

INTRODUCTION

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‘Our children need to be exposed to a world of voices so that the whole world becomes their home’

David Almond, speech at the 2003 *Marsh Award for Children’s Literature in Translation*,
School Librarian, Spring 2003

The intention of this publication is to celebrate and actively promote an interest in the rich tradition and culture of children’s literature from around the world. We hope that it will be a useful resource containing information about which books are currently available in translation, biographical details of authors, illustrators and translators and a resource guide.

Included in the book are a foreword by Philip Pullman and articles written on topics that will help to stimulate the debate surrounding the subject of translation: Nicholas Tucker explores why there is a British problem in the translation of children’s books; Sarah Adams writes about ‘Translating Monsters’, her experience of translating the Golem books; Lene Kaaberbol identifies some of the problems of being translated and of being a translator; Gillian Lathey discusses teaching an MA module on children’s literature in translation at Roehampton University; Patricia Billings explores bilingual books, and Klaus Flugge and Neal Hoskins give two different publishing perspectives.

Our literary heritage is made up of many books that are only known to us in translation from the Bible and Aesop’s Fables to classics from authors such as Tolstoy, Kafka, Camus, Calvino and many more. Edgardo Zaghini’s article on classic European children’s books highlights the vast wealth of literature that has been opened up to new readers through translation.

Translated literature should break down the barriers of geography, language, race and build bridges between nations. It can develop a greater tolerance and understanding of other people’s beliefs by teaching us about other cultures, and it can be an enriching experience as it opens up new horizons and stimulates ideas.

Out of the 3% of all books published in the UK each year that are translated, only 1% are children’s books. Contrasted sharply with other countries in Europe such as France, where a quarter of all books published are translations and 35% in the Netherlands and Germany, this reveals a wide difference between the UK and the rest of Europe. This highlights the need for raising the profile of children’s literature in translation in the UK, particularly if we don’t want children to remain isolated and narrow minded about other cultures.

We have tried to bring together, in one unique volume, a selection of children’s books in translation (all in print at the time of going to press). It has been impossible to include everything, but we hope we have provided a broad cross-section of titles that will appeal to everyone.

How to use the guide

Outside In has been divided into eight sections: five age categories, graphic novels, non-fiction and dual-language sections. The age categories are under 5; 6–8; 9–11; 12+ and 14+. Within each category the books are listed in order of age rather than alphabetically (with the exception of 14+ which is alphabetical by title). This is intended to act only as a broad guideline; in fact, many of the books will appeal to a wider age-range, including adults.

In partnership with Milet Publishing and the Children's Bookshow and supported by Arts Council England, we have been able to produce a guide that we hope will make a difference.

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