leninist ideology, East Germany sought to reshape its entire society. On this path to the creation of the "ideal socialist personality", children's literature was viewed as one of the pivotal tools of re-education and reengineering. Translation was to support it in this process.

However, to ensure that only conformist books appeared, a sophisticated system of instructions, guidance and control was installed. A canon of approved books was defined and everything that differed from these standards was excluded. The new socialist literature had to radiate optimism, it had to be partial and it had to be useful to the children in that it motivated them in developing their socialist identity.

Hence, the books selected to be translated had to display the same characteristics as the books originally written for the East German market. This explains the vast preponderance of books from the Soviet Union and other socialist countries. Sentimentalised books which portrayed the ideal world of a bourgeois society were not called for; girls' books in which girls were depicted in a subordinate, weak role were rejected; all literature was ruled out in which the role of the working class was described in a way not supportive of socialist beliefs or which dealt with anti-social issues. Another reason for the large number of socialist books on the GDR market can be put down to the simple

fact that the East German economy was weak and that these books were cheaper. Many western books were still protected under Copyright Law and therefore royalties had to be paid in foreign currency, of which the country was notoriously short. With respect to literature from the west, it is evident why many books from the classical canon were translated—their copyright had expired and consequently they were relatively cheap to translate and to publish.

Bearing in mind the significance of books regarding their social mission, translation was deemed a highly valued and respected profession. Literary translators were not seen as of less importance compared to the authors. Also, they worked in both fields, that of children's literature and that of adult literature. Moreover, there was no difference in

payment for the translation of children's versus adults' books, as the translation of books for children was not regarded to be an "easier" job. Since translation in the GDR was no different to any other job, translators were provided with a proper contract and, in the majority of cases, also with an insurance for illness and pension which meant that they were considerably more secure financially and, thus, were

able to focus on their work.

East Germany took pride in the fact that they had created a culture of literary translation. This would certainly appear to have been the case, given the climate of high esteem and appreciation of literature in the country, coupled with the good working conditions of the translators.

"To ensure that only conformist books appeared, a sophisticated system of instructions was installed"

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Why Do We Translate Books? by Shereen Kreidieh

As a publisher I face the question: "Why should books be translated?" A sentence that we always used to hear in the translation courses was, "We translate to enrich our culture with other books and to familiarize our children with other cultures", but when it comes to publishing, a different perspective is seen. Publishers are business-oriented and at the end of the day we like to choose books that can sell. There are certain criteria that we look at before translating. In my publishing house we translate books that have new ideas—sizes, shapes, and formats of the books are some of the features we look at and that we want to include in our market in our own language. Characters are other things that we look for. Publishers seek famous characters like Barbie, Tele Tubbies, Barney, and Disney characters because children are familiar with them from other media so they sell really well.

Some information books such as small encyclopedias are also translated since they would need a lot of time and effort to be created anew. We also care for good "low" prices (Arab market demand) so we try to do cheap co-editions with other foreign publishers. When these publishers print huge quantities—most of the times above 50,000 copies—they print them in the Far East for very reasonable prices, thus obtaining good prices for co-editions. Our Arabic market is saturated with translated books. More than 45% of the books are translations because most of the time publishers do not have specialists to create original books. Publishing involves difficult choices that are controlled and affected by the market demand and the media, so the translations we make are also affected by these factors.

(Shereen is a Lebanese publisher of children's books, and has an MA in Children's Literature from Roehampton)

Translating in the GDR

Gaby Asgard

Lebanon

Shereen Kreidieh

Disney Comics in the Arab World

by Jehan Zitavi

Disney comics have been translated from English into Arabic in the Arab world since 1959. They represent an important contribution to the literary experiences of Arab children. Producing Disney Comics in Arabic is a highly sophisticated enterprise in which three main groups are involved: Disney-Jawa; Arabic publishing houses; and a team of translators, editors, and graphic designers.

