

YA Literature in Translation:

A Batch of Batchelder Honorees

Literature in translation lives *in* the edge. While it belongs to multiple nations and languages, it strangely belongs to neither. Stuck somewhere inside and between childhood and adulthood, teenagers occupy a similar, awkward kind of space. Perhaps because of this commonality, connecting young adults to literature in translation creates unique opportunities to explore both personal and national identity, allowing readers to see the world and themselves in new ways through distinguishing either the foreign or the familiar. Although the nature of the publishing industry makes identifying precise percentages an impossible task (Maczka & Stock, 2006), the United States publishes comparatively fewer translations than other developed countries (UNESCO, 2011), particularly given the size of the American publishing industry. An excellent place to start the search for such books is the list of nominees and winners of the Mildred L. Batchelder Award, an annual prize from the American Library Association granted to the publisher who is deemed to have printed “the most outstanding” children’s book “originally published in a foreign language in a foreign country,” then “translated into English and published in the United States” (ALA, 2011).

Since 1966, the Association for Library Service to Children (ALSC, a subdivision of the American Library Association) has granted this award in honor of its namesake, a former executive director who promoted cross-cultural understanding through international literature for children; since 1994, they have also designated honor books and publishers (ALSC). The ALSC hopes to encourage US publishers to discover and

publish high-quality literature from around the world. Although the committee also considers picturebooks, its evaluations emphasize textual characteristics, preferring a strong “relationship to [the] original work” in “substance, . . . viewpoint,” and “style.” Committee members further examine the US translation in terms of theme, style, presentation, visual design, and plot and character development. Whatever changes a book undergoes at the hands of translators and publishers to accommodate American audiences, its “readers should be able to sense that the book came from another country” (ALA, 2011). Such a standard is significant, because at times the process of translation scrapes away detectable traces of foreign origin.

But for any translation to serve as an “authentic window onto another culture” (Maczka & Stock, p. 50), some residual, identifying characteristics must remain, whether they come in the shape of a unique sense of place, foreign folkloric elements, unfamiliar idioms, or surprising plot structures. Translators of children’s and YA literature must thoughtfully determine which foreign elements to retain, explain, or adjust in order to remain faithful to a text without also alienating younger, foreign readers. At their most successful, well-translated books can humanize people from other nations, broaden students’ perspectives, help them to develop empathy, and potentially provide more accurate, compelling information about life outside the United States in both modern and historical contexts “without a perspective of either superiority or inferiority” (Lo, 2001, p. 84). Literature from other nations can provide readers with something like a foreign mirror to serve as a “point of intersection . . .

Danish

Reuter, Bjarne. *The Boys from St. Petri*. Trans. Anthea Bell. Dutton, 1994.

Teller, Janne. *Nothing*. Trans. Martin Aitken. Atheneum, 2010.

Dutch

Hotlwijk, Ineke. *Asphalt Angels*. Trans. Wanda Boeke. Front Street, 1999.

Quintana, Anton. *The Baboon King*. Trans. John Nieuwenhuizen. Walker & Co., 1999.

Ruud van der Rol & Rian Verhoeven. *Anne Frank beyond the Diary: A Photographic Remembrance*. Trans. Anne Frank House. Viking, 1993.

French

Bondoux, Anne-Laure. *The Killer's Tears*. Trans. Y. Maudet. Delacorte, 2006.

Bondoux, Anne-Laure. *A Time of Miracles*. Trans. Y. Maudet. Delacorte, 2010.

Lehmann, Christian. *Ultimate Game*. Trans. William Rodarmor. David R. Godine, 2003.

Mourlevat, Jean-Claude. *The Pull of the Ocean*. Trans. Y. Maudet. Delacorte, 2006.

Stolz, Joëlle. *The Shadows of Ghadames*. Trans. Cathrine Temerson. Delacorte, 2004.

Zenatti, Valérie. *When I Was a Soldier*. Trans. Adriana Hunter. Bloomsbury, 2005.

