

*What's New in Award-Winning
Translated Children's Books
with Jewish Content*

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This talk will...

- ◉ Summarize my research findings about how editors approach selecting children's books to publish in translation
- ◉ Apply findings to translated Jewish children's books recognized by six awards:
 - Mildred L. Batchelder Award
 - USBBY Outstanding International Books list
 - National Jewish Book Awards
 - Sydney Taylor Book Awards
 - Jane Addams Children's Book Award, and
 - GLLI Translated YA Book Prize.
- ◉ Provide booklist (see handout) of award-winning translations with Jewish content, 1970-2018
- ◉ Present hands-on activities to help readers engage with the books
- ◉ List additional resources
- ◉ Brief conclusion

The Research Context

Defining International Books

- ⊙ Location, location, location!
- ⊙ First published outside of one's country
- ⊙ In the US: English-language imports plus books translated from other languages into English
- ⊙ International vs. multicultural (books about other cultures/countries, first published in the US); both can focus on wide-ranging authentic (genuine) cultural experience
- ⊙ Other terms: global/world/transcultural literature

Jella Lepman



iBbY



Why Read International Books?

- ⊙ “Books as bridges” approach
- ⊙ Fresh literary experiences
- ⊙ Specific cultural settings with universal themes
- ⊙ Can become part of every child’s cultural heritage
- ⊙ Deeper insight into others’ lives
- ⊙ Complement many parts of the curriculum...and great for pleasure reading too!
- ⊙ Fight ethnocentrism (these books are not about US children) and prejudice – *tikkun olam*
- ⊙ Philip Pullman (2005): “If we DON’T offer children the experience of literature from other languages, we’re starving them. It’s as simple as that.”

Issues in Publishing Translations

- ⊙ Dearth of translations: approximately 2-3% of US children's books are translations (3% for adult books)
- ⊙ Expensive to translate longer works (hence most translations are picture books)
- ⊙ Perceived lack of interest from buyers and readers
- ⊙ Translator's name often hidden or absent
- ⊙ Possible reader discomfort with the unfamiliar
- ⊙ Americanization (continuum from “adequacy” – fidelity to original – to “acceptability” (accessibility for target audience)
- ⊙ Predominantly Western European languages

...but there are ways to address these issues!

“Found in Translation”

Research Questions

- ⊙ What are the BARRIERS editors encounter?
- ⊙ What are the RESOURCES they see as available?
- ⊙ What are their MOTIVATIONS for publishing translations?
- ⊙ Having considered the barriers, resources, and motivations, what is their PROPENSITY TO PUBLISH translations?

Key Findings I

BARRIERS include:

- ⊙ Relying on others to read a book in another language
- ⊙ Dealing with unfavorable exchange rate [data collected just before 2008 recession]

RESOURCES include:

- ⊙ Attendance at Bologna Book Fair
- ⊙ Connection with agents
- ⊙ Knowledge of award winners in other countries

Key Findings II

MOTIVATIONS include:

- ⊙ A positive personal response to the book
- ⊙ Desire to broaden the perspectives of young readers in the U.S. (“books as bridges approach”)

PROPENSITY TO PUBLISH is greater if editors:

- ⊙ speak a second language
- ⊙ perceive the industry as more open to translations than 5 years ago.
- ⊙ No correlation between propensity to publish and:
 - Years of experience
 - Size of firm.

*Looking for Award-
Winning Judaica
Translations*

Mildred L. Batchelder Award

<http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/alsc/awards/grants/bookmedia/batchelderaward/index.cfm>

“Awarded to a United States **publisher** for a children’s book considered to be the **most outstanding** of those books originating in a **country other than the United States** and in a **language other than English** and subsequently translated into English for publication in the United States during the preceding year.”

USBBY Outstanding International Books (OIB) List

http://www.usbby.org/list_oibl.html

“The Outstanding International Books committee is charged with selecting international books that are deemed **most outstanding** of those published during the calendar year. For the purposes of this honor list, the term ‘international book’ is used to describe **a book published or distributed in the United States that originated or was first published in a country other than the U.S.**”

- ⦿ website links to February *School Library Journal* annotated booklists, bookmarks, and Google maps showing locations of books

Sydney Taylor Book Awards

https://jewishlibraries.org/content.php?page=Sydney_Taylor_Book_Award

“The Sydney Taylor Book Award is presented annually to outstanding books for **children and teens** that **authentically portray the Jewish experience**. Presented by the Association of Jewish Libraries since 1968, the award encourages the publication and widespread use of quality Judaic literature. Gold medals are presented in three categories: **Younger Readers, Older Readers, and Teen Readers**. Honor Books are awarded silver medals, and **Notable Books** are named in each category.”

