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German as a foreign language

Comparing children's literature

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What is the connection between Christoph Hein's *Das Wildpferd hinter dem Kachelofen* und A.A.Milne's *Winnie the Pooh*? An intertextuality which transcends linguistic, cultural and temporal boundaries and offers a dialogue of diverse images of childhood. It is also a rich example of a phenomenon in children's literature of interest from a comparative point of view. This article introduces the nascent field of Comparative Children's Literary Studies which merges and adapts questions and issues of Comparative Literature and Children's Literature Studies. Drawing on examples from European children's literatures and theories it sketches eight constituent areas of the field - general theory of children's literature, contact and transfer studies, comparative poetics of children's literature, intertextuality studies, image studies, comparative genre studies, comparative historiography of children's literature and comparative history of children's literature studies – and gives a brief description of what they encompass. Two aspects are dealt with in more detail: image studies with special focus on the issue of gender and national stereotypes, and contact and transfer studies; a brief account of the history of the translation and reception of *Alice in Wonderland* in Germany reveals much about the influence of norms and traditions of the target literature on the approaches adopted by translators. What emerges is an impression of just how rich the seam of children's literature is for research in comparative literary and cultural studies.

Children's literature has transcended linguistic and cultural borders since books and magazines specifically intended for child readers were produced on any kind of scale in 18th century Europe. As it has always evolved from international rather than national paradigms, the subject of children's literature research cannot therefore be limited to "geographically internal texts and [...] those responsible for their production" (Bouckaert-Ghesquière 1992: 93). But children's literature, not traditionally regarded as meriting serious scholarship, has hitherto flown under the radar of Comparative Literature, the discipline generally responsible for researching cross-cultural phenomena. Today, with postcolonial, postmodern and postfeminist discourses opening new perspectives of critical practice and redefining the borders which shape what is deemed worthy of critical investigation, children's literature is seen as a rich seam for research in literary and cultural studies. I would like to introduce the emerging field of

Comparative Children's Literary Studies¹, to sketch eight constituent areas and to look at two of them in a little more detail to give an idea of how rich this seam actually is. Before doing so, I would like to present a brief example of the kind of case study which is of interest from a comparative point of view.

1. Bears and Wild Horses

A certain animal of very little brain whose answer to the question 'two plus one?' is "Es ist bestimmt nicht mehr als vier oder fünf [...] Ich weiß genau, wieviel es ist. Es fällt mir im Augenblick nur nicht ein. – Vielleicht zwei?" (Hein 1984: 17), this animal of little brain always carries with him a suitable container when going for a walk in the woods,

falls es etwas Eßbares als Wintervorrat zu sammeln gäbe. Er pflückte sich rechts und links die schönsten und schwärzesten Brombeeren ab, steckte sie allerdings nicht in das Kochgeschirr, sondern aß sie gleich. Er hatte immer Hunger. Er konnte sich nicht erinnern, jemals richtig satt gewesen zu sein. Das jedenfalls war seine Ansicht darüber. Tatsächlich würde er auch nach der ausgiebigsten Mahlzeit nie eine angebotene Schokoladenwaffel oder gar einen Karamelpudding ausschlagen. Nur daß es ihm keiner anbot. (ibid: 14)

He is one of the toys that come to life in tales shared by man and boy in the framework story. Each of the toys, the boy's constant companions, has a distinctive character. They all meet up in the woods, go on picnics or on a treasure hunt, even though they aren't entirely sure what it is that are looking for or where exactly they may find it. Someone's birthday is forgotten, the wood is flooded after days of rain, balloons are used as a means of transport and two of their party hunt a fearsome animal.

Ah yes, the Heffalump, the reader might think, after identifying A.A. Milne's *Winnie-the-Pooh*, published in 1926, and still regarded as "one of the best loved of all children's books" (Carpenter/Prichard 1984: 575). But it's not the Heffalump who frightens this cast of characters, it's a wild horse, a "Wildpferd" from Christoph Hein's *Das Wildpferd unterm Kachelofen. Ein schönes dickes Buch von Jakob Borg und seinen Freunden* (Hein 1984), the only children's book to date written by the renowned (ex-GDR) novelist, playwright and essayist and possibly the only title routinely ignored in

¹ The first systematic treatment of the subject is to be found in O'Sullivan (2000), on which the short survey in Section 2 is based.

accounts of his work². But that says more about the status of children's literature than it does about Hein.

Das Wildpferd was composed for Hein's son Jakob³, just as the *Pooh* books originated in stories told by Milne to his son Christopher Robin. Echos of *Pooh* are to be found in Hein's novel on the structural level, in elements of the plot, in characterization and in the themes of friendship and imagination. But these resonances serve to underline the differences: where Milne's utopian vision, an amalgam of a preindustrial Golden Age and the lost paradise of childhood, is only clouded at the very end by Christopher Robin starting school and thus having to leave the enchanted Hundred Acre Wood for ever, Jakob's difficulties in school and with the adult world generally are neither excluded from the fantasy stories he tells nor from the frame; these experiences are, rather, the negative motor for the power of his imagination.