German

Chotjewitz, David. *Daniel Half Human and the Good Nazi*. Trans. Doris Orgel. Richard Jackson Books, 2004.

Frank, Rudolph. *No Hero for the Kaiser*. Trans. Patricia Crampton. Lothrop, Lee & Shepard, 1986.

Härtling, Peter. *Crutches*. Trans. Elizabeth D. Crawford. Lothrop, Lee & Shepard, 1988.

Holub, Josef. *An Innocent Soldier*. Trans. Michael Hofmann. Arthur A. Levine, 2005.

Michaelis, Antonia. *Tiger Moon*. Trans. Anthea Bell. Amulet Books, 2008.

Richter, Hans Peter. *Friedrich*. Trans. Edite Kroll. Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1970.

Schami, Rafik. *A Hand Full of Stars*. Trans. Rika Lesser. E. P. Dutton, 1990.

Van Dijk, Lutz. *Damned Strong Love: The True Story of Willi G. and Stephan K*. Trans. Elizabeth D. Crawford. Henry Holt, 1995.

Hebrew

Orlev, Uri. *The Island on Bird Street*. Trans. Hillel Halkin. Houghton Mifflin, 1985.

Orlev, Uri. *The Lady with the Hat*. Trans. Hillel Halkin. Houghton Mifflin, 1996.

Orlev, Uri. *The Man from the Other Side*. Trans. Hillel Halkin. Houghton Mifflin, 1991.

Orlev, Uri. *Run, Boy, Run*. Trans. Hillel Halkin. Walter Lorraine, 2003.

Rabinovici, Schoschana. *Thanks to My Mother*. Trans. James Skofield. Dial, 1998.

Italian

De Mari, Silvana. *The Last Dragon*. Trans. Shaun Whiteside. Hyperion, 2006.

Japanese

Miyabe, Miyuki. *Brave Story*. Trans. Alexander O. Smith. VIZ Media, 2008.

Uehashi, Nahoko. *Moribito: Guardian of the Spirit*. Trans. Cathy Hirano. Arthur A. Levine, 2008.

Uehashi, Nahoko. *Moribito II: Guardian of the Darkness*. Trans. Cathy Hirano. Arthur A. Levine, 2009.

Russian

Wassiljewa, Tatjana. *Hostage to War: A True Story*. Trans. Anna Trenter. Scholastic, 1997.

Spanish

Llorente, Pilar Molina. *The Apprentice*. Trans. Robin Longshaw. Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1993.

Swedish

Kullman, Harry. *The Battle Horse*. Trans. George Blecher and Lone Thygesen Blecher. Bradbury, 1981.

where the coercive aspects of imagined communities are turned back on themselves . . . so that their covert presuppositions and ideological inflections become apparent” (Giles, 2002, p. 17). Through their experiences with transnational literature, readers might not only improve their understanding of others, but also more clearly recognize themselves. Literature in translation extends the opportunities for these contacts beyond the English-speaking realm.

With such possibilities for enlightenment, translated young adult literature could provide excellent opportunities for cross-curricular collaboration in the secondary education classroom. English, foreign language, science, politics, and history teachers could all find ways for these texts to enhance their individual and collective curricula (Schwarz, 1996). For example, educators could use translated works to teach a specific geographical area or historical period from a different perspective, analyze layout and design choices and compare them to original English books, use the English translations to support or compare texts in foreign languages, or turn to the Batchelder simply to enrich and diversify recommended reading lists.

Because the Batchelder mark increases the likelihood of library purchase and repeated printing, honored books are fortunately easier to locate than other translated literature. The list of Batchelder Award and Honor recipients includes everything from picture-books to YA novels. To aid secondary educators and librarians, this article lists and reviews only those with potential YA appeal (whether because of linguistic demands, protagonist age, or thematic content).