Disney-Jawa is a joint venture between Disney and the Saudi Jawa family and was established in Jeddah in 1993 to issue licences to local companies who are interested in using Disney characters with their products, together with non-Middle Eastern companies which are interested in selling Disney-branded products in the region. JV covers the following countries: The Gulf area (United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar and Oman), Egypt, Lebanon, Jordan, Syria, Yemen, Sudan, and Iran. In 1996 Disney-Jawa moved its head office to Dubai, an important free-trade centre in the region. Abdul Majeed Othman, their current Publication Director, manages the publication of Disney books in the Middle East. His role includes reviewing the entire issue of each magazine, not just the translated comic stories. In addition to making sure that editorials and translations comply with Disney's publishing guidelines, Othman also tries to ensure that the magazine does not include anything that might be deemed culturally offensive. He tries to make sure that the translation is accurate and accessible to members of the targeted group. Generally speaking, publishers are asked by Disney-Jawa to steer away from adult themes or political issues. They are expected to focus on wholesome entertainment, education and encouraging children to be creative and adventurous.

The three main Arabic publishing houses with licences to translate and publish Disney comics in the Arab world are Dar Al Hilal in Egypt, Al Futtaim/ITP in Dubai, and Al Qabas in Kuwait. Dar Al Hilal was founded in 1892 by Gorgi Ziedan. It produces a range of magazines, directed at audiences including women, medical professionals, film-lovers, and children. *Mickey Magazine* and *Super Mickey* both include Disney comic stories translated into Arabic. Dar Al Hilal is Disney's oldest publisher in the Middle East, and the first to publish Disney magazines in the Arab world. According to recent market research, children in Egypt purchase 85% of the copies sold each week. This illustrates both the increasing amounts of disposable income available to children and their continued status as avid and faithful readers of Mickey Mouse, Donald and Uncle

Scrooge comic stories. Dar Al Hilal has been allowed to continue publishing *Mickey*, but only for the Egyptian market and a few Arab African countries, such as Tunisia and Morocco. They are required to send Disney-Jawa the magazines' editions before they are published. Their licence will expire at the end of March 2003.

Al Futtaim/ITP of Dubai is a joint venture between Dubai businessman Othman Al Futtaim and a UK-based publisher, ITP. It used to be the second publisher of Disney magazines in the Arab world, holding the licence to translate and publish Disney comic magazines in the Gulf area and the East of the Arab world. They published five Disney comic magazines: *Mickey Mouse Magazine*, *Minnie*, *Duck City*, *Holiday with Mickey*, and *Golden Mickey*, but their licence has not been renewed since March 2000, as a result of financial disagreements with Disney-Jawa.

Al Qabas is a Kuwaiti publishing house that took over in September 2000 after Al Futtaim's contract with Disney ended. They produce five magazines, four of them monthly (*Minnie*, *Batoot*, *Holiday with Mickey*, and *Golden Mickey*) and one weekly (*Mickey*). Al Qabas used to publish two other Disney magazines for non-Arabic speakers: *Mickey Magazine* in English started in April 2001 and stopped in November 2001 and *Mickey Magazine* in Urdu, started in June 2001 and stopped in October 2001. Al Qabas is also expected to send all copies of its Disney Comics to Disney-Jawa for review and approval, without which publication can be prevented. The third group involved in the process consists of teams of translators, editors, type-setters, graphic designers, language editors, printing departments, and editors-in-chief. These supervise the whole operation of translating, printing, and publishing the Disney comic after it has been translated into Arabic.

The sophistication of the processes through which Disney Comics are translated into Arabic reflects the fondness with which Disney is viewed by Arab children and the commitment of Arab publishing houses to meeting ever increasing levels of demand, in order to ensure that the Arab readerships are able to enjoy the latest Disney tales as quickly as possible through accurate and accessible translations.