The most significant divergence is the reversal of the fictitious narrator-narratee roles. Milne's adult narrator not only has access to the world of imaginary childhood, it is he who presents it in story form to the child. The storyteller in Hein's novel is the boy, Jakob Borg; he 'lends' his stories to the adult narrator who desperately wants to hear them. Here the child is the guardian of the imagination; he believes in miracles and is capable of producing them in his everyday life: "‘Uns passieren oft solche Wunder', gab Jakob zu bedenken, 'im Grunde steckt die Welt voller Wunder.'" (Hein 1984: 70). Imagination, the child's gift, is shown to be lacking in the adult world; in Hein's novel only the adult who has the capacity to listen to and understand the stories he is told as the privileged narratee of a child narrator, may regain access.

Through his reference to and reinterpretation of *Winnie-the-Pooh*, Hein signals his admiration for Milne's book as a model of children's literature. At the same time, by realigning the relationship between child and adult, he underscores his demand for more respect for and admiration of the child.

This example of productive reception, of a literary connection across language, space and time takes us to the core of Comparative Children's Literature Studies which

² Cf. the piece by Behn (1990) in the *Kritisches Lexikon zur deutschsprachigen Gegenwartsliteratur* (1978ff) which doesn't mention Hein's children's book.

observes and analyses phenomena involving literature transcending linguistic and cultural borders and identifies patterns of connections between them. A few of the many questions which beg to be asked once the intertextual dialogue between Hein and Milne has been identified (none of which can be addressed in proper detail in this brief account) are, for instance:

- Was *Winnie-the-Pooh* known and read in the GDR?

A brief answer to this is that *Pooh* certainly wasn't widely known in the GDR⁴. The first German translation by E.L. Shiffer, which was published in 1928 but enjoyed nothing like the enthusiastic reception of the book in Britain and the USA⁵, was reissued once in the GDR in 1960 with a relatively small print-run of 5,000 copies. No new translation of Milne's book was published there. The second, and more successful German translation of *Winnie-the-Pooh*, by Harry Rowohlt, appreciated by both children and adults alike, was published in the Federal Republic in 1987, three years after Hein's *Wildpferd*.

- Did Hein know *Winnie-the Pooh* in either German or English?

The textual evidence states that he must have. Establishing such certainties was the main task of the old school of influence studies of which S. S. Prawer said that Virginia Woolf "only has to say of a character in *To the Lighthouse* that he is 'working on the influence of something on somebody' for us to know that he is remote and ineffectual and that his work is arid" (Prawer 1973: 60). The specific facts of Milne's influence on Hein is of less interest here than the questions addressed above as to why and how Hein reworked elements of Milne's narrative into his own.

- Could Hein's readers – child or adult – recognize the allusions to Milne?

The intertextuality is unmarked, in other words the allusions are never explicit. No names from Milne's *Pooh* are cited, no passages reproduced; neither the title of the pre-text nor the name of the author is mentioned. Could his readers nonetheless recognize

³ Jakob Hein, born in 1971, celebrated his literary debut in 2001 with *Mein erstes T-Shirt* (Hein 2001), a collection of stories about growing up in the GDR.

⁴ Karin Richter, an expert on children's literature in the GDR, named Milne's *Pu der Bär* as an example of the kind of fantasy for children widely unknown in the GDR (1992: 135).

them? As *Winnie-the-Pooh* was not widely known to readers in the GDR it is unlikely that the intertextual relationship between *Wildpferd* and *Pooh* would have been realized. Even if the intertextual references had been marked, it would not necessarily have led to a dialogic reading. So why and for whom did Hein play his intertextual game? To what extent can the different constructs of the child presented in the two novels be understood as products of their times and cultures? Was the fact that Hein's *Wildpferd* was one of the first examples of fantasy for children in the GDR responsible for the fact that it was more or less ignored by critics (cf. Richter 1992: 153)?

Each of these questions deserves to be addressed in detail, but they can only be mentioned here as examples of the kind of topics relevant for the comparative study of children's literature. I would like to move on to identify eight constituent areas of the emerging field of Comparative Children's Literature Studies, again mainly in the form of potential questions, and to give a brief description of what they can encompass. In the final part of this article I shall present a more detailed account of aspects of two of these: imagology and contact and transfer studies.

2. Constituent areas of Comparative Children's Literature Studies

The constituent areas of Comparative Children's Literature Studies are:

1. *general theory of children's literature*
2. *contact and transfer studies*
3. *comparative poetics of children's literature*
4. *intertextuality studies*
5. *image studies*
6. *comparative genre studies*
7. *comparative historiography of children's literature*
8. *comparative history of children's literature studies*

⁵ One reason being because it erased the elements specifically addressed to the adult reader of *Winnie-the-Pooh* (cf. O'Sullivan 1994).

2.1. General Theory of Children's Literature

Comparative Children's Literature Studies (CCLS) calls for more than a mere application of basic questions and concepts of general literary theory and comparative literature theory to children's literature, it questions their relevance for and adapts them to address the specific characteristics of this branch of literature. Because the differences between children's literature and general literature dictate key differences between Comparative Literature and CCLS, the first constituent areas of CCLS is 'general theory of children's literature'. The two key defining characteristics which distinguish children's literature from other branches are firstly that it is a body of literature which belongs simultaneously to two systems, the literary and the pedagogical; it is a literature into which the dominant social, cultural and educational norms are inscribed: "Children's fiction belongs firmly within the domain of cultural practices which exist for the purpose of socializing their target audience" (Stephens 1992: 8). This aspect is particularly relevant when studying forms of transfer of children's literature (to what degree do norms of the source text prohibit translation? how are they adapted to conform to those of the target culture? etc.), hence its relevance as a basic theoretical premise for CCLS.