The dozen reviews that follow include at least one novel from most of the original languages represented on the Batchelder list, examine a fairly representative cross-section of what’s been offered historically, and assess those that might fit most easily and beneficially into middle and high school curricula. Sorted by language of origin, the complete summaries and reviews introduce educators, scholars, and teenagers to a sampling of the translated texts available in the United States. These and other titles not specifically reviewed here appear in a list of Batchelder honorees (copies of those published prior to 1990 are difficult to obtain, unfortunately) that might appeal to a teenage audience (see Fig. 1). The article concludes with a reflection on the award’s limitations and hopes for its future.

Figure 1. Batchelder honor and award recipients with YA appeal

For further information on the history of the Batchelder Award, children's literature in translation, and a complete list of past winners, please consult ALA's website at <http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/alsc/awardsgrants/bookmedia/batchelderaward/index.cfm>.

A Batch of Batchelder Book Reviews

Danish, 1995 Award, 215 pages: Reuter, Bjarne. *The Boys from St. Petri*. Trans. Anthea Bell. New York: Dutton, 1994.

Gunnar Balstrup and his adoring younger brother, Lars, live in Nazi-occupied Denmark. There, Gunnar heads the St. Petri Group, a secret band of boys (named in honor of the church where they meet) who pull pranks on the despised German soldiers. Lars guiltily conceals his love for Gunnar's girlfriend, Irene, creating an underlying tension that lurks in the background of the story. When the inscrutable Otto Hvideman joins the group, he pushes their exploits beyond vandalism into arson and the theft of German supplies. The Germans intensify their search for the culprits of the heightened mischief, but the Balstrup boys continue with their plans to bomb a train. The night of the Christmas play, all but one member help to carry out the plot—despite the fact that someone had already informed the Germans. Lars runs back to the school to say goodbye to Irene before he and three others are arrested. Only Otto manages to escape.

Inspired by the real resistance of teenagers in Aalborg, Denmark, and sprinkled with fictionalized names and locations, the book at times reads almost like a historical adventure novel. But it is much more psychological than readers might expect. The text's style is poetic and emotional, layered with metaphors and a good balance of dialogue and description. Occasionally, these poetics preoccupy the story, making some plot elements difficult to follow and getting in the way of the characterization. However, the book still creates genuine sympathy for the characters and provides an interesting glimpse into the various mindsets of citizens in occupied territories as they struggle to preserve their identities while also preserving their lives. The book obviously would connect to the study of historical events and could complement analysis about perceptions of the United States in places the nation's military has occupied.

Dutch, 2000 Honor, 184 pages: Hotlwijk, Ineke.

Asphalt Angels. Trans. Wanda Boeke. Asheville, NC: Front Street, 1999.

After the death of his mother, 13-year-old Alex finds himself living in the streets of Brazil, struggling to survive. Eventually he joins the Asphalt Angels, one of several street gangs, whose members sniff glue and steal. Alex gets used to the thievery, but unlike his friends, he never takes drugs. After he confesses to a journalist that all he wants is "a bed and a mother" (p. 132), the city increases its efforts to get the kids off the streets. Later, the boys borrow some guns and try to stage a holdup of a bus, but their leader is run over in his attempt to escape. The experience sends Alex into a suicidal depression.

The text concludes with a glossary of terms, which follows the afterword on the real-life plight of Brazilian street kids. Despite all of the shocking events and sad stories about each child, the characters carry little emotional resonance. The third-person narration is vaguely told from Alex's point of view, but it almost feels like author Ineke Holtwijk is just using him as a tour guide of sorts through the Brazilian streets. It comes across slightly editorial, and Alex's voice doesn't always have an authentic ring. However, the transatlantic nature of the book itself—the English translation of a Dutch novel about life in Brazil—reflects the world's increasingly nebulous boundaries and might be more useful for investigating European perceptions than about Brazilian culture. Such a novel could afford a framework for comparing depictions of the US's largest cities and might stimulate debate about crime prevention and related issues.