National Jewish Book Awards

<https://www.jewishbookcouncil.org/awards/national-jewish-book-awards> [awards database coming soon!]

“Inaugurated in 1950, the National Jewish Book Awards is the longest-running North American awards program of its kind and is recognized as the most prestigious. The Awards are intended to **recognize authors, and encourage reading, of outstanding English-language books of Jewish interest.**” There are several categories for young readers: **Children’s Literature** and **YA Literature** (sometimes combined) and **Illustrated Book for Children.**

Jane Addams Children's Book Award

<http://www.janeaddamschildrensbookaward.org/>
“annually recognizes children’s books of **literary and aesthetic excellence** that effectively engage children in thinking about **peace, social justice, global community, and equity for all people**. A national committee of members with passion for and expertise in children’s literature and social justice is responsible for making the choices each year.”

GLLI Translated YA Book Prize

<https://glli-us.org/prizes/>

The GLLI Translated YA Book Prize is the first award is to **recognize publishers, translators, and authors of outstanding books in English translation for young adult readers**. It fills the gap between ALSC's Mildred L. Batchelder Award (0-12 years) and the National Book Award for Translated Literature (adult). For at least the first few years, the committee will **consider works published within three years** of the submission deadline. This is to ensure a wide enough field from which to choose a shortlist. We follow the YALSA model of announcing the **shortlist in late fall** and the **winner and honor titles during ALA Midwinter**. Then at ALA Annual, we party!

The Booklist

Parameters

Included:

- ⊙ Winner, honor, shortlist, and notable titles

Omitted:

- ⊙ Picture books with minimal text
- ⊙ Retellings rather than translations
- ⊙ Allegorical stories about war
- ⊙ WWII stories with no clear Jewish relevance

Final list = 54 titles

Number of Award-Winning Judaica Translations by Year

Year	No. of Judaica Translations	Year	No. of Judaica Translations
2018	1	2003	1
2017	3	2000	2
2015	4	1998	2
2014	4	1997	1
2013	3	1995	4
2012	3	1993	3
2011	1	1991	4
2009	2	1985	1
2008	2	1984	2
2007	1	1980	1
2006	3	1979	1
2005	1	1970	1
2004	3	Total	54

About the Booklist

Format/genres:

- Fiction (36)
- Nonfiction (8)
- Graphic novels (5)
- Picture books (4)
- Poetry (1)

Languages:

- Hebrew (13); German (11); Dutch (9); French (8); Swedish (3); Czech, Italian, Spanish, Yiddish (2); Flemish, Norwegian (1)

Authors with multiple entries :

- Uri Orlev (#26-30), Annika Thor (#39-41), Hermann Vinke (#43-44); Ida Vos (#46-49), Valérie Zenatti (#53-54)

Publishers:

- 37 (69%) titles from large publishers; 17 (31%) titles from smaller independent houses

To Watch For

- ◉ Picture book publisher Enchanted Lion to publish middle grade books, including *Snoozie, Sunny and So-So* (August 2019) by Dafna Ben-zvi, translated from the Hebrew by Annette Appel, and illustrated by Ofra Amit: “a story about loneliness and the hope that new friendships bring, which stars two dogs and a cat.”
- ◉ French graphic novel, *Catherine’s War*, by Julia Billet and Claire Fauvel, forthcoming from HarperCollins (2020): “A Jewish teenager living in the occupied zone of France in 1941, must change her name, forget her past, and flee Nazi persecution.”
- ◉ New publisher: Levine Querido. Committed to include translations on first list (2020). Interested in Jewish content.

Revisiting Issues in Publishing Translations

- ◉ Dearth of translations – there is increased activity – new children's/YA publishers are appearing: Levine Querido, Pushkin Children's Books, Yonder: Restless Books for Young Readers, and Elsewhere Editions
- ◉ Hard to find translators, expensive to translate longer works – cultural organizations offer translation subsidies; GLLI can help publishers and literary translators connect
- ◉ Perceived lack of interest from buyers and readers – supply vs. demand – role of publishers to publish and market translations and persuade librarians to buy them; role of librarians to ask for translations so publishers will know there is a market

Revisiting Issues (continued)

- ⊙ Translators need to be acknowledged – it takes two writers to create a translation. The name of an accomplished literary translator on a book should be an asset.
- ⊙ Possible reader discomfort with the unfamiliar – adults should model interest in translations, as with any kind of reading they support
- ⊙ Americanization – we can trust children to be curious about the unfamiliar – after all, they are learning new things all the time!
- ⊙ Going beyond mostly Western European languages is still a challenge.