The second key characteristic is that the communication in children's literature is fundamentally asymmetrical. This applies to communication outside the text, where adult authors write, adult translators translate, adult publishers issue, adult critics judge, adult librarians and teachers select and recommend books for child readers. Adults act on behalf of children at every turn. Within the text the asymmetrical communication can manifest itself as the implied (adult) author addressing an implied (child) reader. But the asymmetry accounts for other diverse forms of address to be observed in children's literature – single address (to the child reader alone), dual or even multiple address which can include implicit adult readers and child readers at different stages. A general theory of children's literature which considers the consequences of the asymmetrical communication – forms of thematic, linguistic and literary accommodation employed by authors to bridge the distance and difference between adult and child, for instance - are central to a general theory of children's literature which forms the basis of CCLS.

2.2. Contact and Transfer Studies

Every form of cultural exchange between children's literatures from different countries, languages and cultures is of interest here; contact, transfer (by translation, adaptation or otherwise), reception, multi-lateral influences etc. An important aspect of investigation is the trade balance of translations and factors determining the international transfer of children's literature: how is it that translations account for 80% of children's books published in Finland as against 1%-2% in Britain and the USA? The culture-specific attitudes towards foreign literature is one of many determining factors. As the publisher Klaus Flugge remarked in 1994:

Over the last few years [...] the British children's book market has changed. I feel the British have more or less turned their backs on foreign books for children and, to my regret, the number of translations I publish has diminished to one or two, in a list of at least forty titles a year. You may be surprised to know that this is more than most publishers. The reason for this is not so much that British editors or publishers don't read foreign languages or don't want to spend money on translations but simply that there is a lack of interest in this country in anything foreign. (Flugge 1994: 209)

The conditions of production, export and import of children's literature have little to do with the idealistic but still current myth of 'one world of children's books'. Hence such questions have to be addressed as: Which countries export children's literature while failing to import any? How are translations accepted, evaluated and integrated into a target literature? Who is responsible for introducing books and literatures into different cultural contexts? Why are certain works not translated, and why are others discovered only decades after first publication? How has the development of literary traditions been influenced by translations?

The defining characteristics of children's literature – its asymmetrical communication and its simultaneously belonging to the literary and the pedagogical systems - are at the heart of the difference between the theory and practice of translating literature for adults and for children as children's literature generally passes through social and educational filters not normally activated when literature for adults by adults is translated (cf. Section 4, 'Alice in Germany', where the question of translation will be discussed in more detail).

2.3. Comparative Poetics of Children's Literature

This area addresses the complex of literary aesthetics. One example is the comparative development of the new, complex, 'literary' children's literature, which embraces

techniques common to the psychological novel and whose beginnings can be traced back to the end of the 1950s in England, the 1960s in Sweden and around 1970 in Germany. Other areas of interest include the various forms of comedy and humour in children's literature across cultures: Is there such a thing as universal comedy? Do children everywhere laugh at the same things? What comic devices and means from slapstick to satire are most prevalent in (which) children's literature? When and where did it become permissible for adults in positions of authority to become objects of comedy in children's literature? Thematology, which compares the aesthetic treatment of themes in literature also belongs to comparative poetics; it can address such matters as the treatment of death in children's literature across time and cultures.

2.4. Intertextuality Studies

Some of the earliest children's books were adaptations of existing ones for adults – *Robinson Crusoe*, *Gulliver's Travels*. Children's literature has from its inception been a thoroughly intertextual literature of adaptations and retellings. These retellings, parodies, crosscultural references, simple, subtle and complex forms of interaction between national literatures are amongst the subjects of intertextuality studies - Milne's *Pooh* and Hein's *Wildpferd* already served as an example of unmarked intertextuality. An instance of marked intertextuality, in which the links between pre-text and intertext is explicit, is Kirsten Boie's collection of episodic tales in *Wir Kinder aus dem Möwenweg* (2000), a homage to Astrid Lindgren's *Alla vi barn i Bullerbyn* (1947) (German: *Wir Kinder aus Bullerbü* (1954)), which aims to capture the spirit, style and structure of Lindgren's original while transposing the environment and social conditions of rural Sweden at the beginning of the twentieth century to those of urban Germany at the beginning of the twenty-first.

2.5. Image Studies

Modern image studies investigate "the complex links between literary discourse, on the one hand, and national identity constructs, on the other" (Leersen 2000: 270). This can involve analysing topographies specific to different cultures (the forest in German, the garden in English, the Alps in Swiss or the outback in Australian children's literature (cf. Tabbert 1995)), aesthetic aspects of how 'the other' is represented in literature (cf. O'Sullivan 1989 on the aesthetic potential of national stereotypes), the extratextual function of national stereotypes or the consistency and change in representations of

specific groups. (Section 3 will return to image studies to take a closer look at the issue of 'gendering the nation').