French, 2007 Honor, 162 pages. Bondoux, Anne-Laure. *The Killer's Tears*. Trans. Y. Maudet. New York: Delacorte, 2006.

In a remote corner of northern Chile, passerby Angel Allegria murders young Paolo Poloverdo's parents

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but inexplicably spares the boy Paolo. Forming an unlikely bond with each other, Paolo and his parents' killer live quietly together until another stranger wanders in and Angel, thanks to Paolo, spares the

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man's life. After a series of hardships and jealousies, the three head into town, where the man tries to run away with an innkeeper's daughter. Angel and Paolo flee authorities and stumble across Ricardo Murga, a kindly lumberjack who had lost his wife and children in a violent robbery decades earlier. On his mystical property, Ricardo's dead family are somehow able to visit and play with Paolo. Angel hopes for a differ-

ent life for the boy, so he leaves him with Ricardo. The police storm the house the next day, mistaking Ricardo for Angel and killing the old man in the struggle. They apprehend Angel and later sentence him to death, while Paolo is sent away to live in foster care. When Paolo turns 18, he tries to visit Angel, only to find that the killer had been executed a year earlier. The young man returns to his childhood home and starts a new, peaceful life.

Uniquely blending disgrace, redemption, magic, realism, and a sense of both the timeless and the contemporary, *The Killer's Tears* has a lovely, haunting atmosphere and graceful, lyrical prose. While the pace, length, and packaging of the book make it feel like a YA novel, the story is certainly more about Angel Allegria than about young Paolo. It blurs edges by refusing to fit easily into expected styles or structures, but does so while conveying a strangely folkloric familiarity. The story rushes a bit at the end and almost borders on preachy, so its broad appeal is uncertain. But it is a thought-provoking novel with potential for sparking excellent discussions about crime and punishment, folklore, and family structures.

French, 2007 Award, 190 pages: Mourlevat, Jean-Claude. *The Pull of the Ocean*. Trans. Y. Maudet. New York: Delacorte, 2006.

This modernized adaptation of Tom Thumb reveals

each chapter from various characters' viewpoints. One night, Yann overhears a conversation between his parents and convinces his brothers—three sets of identical twins—to run away with him, persuading them that he overheard their parents plotting to kill them. All the boys take off at night and, at Yann's insistence, head toward the ocean. Wise, reticent Yann is so small that they carry him most of the way in a bag. Shortly before the end of their journey, they take brief refuge at a seaside vacation home, but the owner barricades them inside, forcing the boys to spend three days without food, water, or heat until Yann locates a phone and the brothers call home. All but Yann return to the parents, and only the next-to-last chapter reveals his thoughts. The real reason for his departure was anger at his father's plan to kill the kittens recently born on their farm. While no one in the family knows what happened to the boy, the book closes with a skipper's recollection of Yann, happily on board an ocean freight ship.

This charming, little book, which retains the French names and places, reads partly like a fairy tale, partly like a diary, and partly like a transcript of police-recorded interviews. It alludes to the Tom Thumb story just enough to remind the reader of the basic framework and connections, thankfully updating the tale in a believable way that still allows for surprises. Yann is only 10—obviously younger than YAs—but the various narrators range from 10 to 78, covering a spectrum of personalities and age groups. With the large font, spacing, and margins, the novel could be mistaken as a children's book, but the multiple narrative structures promote higher inferential demands suitable at least for middle grades.

French, 2006 Honor, 235 pages: Zenatti, Valérie.

When I Was a Soldier. Trans. Adriana Hunter. New York: Bloomsbury, 2005.

In this memoir, Valérie Zenatti relates her experiences as an Israeli soldier in the late 1980s. Valérie heads to the army quickly after taking the *baccalauréat* (closing high school exam), just like all the other 18-year-olds in Israel. Evolving relationships with her friends and the lingering memory of her ex-boyfriend, Jean-David, weave in and out of her life as a soldier. After training at a base near Tel Aviv, she takes her oath and receives her official assignment to the secret service. There she spends intense days memorizing

large amounts of information and receives nearly perfect marks. After only one less-than-stellar test performance, she's punished by having to give up her weekend leave in order to stay, study, and retake the exam. She feels so ill that she has a painful panic attack, sending her to the hospital. The army attributes it to stress. Psychological evaluations and counseling help her talk things out. Soon the soldiers apply their knowledge to deciphering Jordanian flight transmissions; a year later Valérie's released from her military service.