[Jehan Zitavi can provide fuller details of the magazines involved, and of further reading on this subject; email jehan_zitawi@hotmail.com]

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The Arab World

Jehan Zitavi

Recent Picture Books in Translation

by Ann Lazim

There are now eight titles in the series *Adventures of George and Lily* by Anne Gutman and Georg Hallensleben, small square format books with stories which relate to early experiences which children may encounter, for example *Lily and the New Baby* (Cat's Whiskers £4.99 1903012511). The books originate in France (no translator credited). Some of the stories have a wonderfully surreal air, especially *Lily's Bad Dream* (£4.99 190301252X) and *George and Lily at the Museum* (£4.99 190301218X), enhanced by George and Lily being depicted as stuffed toys living ordinary lives in a world of humans.

Cat's Whiskers' aim is to publish 'The Cream of the World's Picture Books' and they have made available books originally published in several other countries including Belgium and Germany. The former includes *Potty Time* by Guido Van Genechten (£4.99 1903012112) in which various animals in turn place their 'botty' on a potty until finally the little boy Joe 'does the business' which is apparent from his smiling face as he peers into the potty to the accompaniment of the words 'Well done, Joel'. The rhyming text is simple and fun and a point of interest in the illustrations, which were created by painting over newspaper, is that you can sometimes see the Dutch words peeping through. A couple of Guido Van Genechten's books have been published in a number of dual language editions by Mantra—*Floppy* (£6.99 16 editions) and *Floppy in the Dark* (£6.99 19 editions). See www.mantrapublishing.com for more information about books produced by this pioneering publisher of dual language texts, many of which they are now originating themselves rather than using previously published picture books.

Dual language books can sometimes bring out the differences between a translation and the original text. For example, the interesting 'lift-the-flap' books published by Milet (www.milet.com) as *Who am I?* and *What am I?* These books, which originated in France, are available in English with either Chinese, French, Gujarati, Russian, Turkish or Vietnamese. A question is posed on the left page, and the picture on the right can be lifted to reveal the answer in both picture and word. The English translation from French has been altered, chiefly in the interests of making the text rhyme, so that *Je fais du bon lait blanc pour les enfants* is rendered as *I make a drink that's milky and white and helps you sleep tight*. This is not a criticism but it is something of which readers of dual language texts need to be aware, and could be a way into discussing with children some fascinating aspects of language difference and variety.

A picture book which may well become a classroom classic is *Next Please* by Ernst Jandl and Norman Junge (Hutchinson £9.99, ISBN 0091769582) in which five toys are waiting in

turn to see the doctor. The brief text has repetition and pattern which is helpful for young readers in predicting what will come next. However, this is one of those picture books like *Rosie's Walk* and *Handa's Surprise* where words and pictures really do need to be read in conjunction to appreciate the full meaning. The original German book *funfter sein* (Beltz & Gelberg) has an even more minimalist text than the English version (no translator credited) with no equivalent of the phrase 'next please'.

A very interesting book that I came across at the IBBY Congress in Colombia was *La Composizione* by Antonio Skarmeta and Alfonso Ruano so I was delighted to discover that it has been translated into English by Elisa Amado and published in Canada as *The Composition* by Groundwood (0888993900). The Spanish edition was published in Venezuela by Ediciones Ekare (9802572152) and the writer is from Chile. If his name seems familiar, that may be because it was a novel of his on which the popular Italian film *Il Postino* was based. In *The Composition* a boy is asked by a sinister soldier who is a government representative to write about what his family does in the evenings. Will he reveal that his parents are against the military dictatorship? In the English language there is a final page explaining to young readers what dictatorship is, something which was not considered necessary in the original South American edition.

Our new Hans Andersen Award winner Quentin Blake created *Un Bateau dans le Ciel* (Rue du Monde 291208430X) with the help of children from around the world, beginning with a group he met in Rochefort, France. Children exchanged their ideas and thoughts via the internet about what in the French edition is described as 'l'humanisme' and in English as 'the problems of our world – problems such as prejudice, pollution, child slavery and war.' This book has now been translated into English by Quentin and published as *A Sailing Boat in the Sky* (Cape £10.99 0224064541).

