University of Reading

Beyond bringing books and children together: International children's literature advocacy in the UK today

PhD in Translation Studies

Department of Languages and Cultures

Emma Donovan Page

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Thank you to my parents and my brother, for teaching me to talk and think seriously and playfully about books from before I could read them myself. To my book club and the Brighton Translation Surgery, two groups of brilliant readers and thinkers who I am lucky to have in my life. To friends near and far, who have listened and encouraged and kept me on track. Finally, to SP, for everything.

Abstract

Only a tiny percentage of children's books published in English in the UK in any given year are translations from other languages. As a result, translating, publishing and promoting children's literature in English translation is always already a politically, socially and artistically 'committed act'. This project investigates the community of individuals and organisations whose work is guided by this 'commitment' to bringing international children's literature to British audiences. These organisations and individuals, this thesis argues, are part of a transnational tradition of 'international children's literature advocacy' which has its roots in the work of a small network of mostly European and US American children's book professionals active during the post- WWII period. Although this is a field of enquiry which naturally resists neat division into national sub-fields, this thesis centres primarily on the contemporary UK manifestations of this international and transnational phenomenon.

The study uses qualitative methods, arguing that international children's literature advocacy is best understood using the heuristic of a *habitus*. This concept was coined by Pierre Bourdieu in the 1970s and more recently has been developed by translation studies scholars as part of a 'human turn' in the field. This research traces the development of the

phenomenon it identifies as the 'international children's literature advocacy *habitus*' in the British context, always with an awareness of international influences and connections. It identifies the key 'international children's literature advocates' active in contemporary Britain, traces the networks within which they operate, and explores how the *habitus* shapes their work. The thesis concludes with a series of case studies describing the recent English-language translation of several Latin American children's books by UK-based publishers. These cases demonstrate how the framework of an international children's literature advocacy *habitus* offers new ways of understanding the marginal yet resilient phenomenon of children's literature in English translation.

Declaration of Original Authorship

Declaration: I confirm that this is my own work and the use of all material from other sources has been properly and fully acknowledged.

Signed: Emma Donovan Page

Note on previous publications

The case studies featured in Part Four of this thesis also form the basis of two peer-reviewed journal articles, of which I am the sole author, both of which are in press as at October 2025, at the time of thesis submission. Details of these publications are listed below. '"Something new": British children's publishing and the "discovery" of Latin American kid lit in translation' features the cases of The Invisible Story and Claire Storey's YA translations, while 'Incomplete Maps: Towards a sociology of children's literature in English translation' discusses the case of The Emma Press. Elements of the literature review and methodology in Part One of this thesis have also been adapted for inclusion in these articles, in order to provide context for the case studies in question.

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Part 1

Chapter 1.1 – Introduction

In the world of British children's publishing, literary translation is often treated by both industry professionals and academics as a niche, marginal phenomenon. Although precise statistics are difficult to establish, scholars working in this field tend to open their analyses with an insistence that only a tiny minority of children's books published in this country in any given year are translations from other languages. This is not unique to children's publishing, or to Britain: the persistently marginal status of translations in English-language publishing generally has been widely discussed. Much writing about this phenomenon references the idea, based on a survey of literary translations (for adults) published in the US in the early 2000s and popularised in publisher Chad Post's 2011 book 'The Three Percent Problem' (Open Letter), that just 'three percent' of literature published in English is in translation. Among advocates, the 'three percent' statistic has become shorthand for the 'dire' state of literary translation into English.

This thesis presents an alternative perspective. It argues that English translation is a persistent, resilient and integral phenomenon within the British children's book field, and that a systematic analysis of this phenomenon yields results which are relevant not only to scholars of translation, but also to those interested in other aspects of British children's books. These include the relationship between children's books and British national identity, and closely related debates and campaigns around diversity, inclusion and accessibility in British children's publishing. On a structural level, a close analysis of the role that non-profit advocacy organisations play in promoting and shaping translation for children into English offers insight into the integral role that advocacy organisations play in the production and promotion of children's books more generally. I argue that this is an important and understudied element of the ways in which children's publishing is distinct from publishing books for adult audiences. The overwhelming focus on the many children's books from around the world that do not get translated into English has thus far prevented systematic investigations into these aspects of the major role that translation has, in fact, played in British children's publishing in the 20th and 21st centuries.

This thesis uses qualitative methods and draws on a combination of historical and contemporary material, including a series of linked case studies describing recent books for children published in Britain in English translation. It began as a study of a single collection of children's books in English translation gathered between the early 2000s and the mid

2020s by ‘Outside In World’, a non-profit advocacy organisation based in England. In the process of attempting to understand how this collection came to exist and what it represents, the project evolved into a study of the broader world of individuals and organisations who are driven by a belief that the international exchange of children’s books has the power to change the world for the better. This is, by its very nature, a field of enquiry which resists neat division into national sub-fields. It challenges simplistic understandings of the relationship between nation and language, demanding an analysis that takes into account the complexities of cultural and linguistic exchange within and between the four nations of the United Kingdom, as well as its position within literary cultures spanning Europe, the Commonwealth, and the global Anglosphere. I thus present an analysis of the ‘British’ manifestations of the international and transnational phenomenon of international children’s literature advocacy, while being conscious that this is in some cases an arbitrary or even deceptive category, used (sometimes inadvertently, sometimes deliberately) to obscure the deeply entangled nature of children’s literatures around the world.