2.6. Comparative Genre Studies

This can encompass the development of genres in the context of national and international traditions. Taking Germany and the genre of fantasy as the focal point for a thumbnail sketch, we can say that this genre, which was subsequently to become one of the key genres of children's literature, was founded in Germany with E.T.A. Hoffmann's *Nußknacker und Mäusekönig* (1816) but its further development took place in other countries. Hans Christian Andersen initially carried on the heritage of German Romanticism in the field of children's literature in Denmark in the early 19th century, and the tradition of fantasy reached new heights in mid-19th century England with the works of George MacDonald and Lewis Carroll and, somewhat later, E. Nesbit. Via the Swedish reception of the golden age of English fantasy – specifically by Astrid Lindgren – this genre finally reentered Germany, its country of origin, with a revolution in children's literature called *Pippi Långstrump*, in German translation in 1949, leading, for the first time again since the Romantic era, to a favourable climate for the reception and creation of fantasy for children in Germany.

2.7. Comparative Historiography of Children's Literature

Comparative historiography is interested in the development of children's literature research in different countries, and the criteria according to which histories and accounts of the various children's literature are written. It asks: how are the historical accounts organized? According to genres, themes, authors, historical periods? What is the basis of the periodization? Are they written from the disciplinary perspective of literary history, educational history, history of the book or librarianship? Which is the dominant disciplinary context of the study and teaching of children literature in any particular country?

2.8. Comparative History of Children's Literature Studies

Some recent semiotic models of children's literature postulate identical phases of development for children's literature following similar patterns in all cultures, a universal progression from didacticism to diversity (cf. Shavit 1986 and Nikolajeva 1996). A comparative history of children's literature, however, would have to examine the

social, economic and cultural conditions which have to prevail in order for a children's literature to develop, to register how the unique histories of post-colonial children's literatures differ from the postulated 'standard' model based on north-western European countries (Britain, Germany, France). Cf. for examples of developments which deviate from the 'standard' model the discussion of children's literature in Ireland (O'Sullivan 1996) or Africa (O'Sullivan 2000, 138ff).

3. Gendering the Nation

After what has necessarily been a very brief sketch of the main areas in the field of CCLS, I will now look at two aspects in more depth. One of them is an imagological aspect which I would like to call 'Gendering the Nation', the second is the topic of translation and reception, using as a case study *Alice in Wonderland* in Germany.

The attribution of binary opposites (active/passive, rational/irrational), often in a hierarchical relationship as 'positive and normative' versus 'negative and deviant', is seen as a central mechanism in the construction of gender, with male/female being the fundamental opposition. This mechanism can be seen to apply similarly to the construction of national images in literature, depending on the current state of social, political, cultural and especially economic relations between the group portraying and the group being portrayed (the spectant and the spected). The image of the Germans in British children's literature since 1871, for instance, shows a clear development from 'gentle', 'family loving', 'benign', 'musical', 'gemütlich' – traditionally female - characteristics attributed during the late 19th century to the 'brutal', 'overpowering', 'cruel', 'loud', 'unfeeling' - traditionally more 'male' - characteristics of the threatening, Prussian German of the World Wars in literature written from the end of the 19th century until the 1960s. This development mirrors one of the structural factors involved in national characterizations; that of *weak* vs. *strong*. As Joep Leersen observed:

Images of powerful nations will foreground the ruthlessness and cruelty which are associated with effective power, whilst weak nations can count either on the sympathy felt for the underdog or else on that benevolent exoticism which can only flourish under the proviso of condescension (Leersen 2000: 276f.).

While during the early 19th century "in the rosy-tinted representation of Madame de Staël" (ibid: 277), Germany had all the charms of a politically weak country, the same

country of the Wilhelminian period had “all the repulsive hallmarks of efficiency, power and ruthlessness” (ibid). The shift in image is, he argues, directly connected to the nation's rise in international stature.

This alteration in German image from soft to hard, weak to strong, exotic to threatening can be traced by examining the adjustment of the valorization of the stereotype of ‘the musical German’ over a period of about a hundred years. I can only give a thumbnail sketch of the changes here which are documented in greater detail in *Friend and Foe* (O'Sullivan 1990), a study of the cultural history of Anglo-German relations from 1870 to 1985 as reflected in the medium of children's fiction.

The earliest mention of music in the corpus of British childrens' books with a German connection is in a story of a young boy who grows up to be a great poet, first published in 1862, in which the sensitivity of Germans to the arts in general is underlined. Music especially is “innate in the German character” (Ewing 1912: 75); there are “a thousand airs floating in German brains” (ibid: 56). A year later in a fairy-tale by Julia Goddard, ‘The Poor Musician’ of the title acquires a magic violin (Goddard 1863). Another poor musician, a wandering minstrel, gives up his travelling for the love of a woman and settles down to become a city musician (Roberts 1877). The musicality of the Germans is presented in these books - all of which were written before and during the 1870s before the Prussianization of Germany and England's reaction to it started to be reflected in children's literature - as exclusively positive.

The first discordant tones are to be heard in a story published in 1902, set during the Franco-Prussian War. Neither gentle nor harmonious, the music here is loud and rowdy, produced by “rough drunken” (Lucas 1902: 56) German soldiers with their “shouts and songs and laughter” (ibid: 57). This is the harbinger of portrayals which become increasingly negative: German musicality is no longer sensitive, and ‘feminine’ but rough and ‘masculine’.