Another recent translation from French is that by Sarah Pakenham of Philippe Corentin's *Splosh!* (Andersen Press £3.99 0862645891). A hungry wolf falls down a well when he reaches in too far to grab 'a big, round cheese' he has seen in there. The story must be read by turning the book on its side to convey the long narrow shape of the well, up and down which travels a bucket with changing contents (a pig, some rabbits) which the wolf hopes to secure as a meal.

Finally, Tove Jansson's *The Book about Moomin, Mymble and Little My* (£8.99 0953522741) is a new venture for Sort Of Books. The text for the English version was created by poet Sophie Hannah with the help of a literal translation by Silvester Mazzarella, from the original poem written in Swedish and published in Finland in 1952. This is a highly unusual book with calligraphy which suggests the meaning of many of the words and cut out pages through which the reader journeys with Moomintroll and Mymble in their search for Little My. The same publisher hopes to publish Tove Jansson's *Who will comfort Toffle?* in October 2003.

Recent
Translations

Ann Lazim

Rough Guides to Children's Literature

by Pam Robson

Nicholas Tucker, *The Rough Guide to Children's Books 0-5 years* (ISBN 1-85828-787-1) and *The Rough Guide to Children's Books 5-11 years* (ISBN 1-85828-788-X) each £5.99 paperback. Full colour jacket designs by Quentin Blake. Published in February 2002 by Rough Guides and distributed by The Penguin Group.

There is nothing 'rough' about the invaluable information within these pocket guides, which identify some of the best children's titles ever published. The titles recommended provide parents with an eclectic selection for age ranges 0-5 years and 5-11 years, ranging from classics to contemporary publications. In-depth information about each entry guides parental choice. *The Rough Guide to Children's Books 0-5 years* details almost 150 entries in its 251 pages; *The Rough Guide to Children's Books 5-11 years* details over 180 entries in its 376 pages. Small black and white photographs of book illustrations and book covers feature in both volumes. Layout is attractive and the information is easy to access.

Nicholas Tucker, an expert on both literature and psychology, writes authoritatively for his audience. His selected titles are efficiently organised into age groups and genres and he matches each recommended title to the appropriate stage in child development; never failing, however, to emphasise the need for every child to experience pleasure from books. He actively encourages *informal* teaching of toddlers through books, but discourages parents planning to use first word books as teaching *tools*; 'Adults with a mission to teach even the smallest of infants in anything like a formal classroom manner may be making a mistake.' (pg 78)

Books for the 0-5 age range are further organised by age; parents of the youngest age group of 0-18 months can select from categories of play books, interactive books and first stories. For 'Younger Toddlers', books are organised into the categories of nursery rhymes, counting books, alphabet books, word books, and stories. Stories and poetry books are suggested for 'Older Toddlers' and 'Pre-school Children'.

Books for the 5-11 age range are also further organised by age, starting with the 5-7 age range for whom there is a choice of picture books, classics, animal stories, other stories and poetry. For 'Bigger Readers' aged 7-9 years the range widens. They and their parents can choose from myths, legends and religious tales; classics; animal stories; fantasy stories; adventure stories; historical stories; funny stories and poetry. The author suggests *The Hobbit* as a good choice in the classics section; this is a challenging read that some 7-9 year olds will no doubt enjoy, others may prefer to have parents read it to them or to listen to the dramatised audio version. Tucker constantly reinforces his message to parents to pursue shared reading, emphasising the value of reading aloud to children of all ages. In the adventure section for the 7-9 year olds some parents may be surprised to find that the author suggests the Enid Blyton title *Five on a Treasure Island* as a good read. He qualifies this choice and describes her as an author who was '...never a great writer' but goes on to defend the inclusion of one of her books '...they [children] should not be denied the chance of discovering something of the heady excitement that comes from reading a Blyton adventure story as hectic and action-packed as this one.' (page 179). In the final section of this volume pre-teens,

aged 9-11 years, or their parents, can choose from classics, historical stories, school stories, fantasy stories, animal stories, stories from home and abroad and poetry.