This book's prose—to the credit of both the author and the translator—is graceful, reflective, and emotionally believable. The translation impressively navigates comments about French, Russian, Hebrew, and other languages with ease. A few footnotes help to explain important words and dates, but they feel natural in the context. The literary level of the language, as well as some content and cultural references, would place this for older readers. This high-interest, well-written memoir is also thought-provoking without being didactic. In some ways, Zenatti's French background places her as both the observer and the observed in the Israeli culture, so readers can look through the window *with* and *at* Zenatti as she develops. The reality of compulsory military service for males and females is far from the kind of life that American teenagers experience, so this book would definitely prove enlightening for teens and humanize the citizens of a politically pivotal region of the world.

German, 2005 Honor, 327 pages: Chotjewitz, David.

Daniel Half Human. Trans. Doris Orgel. New York: Simon Pulse, 2006.

The narration of this book moves between Daniel Kraushaar's thoughts as he revisits his post-war homeland and a third-person account of Daniel's experiences with his friend, Armin, during the rise of Hitler's regime. The two 13-year-olds are enamored with the Nazi movement, but when Daniel demands permission to join the Hitler Youth, his parents reveal his mother's Jewish descent. Daniel reacts against his mother but manages to conceal his identity for quite some time, until a jealous soccer teammate finally reveals his secret. Armin joins the Hitler Youth but maintains a romance with Daniel's Jewish cousin, Miriam. His superiors know about the trysts, but Armin rejects the pressure to betray the family, instead

warning them of the violence to come on November 9, the night now known as *Kristallnacht*. Not many months later, the Kraushaars escape to the United States. During the last flash forward, Daniel arrives at a hearing, where German men are being questioned about their involvement in the war. There, in an American military capacity, he meets his friend again. Though Armin states that he was never a member of the SS or Nazi party, Daniel discounts his claim.

Chotjewitz's narrative strategy proves effective and moving, providing hope for Daniel's future during frightening events. The depictions of stunning, complex characters seem honest, and the

author provides an interesting spectrum of reactions to the disturbing situations. It provides a chilling look at the pervasiveness and influence of propaganda, as Chotjewitz inserts just enough historical background knowledge to illuminate the scenes without overwhelming the reader with detail. Nearly all of the characters straddle the lines of loyalty, class, and heritage, and the story provides rich opportunities for classroom analysis.

German, 2006 Award, 232 pages: Holub, Josef. *An Innocent Soldier*. Trans. Michael Hofmann. New York: Arthur A. Levine, 2005.

Adam, a teenage farmhand, is awoken in the middle of the night and taken to town by his master, where he is signed up for Napoleon's army in place of the master's son. He marches with the Grande Armée on their way to conquer Russia, while the mean-spirited Sergeant Krauter constantly hounds the poor boy. Luckily, an aristocratic lieutenant a few years older than Adam takes him on as a personal servant, and the two form a tight friendship. Adam serves Konrad Klara faithfully, nursing him through sickness, trudging through frustrations incurred by the ever-pursuing Krauter, and narrowly avoiding the freezing, starva-

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tion, and violence that surround their journey. Somehow the two manage to survive the ordeal and reunite later in the lieutenant's comfortable home back in western Germany.