Music serves the purpose of illustrating the uncouthness and arrogance of members of the German army in books written and set during and just after the First World War. In Captain Charles Gilson's *A Motor-Scout in Flanders* drunken Pomeranian soldiers sing “a very raucous and discordant interpretation of ‘Deutschland über alles’” (Gilson 1915: 49), a song sung by soldiers, drunk or sober, in a number of books published during the 1910s and 1920s. This tradition is picked up again in the 1940s: British pilots who look down from their planes on a show parade in Germany in *Bombs on Berchtesgaden* see

men in Nazi uniform goose-stepping and “a typical German Band, blowing and swaggering” (Dupont n.d.).

What happens to the testosterone-charged musicality of the Germans after the war? As is well known, swaggering Nazis have become an important stock character in British comedy, escape stories and the like. However, around the end of the 1960s, a positive shift took place in the portrayal of the German in British children's literature. Bearing in mind the dominant negative images of Germany in British culture at that time, it is worth examining the strategies authors used to effect this shift.

In books written in the post-1967 period but set during the periods of the World Wars, recourse is taken to the familiar stereotype of musicality, but here its favourable properties are used as redeeming features of individual ‘positive’ Germans in an apparent attempt to show young British readers that the Germans should not exclusively be associated with warmongering. The semantic core ‘music’ remains the same but the interpretation has changed. The drunken, loud, nasty, raucous music of the warring Germans gives way, in books written after 1967, to a recurrence of the gentle, sensitive musicality found in the earlier books, making the character endowed with the gift (usually a prisoner of war) almost exclusively positive. A bevy of this type of book appeared in the 1970s - Robert Westall's *The Machine-Gunners*, David Rees' *The Missing German* or Gabriel Alington's *Willow's Luck*, to name but three. The dark side of Germany during the period portrayed is not excluded from these books, but the overall positive power of the individual German character dominates. Music is used to denote the non-military side of the German. The machine-gunner in Robert Westall's book teaches his English child-captors to sing the song *Ich hatt' einen Kameraden!* “The children took up the words of the sad old soldiers' song. They sang so sweetly that Rudi was close to tears. What was happening to him? He grew less like a soldier every day; more like a *lehrer* in some kindergarten” (Westall 1977: 132). In *Summer of the Zeppelin* Elvira is told that her father has been reported missing in action. Almost immediately afterwards she hears music being played on the church organ. The rector tells her that the piece is called *Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring*, was composed “by a German musician called Bach. And you won't often hear it played as superbly as that” (McCutcheon 1983: 53). The organist is a German prisoner of war.

In these British children's books set in periods during which Germany was Britain's enemy number one, we find English children who relate to a German soldier in their

midst as to a father, a friend or even a lover. What devices do the authors use to achieve this extraordinary dissociation of almost automatically negative images of and emotional responses to that nation at that time in history? The individual Germans in these books are marked sufficiently as 'German' to allow them to represent their nation but, at the same time, their negative Germanness is disposed of. In contrast to the Nazis, the collective Germans whose maleness connotes aggression, these individuals don't pose a threat but have, symbolically speaking, been 'emasculated' – usually by means of a broken limb. And having being captured and held prisoner of war places even those not symbolically castrated by injury firmly on the side of the passive rather than the aggressive party. In order to transform their male Germans into positive figures during times of war, authors dispense with and indeed negate traditional elements of the social construction of masculinity in their characterisation; they could be said to ungender the German.

Gendering the nation is a phenomenon with different guises. With my second and last example I would like to illustrate some connotations in books written specifically for girls. A constant topos of German girls' literature since the 18th century is the 'naturalness' and 'unspoiltness' of girls, often presented as a national or racial characteristic: most natural of all was the state of being German. This is illustrated by the following verse published in a girls' magazine in 1781:

Ich bin ein deutsches Mädchen – ich
Bin edel stolz und gut;
Und unverdorben fließt in mir
Ein jeder Tropfen Blut (quoted in Wilkending 1994: 49)

In keeping with the constant comparisons between girls and plants⁶, the natural habitat of German girls is depicted as rural rather than urban, their 'naturalness' is underscored by negative juxtaposition with their sophisticated, even decadent French counterparts in fiction of the 18th and 19th centuries and with English and Russian girls in the 19th and 20th centuries (cf. Wilkending 1994: 49). National stereotypes are clearly utilized in this branch of literature to impart the currently appropriate gender-specific modes of thought and behaviour.

⁶ Girls are compared to violets, roses, "edele Gartenpflanzen" and "frische Waldblumen"; Emmy von Rhoden's *Trotzkopf*, Ilse, is an example of the latter (von Rhoden 1885).