The very nature of such limited selective works means that sacrifices in the form of omissions always have to be made—authors like Geoffrey Trease and Brian Jacques are notable by their absence—but despite such inevitable, and obviously unavoidable, editorial constraints Nicholas Tucker has succeeded in producing an eclectic range of excellent titles in both volumes from a plethora of alternative possibilities. He wisely acknowledges that age can be a misleading organisational tool when categorising reading material for children and consequently suggests some more challenging choices for good readers. This is noticeable in his selection for 7-9 years; in the 'historical stories' category he recommends titles such as Ann Holm's *I Am David* and Cynthia Harnett's *The Wool-Pack*, stories that could reasonably be recommended for readers of 9-11 years, but age is relative in terms of reading. In the 'fantasy stories' category for 7-9 years the author recommends the first Harry Potter title for its entertainment value, but points out that children should also be seeking more challenging reading material. He describes J.K. Rowling in vaguely negative terms as '...not an innovative writer'.

Unfortunately the vagaries of the publishing world often mean that some of the best titles regularly go out of print and one or two selected titles are no longer available. In the volume for 5-11 years Robert Leeson's *The Third-Class Genie* is recommended but is no longer in print; the same is true of Jan Mark's well known title *Handles*. Rumer Godden's story *The Diddakoi* is out of print but due to be re-issued in 2003; of course it is always possible to find out-of-print titles on local library shelves or in book shops. Perhaps the publishers need to consider the possibility of regular revisions to keep the information up to date and provide for the inclusion of new and/or alternative titles in future publications.

An author and title index is provided in both volumes, a useful search tool for those who know their children's literature. For those with less book 'knowledge', an additional thematic index might have been useful, facilitating an anxious parent's search for a picture book that deals with, for example, fear of the dark, although Tucker proffers a note of caution to parents seeking to use a story as some kind of psychological tool; his belief is that if a child is enjoying a story the chances are that the book *is* serving a psychological purpose.

Aside from quibbles about a few minor spelling errors and one mysteriously blank page, both volumes will prove an invaluable source of help and information for parents. The author offers far more than bibliographic details and story summaries, he provides sound advice and guidance for parents too. His in-depth comments are balanced; he points out good and bad features about each entry wherever appropriate, for instance he highlights the fragile nature of certain interactive novelty titles for babies. In addition he has cleverly expanded his selection of possible titles by referring within each summary to other books by the same author, so that a reader seeking information about Jacqueline Wilson can read not only about *The Illustrated Mum* but also about four other titles written by her. Altogether a recommended buy!

Rough Guides

Pam Robson

World Book Day - April 2nd 2002

by Pam Robson

The British Section of IBBY organised an Irish Storytelling Day for children on March 18th at Tate Britain; the theme for the day was 'Framing Celtic Stories.' The day was organised as a combined celebration of World Book Day, St Patrick's Day and International Children's Book Day. Heartfelt thanks to the children's publishers Barefoot Books and Walker Books who, through their generous sponsorship, made possible yet another successful IBBY Day at Tate Britain; also to Colin Grigg who was instrumental in making available to IBBY, once again, this prestigious venue. Events like this could not take place without the backing of these good friends of IBBY. London school children were invited to take part in a carousel of workshops in the galleries so that they could interact with works of art selected by the authors and storytellers. Workshops were led by storyteller and author, Patrick Ryan (always a good friend of IBBY), children's author Malachy Doyle, children's author Siobhan Parkinson and performance artist, Margot Henderson.