Adam's persistent, wide-eyed innocence seems young for the mid-teens he supposedly depicts, and the relationship between him and Konrad Klara never quite connects. However, the book is interesting for

its unusual subject matter—the difficult, daily life of young soldiers in the Napoleonic War—and effectively conveys the confused feeling of being carried away by events completely beyond one's control. At times, the slow-paced, present tense narration of the novel is actually difficult to follow, and the language occasion-

ally feels awkward and out-of-place. The narrative style, however, might itself be a window to another culture. Prominent translator Anthea Bell likes the “immediacy” of the historic present tense but treats it with “caution” when translating for children, because it does not always carry the same implications in English as it does in French and German, where it is more commonly used (Bell, 2006, p. 232). These linguistic considerations might make the book helpful for foreign language teachers illustrating the use and effect of tenses in each language.

Hebrew, 2004 Award, 186 pages: Orlev, Uri. *Run, Boy, Run*. Trans. Hillel Halkin. Boston: Walter Lorraine, 2003.

Trying to escape the Warsaw ghetto during World War II, eight-year-old Srulik and his mother are separated from Srulik's father. Soon afterward, the mother also disappears, and Srulik is left to fend for himself. He joins a small group of young thieves, and they narrowly escape to the Polish side, where they live briefly in the forest until German officers break up the crew. Srulik dashes off alone and soon assumes a Catholic identity that includes the adopted name Jurek. Alternately running away and working for various locals and even German soldiers, Jurek endures a series of hardships—including a threshing accident

that mangles his arm so badly it has to be amputated. Through luck, tenacity, and the kindness of strangers, he survives the war and plans to stay with a particular family afterward, but a children's home eventually retains him. There, a kind worker helps the boy to remember his family and his past.

The epilogue explains that the worker eventually helped Jurek to locate his sister, the only other surviving member of his immediate family. He went on to finish his education, have a family, and move to Israel, where the author heard him (now using the name Yoram) relate his story. However, it is unclear whether Orlev had any further contact with the man, so it is uncertain how much of the story is accurately biographical. Like some similar accounts, the weighty subject matter bogs down in specifics, and emotional events feel oddly distant. Still, the story of survival is amazing without becoming maudlin, and the language feels smooth. Despite the younger age of the protagonist, it can be recommended for YAs, especially given some themes and situations. Srulik's adaptability and shifting concepts of identity might intrigue teenage readers engaged in their own quests for self-discovery. Furthermore, Srulik's unique life broadens the range of experiences students usually encounter when reading literature about the Holocaust.

Hebrew, 1999 Award, 246 pages: Rabinovici, Schoschana. *Thanks to My Mother*. Trans. James Skofield. New York: Dial, 1998.

Schoschana Rabinovici (originally Susanne Weksler) wrote this autobiographical account in Hebrew, but the American version of her experiences during the Holocaust comes to English via a translation of the German edition. Rabinovici begins her grim growing-up years in Vilnius, Lithuania, which the Russians occupied from 1939 to 1941. First, her family is terrorized when the Germans invade, and soon the family must relocate to the ghetto. When that is liquidated, most of the family is separated. At an early stop, Susanne's mother, Raja, hides her daughter in a backpack and presses forward to the right of the moving crowds as those on the left are ushered to their deaths. Thanks largely to her mother's ingenuity, Susanne survives *Kaiserwald*, then Stutthof Camp, and a death march to the Taudentzen Camp. Ultimately, mother and daughter are rescued and move to Bialystok after the war, where they reunite with Susanne's

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uncle, the only other member of her family to survive.

This is a particularly detailed (at times, graphic) autobiography, providing a grim, heart-wrenching account of the horrors experienced by the author and the unflagging perseverance of her mother. The details weigh down the story at times, making the reading process occasionally laborious. Still, the book excellently recounts Rabinivici's life through a child's-eye memory, stating things simply and bluntly, and revealing details in the way she learned them herself. Like *Run, Boy, Run*, the author's life experiences defy strict national boundaries and illustrate areas of the globe that sometimes occupy the periphery of Holocaust-era study in language arts classrooms.

Italian, 2007 Honor, 361 pages: De Mari, Silvana. *The Last Dragon*. Trans. Shaun Whiteside. New York: Hyperion, 2006.

