

Andersen / Tomi Ungerer's Toys and Tales. There have been other international meetings recently, for example a seminar about 'Children's Books and Visions of Childhood in Black Africa', another about the 'Contemporary Perspectives of the Children's Novel', and one will take place in March 2001 about 'Literary Appropriation in Fairy Tales'.

The accession of the Institute to membership of FILLM is yet another effort to reinforce its international dimension. Moreover the IICP would be glad to host an FILLM congress in the future. The Institute had previous experience of arranging a large venue when it organized in Eaubonne the 1998 Children's Literature Association conference on the theme 'Children's Literature and the Fine Arts'. A possible theme if a FILLM congress were to be held in France would be 'Water', which allows numerous approaches, from symbolism to ecology.

This international approach is also developed along other lines. The Institute is in touch with all the main international associations involved in children's literature, like the IBBY (International Board on Books for Young People). It takes part in a European research project on picture books, as the focus on illustrations enables the exchange of books between classes from different countries. International exchanges are also favoured through the invitation of foreign authors to stay at the Institute for periods of about 10 days, offering them the opportunity to meet French children as well as personalities from the book industry: in November 2000 for instance, in connection with the symposium about Africa, an author from Mali stayed in Eaubonne. Another aspect is the promotion of translation. Translations of children's books into French or from French into other languages are encouraged (e.g. by helping translators to find publishers) and studied in seminars. An interesting point is that a significant number of French authors have translated children's books into French. Moreover some of the seminars or training sessions are organized not only in French but also in English for foreign students wishing to widen their knowledge of French children's literature. A recent example was a seminar held in English in June 2000 on French illustrators of children's picture books.

I would say that the difficulties of the Institute spring from its strengths. The ambition and variety of its aims make it hard to find the necessary funds (in spite of subsidies from local or national authorities), but also the people or time to carry out at once the different missions it has set itself. It is sometimes difficult not to scatter energies when there is so much to do. One step towards the achievement of all these aims has been the recent development of the Institute's staff (now a president, a secretary-general, a secretary and two archivists), each person having a particular task to carry out. Efforts should also be made to increase attendance at the events organized and strengthen the continuity of the Institute with its members (there are 71 currently). The publication of a quarterly newsletter since March 1999 has partly been a solution to these problems.

www.univ-paris13.fr/perrault.htm

The International Research Society for Children's Literature (IRSCCL)

Rosemary Ross Johnston and Sandra Beckett

Children's literature is increasingly recognized as a significant area and as a rich and growing field of academic study. It is of interest to literature and language scholars, teachers and

librarians, journalists, writers and illustrators, sociologists and health scientists. It introduces children to *language* as an art form, and reflects not only a *literature*, but also an artistically mediated worldview that includes ideas of the construct of ‘the child’ and of ‘childhood’. It constitutes an important aspect of cultural studies: what any society endorses and provides for its young is likely to reflect a great deal about its own attitudes, values and ideologies, not only in relation to its children, but also in relation to itself. Children’s literature emerges from the human desire for story – story told and story read, private story and communal story; it also emerges from the desire of a culture to teach its children about its sense of identity, and about how it has shaped and ordered the world into which they have been born.

Whilst children’s literature *is* literature, and part of the literature continuum, its intensive study has led to the emergence of a distinctive body of theory. Here for example, is a literature that (in the case of picture books) depends for meaning-making not only on the artistic use of words but also on the artistic use of pictures. Nor does such meaning-making emerge from either one or the other (words or pictures), but on an interaction and negotiation between the two: children read both the words and the illustrations as part of the carriage of story. Sometimes words are privileged, and sometimes pictures; sometimes both tell the same story, sometimes they tell a different story, and the real ‘story’ is created by the child reader in the spaces in between. A well-known example of this is *Come Away from the Water Shirley*, by John Burningham, where the words express what Shirley hears in the everyday world (parental talk and admonitions to be careful on a visit to the beach), while the pictures express what Shirley is thinking about in another world altogether (a pirate adventure); the collaborative story of words and illustrations (which is not fully contained in either) is a celebration of the imagination, its freedoms and delights. Indeed, picture books contain elements of the novel genre in their verbal text (including plot, character and motivation), elements of poetry in their language (sparse, euphonic, succinct and powerful), and theatrical elements in their composition (each page a stage, each illustration a depiction of a theatrical moment). The development of picture book theory is one of the exciting developments in the study of children’s literature.

Here also is a literature in which at some point or other, to some degree or other, we have *all* participated, and in which each individual, as well as each society, has a degree of emotional investment. Thus the study of children’s literature constitutes a fruitful area to study sociocultural subjectivities and ideologies, not only those reflected in themes and significances, but also those reflected in narrative structures. There are pedagogical implications as well; literature for children is associated with reading, and with the whole contested subject of literacy and literacy skills. The International Research Society for Children’s Literature was established to give scholars working in this new area a forum and meeting place for intellectual debate and research.

Origins. The foundations of the International Research Society for Children’s Literature were laid at the Frankfurt Colloquium of 1969, which was organized by the members of the *Institut für Jugendbuchforschung* of the Goethe University in Frankfurt, Germany. Members of the Frankfurt Institute proposed that an international organization support and promote research in the field of literature for children and young people. Colloquium participants from five countries elected an organizational committee, and the following year, on 30 May 1970, the IRSL was founded by seven specialists, from Austria (Richard Bamberger), Czechoslovakia (Frantisek Holesovsky), Federal Republic of Germany (Peter Aley, Klaus Doderer, Helmut Mueller), Spain (Carmen Bravo-Villasante), and Switzerland (Franz Caspar). By-laws were approved, and Klaus Doderer was elected the first IRSL president.