Patrick Ryan held his young audiences spellbound with his Irish stories and riddles. He began by telling the familiar story of *Molly Whuppie*, and followed this with the ghost story *Ruby Lips and Bony Fingers*. His amazing repertoire continued with *Jack and the Black Horse* and *The Fairy Thorn Tree*. The latter seemed to fascinate the children who inundated Patrick with an endless stream of queries about the fate of the child in the story who touches the tree and is then carried away

by the fairies—they could not decide whether or not to believe ...

Malachy Doyle gained the immediate attention of his audiences when he donned a hat of many colours before reading from his own version of *The Children of Lir*. He then read from some of his many picture books, including *The Great Castle of Marshmangle*, *Hungry! Hungry! Hungry!* and *The Bold Boy*.

Siobhan Parkinson, award-winning Irish author, read to her audience from her novels *Animals Don't Have Ghosts* and *The Moon King*. The latter is a moving story in which character focus shifts between the narrator and the central character, a child who might be described as autistic. In this story Siobhan successfully gets inside the head of her child character to the extent that the reader cannot fail to be moved by his plight. Later on Monday evening, Siobhan spoke about her writing career to IBBY members at IBBY's Annual General Meeting held at CLPE.

Margot Henderson, herself a Scot, told and performed a fairy changeling story for the children. This was a truly mesmerising performance made more real by her use of authentic Irish musical instruments like the lyre. She captivated her young audiences. Altogether, those children who were fortunate enough to attend the event must have gone away with their heads bursting with the stories, perhaps to dream of the works of art they had been gazing at.

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Congress 2008 Bid: Update

Working in close association with the Newcastle and Gateshead Convention bureau, we are continuing to make good progress with our bid to hold the international IBBY congress in the UK in 2008. The city has recently submitted its own bid to become European Capital of Culture in 2008 and, regardless of the outcome, has developed an exciting arts and culture programme. Home to the *Centre for the Children's Book*, Newcastle and Gateshead is an ideal venue for a children's literature conference. The Music Centre currently under construction on the Gateshead Quays will be a world class conference venue offering lecture halls, meeting rooms, exhibition space and foyer areas that offer exciting possibilities for the IBBY Congress to have a public face. Other venues for special events such as book launches and private views of special exhibitions include the *Baltic Gallery of Contemporary Art* due to open this summer and *The Centre for Life*. While the *Theatre Royal*, a beautifully restored Matchams' theatre, is potentially the perfect setting for the Hans Andersen Awards.

Located close to the Northumbrian Coast, Hadrian's Wall, Alnwick Castle, Durham and the Farne Islands, the region has many places of interest for overseas visitors as well as those from home who have not previously visited the area. Post congress tours to other parts of the UK including London and Edinburgh would be organised by a tour operator working for the convention bureau. The British Tourist Authority has offered to assist with the bidding process and the Newcastle and Gateshead Convention bureau will be preparing the bid document to our specification.

Denmark is also bidding to hold the event in 2008. It is the first time for some years that countries have competed to hold the Congress but with the recent string of successes with Andersen nominations, we are confident that the time is right for this proposal. We would like to express our appreciation of the support we have received to date from all sections of the children's book world and look forward to working closely with you in the event of our success.

Further information and suggestions to Nikki Gamble, Nhgamble@aol.com

Children's Book Day

Pam Robson

Congress 2008

Nikki Gamble

Mirjam Pressler and her books

by Eva Kaum

Mirjam Pressler, born in 1940, is a much acclaimed German author of children's books. She has won several important awards throughout her career, such as the German Jugendbuchpreis in 1995 for her book *Wenn das Glück kommt, muss man ihm einen Stuhl hinstellen*. For her work as a translator of almost 300 books from Hebrew, Afrikaans, Dutch and English, she received the prestigious German Jugendbuchpreis in 1994.