A woman and a hunter take pity on a very young elf, Yorshkrunsquarkljolnerstrink ("Yorsh" for short), even though it is punishable by death for them to help elves. After the three are captured and sentenced to hang, Yorsh helps them escape and, during their flight, reads an ancient prophecy that involves "the last dragon and the last elf" (p. 61). He recognizes himself as the one spoken of, fulfills the first portion of the prophecy, and pledges to stay and care for a cranky dragon who grudgingly aids the three travelers.

Thirteen years later, Yorsh cares for the dragon until it lays an egg and flies off to die, transferring his duties to the newly hatched dragon. Meanwhile, Robi, the daughter of the now-deceased woman and hunter, lives at a terrible orphanage. After being caught talking to Yorsh, Robi is arrested and condemned to die. Yorsh helps her escape, and the two lead an uprising of orphans and other oppressed citizens, fleeing to a city behind a waterfall as Yorsh urges them forward with his gift of storytelling. The exhausted crowd succeeds only because of a distraction caused by the dragon, who dies in the process.

This fantasy's plot appears predictable at first, but the characters are so sympathetically drawn and complexly portrayed that the story becomes surprisingly fresh, despite occasionally sluggish pacing. The narrative injects a healthy amount of irony, humor, and advanced vocabulary that readers could appreciate at a variety of levels, managing to describe the actions of each character from outsiders' perspectives—illustrat-

ing how ridiculous they appear from a distance while demonstrating how those actions are justifiable from insiders' viewpoints. Although the fantasy setting and style of translation do not betray the book's foreign origins, the plot structure and problem-solving strategies deviate from expectations of British and American tradition. In addition, many themes in the novel easily support discussions about family folklore, responsibility, government structures, genocide, and even simply the art of storytelling.

Japanese, 2009 Award, 248 pages: Uehashi, Nahoko.

Moribito: Guardian of the Spirit. Trans. Cathy Hirano. Arthur A. Levine, 2008.

Balsa, a 30-year-old, spear-wielding, female bodyguard is charged with preserving the life of the Chagum, the Second Prince, who is also Moribito, Guardian of the Spirit and host to the egg of a water spirit linked to a parallel world. Not only is the boy's life at stake, but if he does not survive until midsummer and reach the sea for the egg to hatch, the whole land of New Yogo will suffer from a terrible drought. With the help of a Tanda (a childhood friend and healer) and Torogai (a clever magic weaver), Balsa fends off attackers sent by the Mikado (his father) and supports Chagum through the difficulties he experiences as the egg matures, gradually revealing aspects of her own strange past and discovering secrets about local legends and politics along the way. Ultimately, they succeed in their endeavor, defeating the monstrous earth spirit Rarunga as a sacred bird carries the egg away to safety. After learning that Chagum's older brother has died, leaving him as the Crown Prince, Balsa leaves to return to her childhood home of Kanbal.

As Uehashi states in her author's note at the end of the book, this martial-arts tale is set in a "fantasy world that carries the scent of Japan" (p. 260). The book contains a great deal of fast-paced action, in-

The narrative injects a healthy amount of irony, humor, and advanced vocabulary that readers could appreciate at a variety of levels, managing to describe the actions of each character from outsiders' perspectives.

triguing linguistic and folkloric details, and an interesting set of characters with ages not traditionally considered YA. It is also the first in an extremely popular Japanese, 10-volume series that has been adapted for manga, television, and other media, affording comparisons that span not only countries but genres. The second book, *Moribito II: Guardian of the Darkness*, earned Scholastic a Batchelder honor in 2010.

Russian, 1998 Honor, 192 pages: Wassiljewa, Tatjana. *Hostage to War: A True Story*. Trans. Anna Trenter. New York: Scholastic, 1997.