*Helping Children & Teens
Connect with
Translations*

Activities with Translations

- ⦿ pair with US book on a similar theme/topic
- ⦿ author study
- ⦿ compare covers of original and US editions (for example, #40 *A Faraway Island*)



More Activities

- ⦿ readers' theater -- choose scenes from middle grade Holocaust books like #6 *Adam and Thomas* and #45 *My Family for the War*
- ⦿ in a language class compare excerpt from the original with the English translation
- ⦿ make a Google map of books by country of publication and/or country of setting
- ⦿ booktalk prompt: distribute notes with the name of a country and ask people to choose one... and its books (example: Chile – #4 *I Lived on Butterfly Hill*)
- ⦿ your ideas!

Keeping Up with Translations

USBBY Bibliographies

“Bridges to Understanding” series of annotated bibliographies sponsored by USBBY and published by Scarecrow Press (now Rowman & Littlefield):

- Goldsmith, Annette Y., Corapi, Susan, and Heras, Theo. *Reading the World's Stories: An Annotated Bibliography of International Youth Literature*. (2016)
- Pavonetti, Linda. *Bridges to Understanding: Envisioning the World Through Children's Books*. (2011)
- Gebel, Doris. *Crossing Boundaries with Children's Books*. (2006)
- Stan, Susan. *The World Through Children's Books*. (2002)
- Tomlinson, Carl. *Children's Books from Other Countries*. (1998)

Additional Professional Texts

- ◎ Corapi, Susan, and Short, Kathy G. *Exploring International and Intercultural Understanding through Global Literature*. Longview Press and World of Words, 2005. Free download: <https://wowlit.org/links/exploring-international-intercultural-understanding-global-literature/>
- ◎ Freeman, Evelyn and Barbara Lehman. *Global Perspectives in Children's Literature*. Allyn & Bacon, 2001.
- ◎ Lehman, Barbara, Freeman, Evelyn, and Patricia L. Scharer. *Reading Globally, K-8*. Corwin, 2010.
- ◎ Stan, Susan. *Global Voices: Picture Books from Around the World*. ALA Editions, 2013.

Organizations

Int'l Board on Books for Young People (IBBY) and United States Board on Books for Young People (USBBY)

<http://www.ibby.org/> 78 national sections including
USBBY www.usbby.org/

- Next USBBY regional conference: Austin, TX, Oct. 25-27, 2019
- Next international IBBY congress: Moscow, Sept. 5-7, 2020

Global Literature in Libraries Initiative (GLLI)

- ◎ Website: <https://glli-us.org/>
- ◎ Facebook group:
<https://www.facebook.com/GlobalLitInLibs/>
- ◎ Twitter: <https://twitter.com/GlobalLitInLibs>

Libraries & Websites

International Children's Digital Library (ICDL)

<http://en.childrenslibrary.org/> -- check out the free iTunes app for iPhone and iPad

International Youth Library (IYL)

<http://www.ijb.de/files/Page00.htm> -- includes White Ravens, books considered worthy of translation:

<http://www.ijb.de/files/whiteravens/wr12/Einleitung12.htm>

World of Words (WOW)

<http://wowlit.org/> hosted by University of Arizona

Journals

Bookbird: A Journal of International Children's Literature

<http://www.ibby.org/bookbird/>

The Looking Glass: New Perspectives on Children's Literature

<http://www.lib.latrobe.edu.au/ojs/index.php/tlg>

WOW Review

<http://wowlit.org/on-line-publications/review/>

Conclusion

- ⦿ Translations are important to share with our children and teens – and there are lots of creative ways to do it!
- ⦿ Librarians have the power and responsibility to help create and sustain the market for translations
- ⦿ Award-winning Judaica translations can educate and entertain but also challenge us as readers – a very good thing!

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<https://www.publishersweekly.com/pw/by-topic/international/london-book-fair/article/79469-london-book-fair-2019-four-questions-for-chad-post.html>
- Conference on Jewish Materials Claims Against Germany. (10 April, 2018). Holocaust Knowledge and Awareness Study. Executive Summary.
http://www.claimscon.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Holocaust-Knowledge-Awareness-Study_Executive-Summary-2018.pdf
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- Pullman, Philip. (2005, September 23). Still lost in translation. Times Educational Supplement, 4653, 23.

Thanks for listening!
Questions? Comments?
Let's talk!