The foreign governess, the international boarding school or the female *Bildungsreise* offered literary exposure to and contrast with other nations. One such *Bildungsreise* by a German girl to England in a novel published in 1891 provides a good example of the function of national characteristics in the female education of the protagonist; the girl's exposure to a supposedly English trait ultimately serves to correct a deficit which hitherto prevented her from fulfilling the ideal gender role of the day. In *Zwillings-Schwestern. Erlebnisse zweier deutschen Mädchen in Skandinavien und England* (Augusti 1891)⁷, the 18-year-old twin daughters of a German pastor are sent abroad for a year as companions for the daughter of the house, the highly spirited Ilse to an English, the shy and meek Frida to a Norwegian family. After she has been in England for a short while, Ilse writes to Frida, venting her frustration by what she sees to be the English tyranny of convention in behaviour:

[...] diese freien Engländer haben sich selbst in ein Netz von despotischen Sitten und Gebräuchen eingesponnen, und wehe jedem, der sich dasselbe nicht willenlos über den Kopf werfen läßt! Wäre er auch ein Musterbild jeglicher Tugend und Vollkommenheit, er würde zweifellos verächtlich über die Achsel angesehen werden. Wie oft habe ich es schon hören müssen: *but that is not ladylike!* und wieviel öfter noch habe ich den Ausdruck: *shocking!* in den Mienen meiner Umgebung gelesen! Wenn Du beim Essen zufällig das Messer zum Munde führst – wenn Du in ein Butterbrot einbeißt, statt Dir ein Stückchen nach dem andern davon abzubrechen, oder beim Nachtschiff eine Feige in die Hand nimmst, statt sie auf dem Teller zu zerschneiden – wenn Du Dir gar einfallen läßt, eine Erdbeere aufzuheben, die dem Diener herabgefallen ist, damit sie nicht zertreten wird – so begehest Du in diesem Lande der Freiheit Verbrechen gegen die gute Sitte, für die es keine Vergebung giebt. Als ich an einem der ersten Abende mein Strickzeug herunterbrachte, um nicht ganz müßig dazusitzen, machte Lady Jane ein Gesicht, als beginge ich etwas Anstößiges und flüsterte mir ganz entsetzt zu: 'Ich hoffe, Sie werden in Gegenwart eines Herrn nicht an einem – Strumpf stricken!' Natürlich lachte ich und sagte, das sei gute, deutsche Sitte und ein echtes, deutsches Mädchen sei ohne Strickzeug gar nicht denkbar – aber da kam ich schön an! Nicht, daß Lady Jane heftig geworden wäre – dazu ist sie viel zu *genteel* und *ladylike* – aber ihre ruhigen Augen blitzen vor Unwillen, und Maud bat mich nachher dringend, davon abzulassen, da ihre Tante es für völlig unpassend halte (ibid: 38f).

Although a deeply religious girl herself, Ilse finds the inactivity of the long English Sundays, during which any form of music or games is forbidden, hard to bear; it increases her homesickness for her *gemütlich* German home, where her parents and siblings wander, singing, through the forests after having completed their duties on a Sunday. Ilse is determined to resist the English way of doing things.

⁷ This novel is briefly discussed in O'Sullivan/Rösler (2000) as an example of how stereotypes of the learners' culture in target language texts can be used to increase intercultural awareness in foreign

[...] ich will mich nicht in das knechtische Joch fangen lassen, das sie hier den Menschen auflegen; ich will mir meine Freiheit bewahren, das zu thun, was Vater und Mutter und unzählige gute und fromme Menschen in meiner Heimat für recht und anständig halten! Und ich will diese Lady Jane, die von Herzen gewiß nicht böse ist, zwingen, mich meinen eigenen Weg gehen zu lassen, denn diese ängstliche Rücksicht auf fremdartige und unvernünftige Vorschriften raubt mir meine sichere Unbefangenheit [...] ich künde der starren englischen Sitte den Krieg an und will einmal sehen, wer in dem Kampfe der Sieger bleibt! (ibid: 39).

Who indeed! The history of girls' books in the 18th and 19th centuries is one of spirited girls learning by various means to conform to the behaviour considered appropriate for them by the gender norms of the day⁸, so we are not surprised when Ilse, too, is brought to realize the folly of her ways. Augusti's novel is unusual in that the behaviour and the virtues which the protagonist needs to adopt are presented in terms of national characteristics: for Ilse to become a complete young woman, she has to learn to conform willingly to the English way of doing things. Miss Robson, a friend to whom she has appealed for advice, makes this clear when she tells Ilse:

Wenn Sie eine fremde Sprache lernen wollen, müssen Sie sich mit ihren Regeln und Ausnahmen bekannt machen; es hilft Ihnen nichts, wenn Sie manches widersinnig finden, die Sprache kehrt sich nicht an Ihre Ausstellungen, sie bleibt wie sie ist. Jeder Verein giebt sich seine Satzungen; wer ihm angehören will, verpflichtet sich, dieselben zu achten, oder er wird ausgestoßen. Auch die englische, gute Gesellschaft hat sich eine Anzahl strenger Vorschriften gegeben, deren genaue Beobachtung für jeden unerlässlich ist, der dazu gezählt werden will. Kein Widerstand, mag er anscheinend noch so berechtigt sein, wird dieselben aufheben, kein einzelner wird das umstoßen, was Tausende in langen Jahren als unumstößliche Regel aufgestellt haben. Ist das nicht vollkommen folgerichtig? [...] da Sie sich aus freien Stücken entschlossen haben, in England zu leben, so müssen Sie auch unsere nationale Eigenart mit in den Kauf nehmen, Miß Stein. (ibid: 45f)

This obviously – if for the reader surprisingly - makes sense to Ilse, who takes the first step towards taming her unruly spirit by declaring: “Ich fürchte, Sie haben recht, Miß Robson”, sagte das junge Mädchen endlich mit einem tiefen Seufzer, ‘und es bleibt mir nur übrig, mein widerspenstiges Herz unter diese Erkenntnis zu beugen’ (ibid: 46). The completion of Ilse's female education sees her conform to the ‘English’ way of behaving in order to be accepted in that country. The common stereotype of the stiff and reserved English is fully utilized in the taming of this German shrew. In an apparition,

language classes.