Based on the author's memories and writings, this memoir recounts Wassiljewa's experiences from early 1941 through late 1949 in the form of a diary. The bombing begins in her hometown of Leningrad, where her father becomes ill and food is scarce. Thirteen-year-old Tatjana braves a long, cold journey to collect corn for her family, and her father dies that year. When the Germans take Tatjana to Germany as a captive laborer, she starts work in a bean field. Her lack of strength gets her sent to a factory in the city to sort cartons. She makes friends there and barely survives an illness. After American bombs leave the city in ruins, Tatjana and a friend scramble from town to town until Tatjana finds refuge in Belgium. Almost 18 by then, Tatjana returns to her ailing mother and sister and is dismayed to discover that her homeland treats the previously captive Russians as potential traitors. She finally finishes her education and becomes a teacher, and the book closes with a historical note about Russia and Germany.

The text is an American translation of a German translation of the original Russian, and perhaps as a result, the writing becomes clumsy and choppy at times. From Russia to Germany to Belgium and back to Russia, this book covers a lot of historical and geographical territory. Consequently, the events pass by in a blur, but the range of Wassiljewa's experiences does provide a compelling overview of pivotal events and makes the state in Russia after the war even more disheartening. The author details instances of brutality, flippancy, and selfishness from a variety of sources alongside touching displays of humanity and compassion from Russians, Poles, and Belgians alike. The resulting depictions are well rounded and human, offering students brief glimpses into the lives of people from a variety of Eastern-European nations.

Hope for the Batchelder and Beyond

This sampling of books, as well as a scan of the other available titles, reveals some patterns and limitations. The world as viewed through the Batchelder is not as expansive as it should be. Interestingly, for example, only one originally Spanish children's book graces the Batchelder list. Translations from Western-European languages—especially French and German—dominate. I have deduced three possible reasons for this: (1) They have longer-standing literary traditions for children and young adults; (2) "Some languages are much easier to translate than others and so are less challenging to the American publishers" (ALSC, p. 65); (3) As Emer O'Sullivan argues, there is a "cultural narrow-mindedness" on the part of publishers that "leads to the exclusion of works translated from other languages" (p. 68). Though actually identifying the cause is problematic, it would certainly be refreshing and helpful for all readers if publishers could provide access to worthy titles from all continents and nations.

Naturally, once a book has a reasonable degree of success, publishers are more likely to market additional titles by the same author. Authors Uri Orlev, Kazumi Yumoto, and Anne-Laure Bondoux (whose *A Time of Miracles* earned Delacorte Press this year's Batchelder Award) all have more than one YA book receiving Batchelder recognition. However, translation complicates the very notion of authorship. The translators' imprints on the text, of course, can hardly be overstated, as they mediate both words and systems, cultural norms and genres (Shavit, p. 25). Anthea Bell, Elizabeth D. Crawford, Hillel Halkin, Doris Orgel, Y. Maudet, and James Skofield are among those who've translated multiple Batchelder honorees, at least one of which was marketed for teens. Publishers' influences—determining which texts are translated, who will translate them, and how they'll be marketed to the US audience—almost posit them as authors themselves.

War-related themes—especially World War II—traditionally have led the lists of Batchelder-honored YA titles in American translation, though children's books have enjoyed wider variety by comparison. Fortunately, recent years have expanded the thematic range. The increased diversity is probably due to a general increase in translation, giving the Batchelder committee a larger number of books from which to select winners. Referring to the early 2000s, for example, Bell said she had "translated more children's

books in the last three or four years” than she had in the previous twenty” (Travis, par. 4), and young adult literature is arguably among those translations. Still, according to Bell, publishers want only the “absolutely top titles” and tend to ignore “the perfectly acceptable series of everyday life stories” (Travis, par. 12–13), which, unfortunately, removes potential windows through which teenage readers might see the world.

Ideally, translated young adult literature should encompass a broader spectrum of languages and aspects of life. We can hope that the Batchelder recognition and other efforts will continue to support these offerings so that young adults will have more opportunities to read in the edge—the edge of cultures, languages, classifications, literary markets, and national boundaries.

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