Membership. The first symposium of the Society was held at Frankfurt in October 1971. At this time 50 scholars from 18 countries became members of the IRSL. At the end of 1971 the society had 75 members from 18 countries. By 1997 the Society has approximately 230 members from 39 countries. Currently, in 2001, the membership represents 43 countries.

Membership is open to individuals engaged in research into children's and young people's literature, and institutional membership is open to libraries, journals, children's book collections, and other institutions whose activities are related to the aims of the society. Institutional membership does not carry with it the right to vote in general membership meetings, nor does it provide access to board membership.

Membership of the Society is acquired by written application and as a result of the decision of the executive board. Members are obliged to pay annual dues, the minimum being determined in each case by the general membership meeting. The institutional membership fee is double the fee for individual membership. The Society's working accounts are kept and audited in the country where the treasurer resides.

The governing bodies of the Society are (a) the executive board; and (b) the general membership meeting. The executive board consists of the president, the vice-president, the treasurer, the secretary, and two additional members. The executive board carries out the decisions of the general membership meeting and takes the initiative in working towards the goals of the Society. The outgoing president automatically becomes a member of the new board for one term of 2 years unless he or she declines. In the latter case, the Board will function with six members. The Board may coopt one member from the country which hosts the biennial congress, if a member from that country is not already on the Board.

Purpose. The IRSCL fosters interaction between researchers from different countries and scientific disciplines. Its purpose, as stated in the by-laws, is to further research into children's and young people's literature, reading and related fields. The primary aims of the Society are exchange of professional information, discussion of theoretical questions, and initiation and coordination of research. The Society aims first and foremost at facilitating the exchange of information and cooperation between researchers in different countries and from different branches of learning. Its existence enables researchers from different countries and researchers of different disciplines to correspond and collaborate with one another. The Society seeks to work in cooperation with specialists, institutions and organizations whose activities are related to the aims of the Society.

The Society strives to achieve these goals by organizing a congress every two years, by circulating its directory and newsletters amongst members, and by a small publications programme. A general membership meeting is held every second calendar year. The General Membership meeting elects the president and the other members of the executive board by simple majority. Special membership meetings must be convened if the interests of the Society demand it, or if 30 percent of the entire membership request it of the executive board in writing, stating the purpose and the reason for the meeting. The primary purposes of the general membership meeting are to accept the report on the past two-year period and the treasurer's report; elect the executive board; discharge the members of the executive board; determine the minimum annual membership dues; and decide on changes in the by-laws.

Benefits of Membership. Membership of the society has mutual benefits. The stronger and more internationally representative the society becomes, the greater the voices of its individuals are in the Academy (where in the past they may have struggled to overcome misconceptions and intellectual prejudice). The more robust the membership, the better placed the members are to claim their ground, and to apply for research grants and other funding. The Society has a commitment to encouraging and promoting research in the youth literatures of developing nations. Congresses are held all over the world; in a continent of many young countries, such as Africa, a forthcoming congress in South Africa provides an opportunity for IRSCL to provide a forum of support for colleagues working in what may well be an emergent field.

The Society offers its members opportunities for research and the exchange of ideas through the directory, congresses and newsletter; opportunities for national and international

research collaborations; opportunities to promote international research in Children's Literature; possibilities of professional and institutional alliances; a meeting place; opportunities to nominate and be nominated for awards and prizes for new voices and excellence in scholarship; and intellectual debate in the field.

Planning for the Future. Children's literature studies are at a very exciting point in their development. There are indications that the growth of children's literature theory is providing the dynamic lift to literature studies that feminism and postcolonialism did in the later decades of the 20th century. While some researchers have proposed a notion of 'childist' (after 'feminist' and 'postcolonialist') as a descriptor, it seems that, whatever the terminology, children's literature studies are here to stay, and set to become a significant part of the intellectual agenda.

IRSCL faces a number of challenges. The most important of these is its 'internationalism': how can a society address the needs of and represent with integrity so many different countries? What decisions need to be made about languages? In what ways can the society most contribute to the development of the studies of youth literatures, particularly in developing countries? How can membership and attendance at congresses be encouraged and facilitated for the scholars in these countries? How can the Society best use its resources to develop international partnerships and collaborations?

There are no easy answers to some of these questions. However, the Society is fully committed to its intention – that is, to work towards outcomes that generate rigorous, intellectual and scholarly research in the important area of children's literature studies.

www.education.uts.edu.au/centres/crea/irscl

International Association for Germanic Studies (IVG)

International Vereinigung für Germanistik

Michael S. Batts

The International Association for Germanic Language and Literature (Internationale Vereinigung für Germanische Sprach- und Literaturwissenschaft – the name was changed at the business meeting at the 2000 Congress in Vienna to Internationale Vereinigung für Germanistik) has connections on the one hand with the Fédération Internationale des Langues et Littératures Modernes (FILLM) and on the other hand with the International Association of Teachers of German (Internationaler Deutschlehrerverband, IDV). The FILLM was founded in 1948, when the field of linguistics was added at the fourth congress of the Commission Internationale d'Histoire Littéraire Moderne and the name changed to the more appropriate Fédération Internationale des Langues et Littératures Modernes. At the fifth congress of the FILLM in Florence in 1951 a series of disciplinary organizations was suggested by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), including one for Germanic studies. The Germanists present at this meeting supported the idea and formed a provisional executive, consisting of Professors Borcherdt, Santoli and Böckmann. The first idea was to create an umbrella organization, but this idea was soon dropped and at a meeting in 1952, attended by 26 Germanists from 15 countries, it was decided that there should be