⁸ This type of book should not be interpreted entirely negatively by being read solely in terms of the ending. By portraying wild girls who had to be tamed, authors could present female behaviour otherwise unacceptable in girls' books at that time. The price that had to be paid was the ‘taming’ at the end, but the readers had the enjoyment of vicariously experiencing norm-breaking at least until the final scenes (cf. Wilkending 1990).

Ilse - and the reader - are shown that it must have been part of the divine plan to send her to England to finish her moral and sentimental education. During a fit of “tief gekränkten Selbstgefühls” in which Ilse weeps and rants in her room – Lady Jane had just reprimanded her sharply for her inappropriate behaviour – the girl imagines her father sitting before her, placing his calming hand on her brow and saying to her in his mild voice “Meine Ilse, viele gute Gaben hat unser himmlischer Vater dir frei geschenkt und dich vor anderen reich bedacht; nun strebe du mit allem Fleiß nach denen, die Er deiner Natur versagte, nach Sanftmut und Demut!” (ibid: 43).

4. Alice in Germany

The second of the two aspects which I would like to present in a little more detail to illustrate the range and relevance of Comparative Children's Literature Studies is a selected aspect of a case study from the area of contact and transfer studies (2.2.), and concerns the translation and reception of Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland* in Germany.

Shortly after *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* was published under his pseudonym Lewis Carroll in 1865, the author, Charles Dodgson, started to examine the possibility of having the book translated into French and German, even going about finding the translators himself. Antonie Zimmermann, a German teacher living in England at the time, produced the first German translation, closely monitored by Dodgson (who, incidentally, didn't speak the language). Published in 1869, it was the very first translation of *Alice in Wonderland*. Since then over thirty different German translations have been published (not counting abridged versions and translations into other media). A short account of the translation and reception of *Alice in Wonderland* in Germany will serve as a final example of Comparative Children's Literature Studies⁹. Can *Alice in Wonderland* be successfully translated into German or, for that matter, into any other language? Word play on the highest level, linguistic jokes which can't be translated easily, poems, parodies; the English language not only provides the context for much of

⁹ A comprehensive analysis as well as a bibliography of all the translations can be found in O'Sullivan (2000).

his humour, it itself is frequently its very object. *Alice in Wonderland* is full of explicit and implicit cultural references which present translators with further difficulties¹⁰.

But beyond these linguistic and cultural elements lies a more fundamental issue which had to be addressed by every German translator of *Alice in Wonderland*: how can you translate a book which is so totally unlike anything produced by German authors for children? How do you deal with its dream-like quality, its perverted logic, its incomprehensibility? Is the book suitable for children? Is it acceptable for German children? Each translation can be read as an answer to these questions provided by the individual translator and influenced by predominant concepts of childhood and attitudes towards what constituted children's literature in Germany at the time of that particular translation.

The translations range from those which infantilize the novel to others which offer an exclusively adult reading of it. It is presumptuous to offer a simple classification of over 130 years of translation history which has produced more than 30 different versions of the same book but, for the sake of a brief overview, it is nonetheless possible to identify five main approaches towards the translation of Lewis Carroll's novel:

- the fairy-tale approach,
- the explanatory approach,
- the moralising approach,
- the literary approach and
- an approach which is both literary and accessible to children.

I would like to illustrate some of these approaches with examples of the translation of Carroll's famous parody 'How doth the little crocodile'.

After several changes in size Alice feels unsure of her identity, so she attempts to recite a religious verse which 'the old Alice' knows by heart, 'Against Idleness and Mischief' from the *Divine Songs Attempted in Easy Language for the Use of Children* by Isaac Watts (1715):

¹⁰ These include references to historical or cultural figures, regional and social accents, imperial weights and measures and names, many of which are figures from English nursery rhymes or personifications of

How doth the little busy bee
 Improve each shining hour,
 And gather honey all the day
 From every opening flower!

How skilfully she builds her cell!
 How neat she spreads the wax!
 And labours hard to store it well
 With the sweet food she makes.

In works of labour or of skill,
 I would be busy too;
 For Satan finds some mischief still
 For idle hands to do.

In books, or work, or healthful play,
 Let my first years be passed,
 That I may give for every day
 Some good account at last.

But when Alice starts her recitation, her voice sounds “hoarse and strange, and the words did not come the same as they used to do” (Carroll 1970: 38). What she actually declaims is:

How doth the little crocodile
 Improve his shining tail,
 And pour the waters of the Nile
 On every golden scale!

How cheerfully he seems to grin,
 How neatly spreads his claws
 And welcomes little fishes in,
 With gently smiling jaws! (Carroll 1970: 38)

Instead of a little busy bee we have a crocodile who grins at his victims; industry, piety and moral are replaced by brutality, egoism and aggression. The parody picks up central themes of the novel: death and murder, eat or be eaten.

Many of Carroll's German translators actually translate the parodies as they stand rather than adopting the principle and parodying a known German pre-text: there are more crocodile poems like the following than parodies of well-known German ones.