Translations are of great importance in Germany, not only in the print medium, but also in film. Every foreign film, for example, is dubbed, whereas other countries prefer subtitles. Every third new novel and every fourth children's book is a translation, and three quarters of all translations are from English. Last year, four of the six books shortlisted for the German Jugendbuchpreis were translations, also the winner (Richard Van Camp's novel called *Die ohne Segen sind*). This year's nominations look much the same. But as a German writer, Mirjam Pressler is shortlisted with her book *Malka Mai* (2001) which will probably be out in an English translation soon.

Mirjam Pressler is famous for letting her novels emerge straight from real life—be it past or present. In England she is already known for her recent translation of the life of Anne Frank called *The Diary of a Young Girl* and her novel *Shylock's Daughter*. Real problems and the inner life and worries of children and teenagers are at the centre of her stories, even if they treat historical subjects. They are always written in a clear, unpretentious and yet very intense style. With her two latest books, *Malka Mai* (2001) and *Für Isabel war es Liebe*

(2002), Mirjam Pressler writes within two of the currently three dominating thematic fields in realistic children's literature in Germany. *Malka Mai* deals with 'history and the Nazi regime' and *For Isabel it was Love* could come under the heading of 'all kinds of love and sexual education'; 'violence as a social and political phenomenon' being the third currently popular topic. At first glance, the two books are very different. Malka Mai is Jewish and seven years old when she is suddenly left alone by her mother and older sister on their flight from occupied Poland in 1943. She has to survive in ghettos and hospitals all by herself and is forced to grow up instantly amidst fear and death. Isabel is a normal 17-year-old teenager who falls in love for the first time—with a girl in her arts class. She has to face her own fears and is confronted with death when her mother is diagnosed with breast cancer. At a second glance, however, the stories are not that different at all. Both reflect on existential experiences of the heroines and both examine a mother-daughter relationship. Both are written in an equally frank but sensitive style. The first-person point of view in Isabel's story is used very poignantly as Isabel's memories fill the time of a car journey from Hamburg to Munich, and express a coming-home on different levels. *Malka Mai* is also about a flight from home and a change of direction which leaves the main characters not quite reaching home again any more.

Even though a wide range of books is published in English every year, it is certainly worth watching out for good books in translation—and Mirjam Pressler is certainly an author of very good books for young adults.

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Gudrun Pausewang's *Fall-Out* by Peter Bramwell

Gudrun Pausewang *Fall-Out* was first published in German as *Die Wolke* in 1987, translated into English by Patricia Crampton and published by Penguin Viking in 1994 / Puffin 1997.

When there is a radiation leak at Grafenrheinfeld nuclear power station, panic rises rapidly, and 14 year-old Janna and her younger brother Uli flee their home in southern Germany. Fragmented details convey the desperation of the mass exodus: 'When it comes to sheer survival, the mask of civilization soon falls away.' Young Uli, who has been vibrantly portrayed, is killed in a shocking accident. Janna is forced to keep going and ends up in a makeshift hospital, where she suffers the effects of radiation poisoning, including losing her hair. At last she discovers what she feared, that her parents, who were anti-nuclear protestors, have died. Janna, like refugees from the War, is feared and shunned, but will not cover up that she is a Hibakusha, like those who survived Hiroshima poisoned. A rather proper aunt in Hamburg takes her in, but then she joins aunt Almut and others who are campaigning for the Hibakusha. Finally Janna visits her old home...

This novel is a grimly realistic portrayal of a terrible disaster, but the despair is leavened by sparks of integrity, camaraderie and determination, and, implicitly, the belief that warnings in fiction can galvanise action to change things. You would have to read *Fall-Out* from a library or second-hand, as it is already out of print, a sad indicator that both German children's fiction in English, and the nuclear power issue, seem unfashionable. As the narrative comments, 'It was as if Chernobyl had never happened.'