Das süße kleine Krokodil
 Wie putzt es seinen Schwanz
 Erst badet es im tiefen Nil,
 Dann trocknet's ihn beim Ringenspiel im Abendsonnenglanz.
 Gar lieblich lächelt es darein

sayings – the Mad Hatter, the March Hare, the Cheshire Cat, the Queen of Hearts and her court.

Streckt seine zarten Pfötchen aus,
 Und lädt die kleinen Fischlein ein,
 Zu sich daheim, dabei zu sein
 Bei dem Geburtstagsschmaus! (Carroll/Freitag 1955: 17).

What we have here is a jolly, supposedly child-friendly poem about a crocodile, full of endearing attributes, *süß, klein, lieblich lächelnd*, even the diminutive claws are *zart*; gone is the sinister undertone of Carroll's original. There is, at a push, some ambiguity left at the end as to whether the *kleine Fischlein* are invited to join in or whether they are to be the *Geburtstagsschmaus*. This translation of *Alice in Wonderland* can be classified as an example of the fairy-tale approach, one which selects what it believes is a more familiar and child-appropriate genre than Carroll's nonsense with its disturbing parodies.

Wie nutzt das kleine Krokodil
 doch seinen langen Schwanz
 und gießt das Wasser aus dem Nil
 auf seiner Schuppen goldnen Glanz.
 Wie freudig grinst es und wie dreist
 mit seinem Maul voll Zähnen,
 die Fischlein es willkommen heißt.
 Es sollte sich was schämen. (Carroll/Werdau 1984: 18)

Another supposedly child-friendly version, but this time with a lyrical speaker who actually criticises the behaviour of the crocodile; it is therefore more akin to Isaac Watts' *Divine Song* which Carroll was making fun of than to his actual parody. This is an obvious example of the moralising approach which is based on the belief that children's literature must contribute to the betterment of a child. What is surprising is that this approach can be found in a German version of *Alice* published as recently as 1984.

With Christian Enzensberger's intelligent and creative translation of *Alice in Wonderland* in 1963, German readers could finally get an inkling of the complexity and brilliance of Carroll's original:

Wie emsig doch das Krokodil
 Den Schwanz sich aufgebessert
 Und jede Schuppe, fern am Nil
 Im Golde hat gewässert!

Wie freundlich blickt sein Auge drein,
 Wie klar quillt seine Träne,
 Wenn es die Fischlein lockt herein
 In seine milden Zähne! (Carroll/Enzensberger 1963: 23)

'How doth the little crocodile' is translated here as a parody of Isaac Watts' 'How doth

the little busy bee', with Enzensberger using the same key lexical elements, the desirable qualities of the busy bee (which are those of the well-behaved Victorian girl) in the grotesquely contrasting image of the grinning crocodile: *busy, improve, cheerfully, neatly, gently smiling* become *emsig, aufgebessert, freundlich, mild*. Enzensberger uses the same metre and the same strategies as Carroll did to satirize empty moralising by retaining the crocodile's danger under his seemingly friendly exterior. It is, therefore, a perfect German parody of an English poem; only a reader familiar with Watts' original verses can fully get the joke. Enzensberger retains the temporal distance between the novel of 1865 and readers of the 1960s and produces a text which has a distinct 19th century feel to it. With its odd archaic turns of phrase in German and its opaque references, Enzensberger's translation is that of the classical text which *Alice in Wonderland* has become, complete with the patina lent by time and acclaim. It is a literary translation for adults, for intellectuals even which, in contrast to Lewis Carroll's original, loses sight of the child reader. It reproduces an almost exclusively adult reading of the text.

Carroll's parodies are replaced by parodies of well-known German poems in Siv Bublitz' translation of 1993:

Das Wasser rauscht, das Wasser tost,
ein Krokodil sitzt drin,
sieht nach dem kleinen Fischerboot
und grinst so vor sich hin.
Dann schnappt es zu, das geht ruck, zuck,
da ist der Fischer weg;
das Krokodil hat Magendruck,
das Boot, es hat ein Leck. (Carroll/Bublitz 1993: 23)

Here we have a parody of Goethe's *Der Fischer*, dynamic and cheeky in its diction but nonetheless retaining the smiling and murderous crocodile. This is a translation which can be enjoyed and understood by children, but which does not compromise the quality and the spirit of the original. A small number of translations published in the late 1980s and early 1990s belong to the group which I have called both literary and accessible to children.

The approaches described here – the fairy-tale, the moralizing, the literary approach and the one which is both literary and accessible to children – cannot be seen as strictly chronological progressions. Enzensberger's watershed literary translation was without doubt in part responsible for the superior quality of the later translations, but since it appeared in 1963, further translation with 'nanny' or dumbing-down tendencies have

been issued for children. Nonetheless a certain historical progression cannot be denied, with current translational norms demanding higher standards of literary translations for children.

An analysis of translated children's literature within the context of the norms and traditions of the target literature, imagological studies which go beyond identifying national stereotypes to examine the general structural factors involved, the constancy and change according to political relations between nations and the aesthetic functions of stereotypes within the texts; these, together with the sketch of the constituent areas of CCLS, should have served to demonstrate just how rich the seam of children's literature is for research in comparative literary and cultural studies.

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