**Mirjam Pressler
Eva Kaum**

**Gudrun
Pausewang**

Peter Bramwell

CALENDAR & EVENTS

28th-30th June 2002, New Lanark, Scotland

SCIENCE FICTION AND UTOPIAN FICTION

Booking form at <http://www.SFRA.org/SFRA2002.htm>

2nd July 2002, 10-3:15, Center for Language in Primary Education, London

TALK IN THE CLASSROOM

Speakers: Aidan Chambers and Neil Mercer

Contact CLPE, Webber St., London SE1 8QW Phone 020 7401 3382/3 Email info@clpe.co.uk

5th-6th July 2002, De Montfort University, Leicester

THE CHILD READER 1740-1940

Contact Matthew Grenby, 24 Cornwall Rd. London N4 4PH

Email mgrenby@dmu.ac.uk

25th-26th July 2002, Edge Hill College, Ormskirk, Lancs

INFECTION AND CONTAMINATION

An interdisciplinary conference analysing the fiction, history and politics associated with this subject.

Contact Clare Horrocks, English Dept., Edge Hill College, St. Helen's Rd., Ormskirk, Lancs, L39 4QP

Email horrocksc@edgehill.ac.uk

September 2002

BAREFOOT BOOKS AND MANCHESTER ART GALLERY CHILDREN'S LITERATURE WORKSHOPS

Barefoot Books and Manchester Art Gallery have formed a partnership to present monthly children's literature workshops, and an exhibition starting in September, aimed at families.

Details can be found in their website <http://www.barefootbooks.com>

13th-15th September 2002, Bodington Hall, University of Leeds

MAGIC CARPETS: AN INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE ON CHILDREN'S BOOKS

Organised by the Children's Writers and Illustrators Group of the Society of Authors. Speakers include Anthony Browne, Anne Fine, Klaus Flugge, Adele Geras, Elizabeth Laird, Beverley Naidoo, Philip Pullman, Tony Ross and Jane Yolen.

Full board £195, non-residential £145, deposit £20.

Contact Enid Stephenson, 9 Garden Terrace, Hebden Bridge, HX7 8BL Email enid@step9.freeserve.co.uk

13th-15th September 2002, College of Ripon and York, St. John, York

ETHICS AND RESPONSIBILITY: THEOLOGY, LITERATURE AND FILM

With a panel on Ethics and Children's Literature

Contact Gaye Ortiz, College of Ripon and York St John, Lord Mayor's Walk, Work, YO31 7EX

Email g.ortiz@ucrysj.ac.uk

16th-17th November 2002, Liverpool John Moores University

ANALYSING SERIES AND SERIAL NARRATIVE

Contact Nickianne Moody, Liverpool John Moores University, Dean Walters Building, St. James Rd.,

Liverpool L1 7BR. Email N.A.Moody@livjm.ac.uk

Saturday 16th November 2002, Froebel College, University of Surrey Roehampton

9th ANNUAL NCRLC/IBBY CONFERENCE: PERFORMANCE AND CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

The 9th annual NCRLC/IBBY conference will be looking both at the way *Children's Texts* have been turned into performances (stage, screen, musical, audio, dance) and the way *childhood* itself has been performed.

Details from NCRLC, Digby Stuart College, University of Surrey Roehampton, SW15 5PH Phone 020 8392 3008

Email ncrcl@roehampton.ac.uk

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CALL FOR PROPOSALS

Proposals are invited for papers on the theme of Disability Culture in Children's Literature, for a special issue of *Disability Studies Quarterly*, an online journal, to appear in January 2004. Joint editors Kathy Saunders, Ann Dowker, and Jane Stemp. Papers of about 5,000 words are required by August 2003; proposals of approximately 500 words should be submitted by the end of September 2002, accompanied by a short biographical statement, to Kathy Saunders (k.saunders1@ukonlin.co.uk), from whom more details are available. Note that proposals should be sent within the body of the email- attachments will be deleted unopened.