Finally, this research focuses on the production, promotion and dissemination of translated books primarily aimed at children, rather than on how those translations are read and received by their target audiences. As such, here I understand ‘children’s books’ in the sense that this concept is used in the publishing industry. Throughout this work the phrases ‘children’s books’, ‘books for children and young adults’, and ‘books for young readers’ are used interchangeably to refer to books primarily marketed for consumption by readers in age groups which can reasonably be assumed to be subject to educational and/or parental authority. This includes everything from books aimed at pre-verbal infants to novels aimed at teens which in recent decades have increasingly enjoyed a crossover appeal and may in some cases be read and enjoyed by adults. From illustrated abecedaries to YA titles featuring sex and drugs, these books share the characteristic of being produced with a dual audience in mind: the young people themselves, and the adults (particularly parents, teachers and librarians) who are responsible for mediating their media consumption. The existence of this dual audience, as well as the educational and moral responsibility often ascribed to these texts, are fundamental to understanding the translation advocacy work described in this thesis.

Key actors and scope

‘The act of translating and distributing children’s literature in translation’ in English is, in the words of Beauvais, a ‘committed act’ (2018: 14). ‘Committed’, here, refers to a sense that the act of bringing translated literature for children into English reflects particular political,

social, and/or artistic motivations which drive these 'committed' individuals to overcome the practical, cultural and commercial barriers which face potential translations of children's books into English. This research arose out of encounters with the small but active community of individuals and organisations whose work is driven by this 'commitment' to bringing international children's literature to British audiences. One of these is Outside In World (OIW), an organisation founded in the early 2000s that gathered the collection which originally inspired this project. OIW's founders, Deborah Hallford, Edgardo Zaghini and Alexandra Strick, met while working at major UK reading charity BookTrust. In 2005, Hallford and Zaghini published *Outside In* (Milet), billed as 'the first ever guide to children's books in translation'. The editors were inspired to launch the project by their experience producing *Folk and Fairy Tales: A Book Guide,* published by BookTrust in 2004*. Outside In* opens with a forward by legendary British children's author Philip Pullman, followed by a series of short essays contributed by academics, publishers, and translators on topics related to children's literature in English translation. The bulk of the book is dedicated to brief reviews of children's books in English translation in print at the time of publication, mostly organised by target reader age range, with separate sections for Graphic Novels, Non-Fiction and Dual Language titles. Finally, a 'Resource Guide' lists publishers, distributors, grants, prizes and organisations, UK-based and international, with a particular relevance to translated and/or international children's books.

Although *Outside In* did not sell particularly well, its existence was enthusiastically received by some as a hopeful sign that translation might, at last, begin to be recognised more widely for what the authors understood as its vital contribution to British children's book cultures. Inspired by this positive response, Hallford, Zaghini, and their former BookTrust colleague Strick incorporated the non-profit organisation Outside In World (OIW) in 2007 to carry on and expand the work they began with *Outside In.* At the heart of OIW's work is the OIW database of children's books in English translation, an online resource where Hallford (with occasional input from others) continues to collect, list and review translated children's books in English translation to the present day. OIW has also led a number of other projects over the years researching and promoting international children's literature, always with an explicit intersectional focus on how translation might support the availability of more diverse, accessible children's books in English. Finally, the physical collection of children's books in English translation which Hallford has amassed in the process of developing the guide and database has become more central to the organisation's work since 2020. More recently, OIW has been joined by a second important actor in this field: World Kid Lit (WKL), a loose collective of highly committed translators, publishers, writers and illustrators, many of whom

are based in the UK, who first came together on Twitter in 2016. The list of authors, translators, academics and publishers who contributed essays to *Outside In,* and the concerns and themes which guided those contributions and have shaped OIW's work since that time, offer a snapshot into the world of international children's literature advocacy in the UK at the turn of the 21st century. The archive of interviews, articles, book lists and reviews on World Kid Lit's website reflect how this field has evolved and expanded in the past decade.

OIW and WKL are two nodes in a broad network of publishers, translators, librarians, academics, authors, illustrators and activists, many of whom I interviewed in the course of this project. In the process of trying to understand the historical and global context which gave rise to OIW, WKL and the activity of the individuals and groups associated with them, I came to spend a significant amount of time investigating a third organisation, which bears introducing here: The International Board on Books for Young People, commonly known as IBBY. Founded in 1953 in Switzerland in the context of the rapidly evolving post-War world order, IBBY began as a small group of mostly European individuals concerned about the potential negative effects of comic books and other new forms of mass media on the moral and intellectual development of future generations. Today, the organisation is structured as a confederation of independently-run 'national sections' representing over 80 countries across the world. The International IBBY executive runs biennial 'World Congresses' and administers the prestigious Hans Christian Anderson Award and IBBY Honour Lists recognising the 'best' of international children's literature, while the national sections engage in a wide variety of activities at the local level related to literacy, reading promotion, translation, and children's publishing. Although British children's authors, reviewers, translators and librarians have been involved in IBBY since the 1950s, the current incarnation of the British national section ('IBBY UK') was founded in the 1990s by a handful of academics and children's librarians, and is smaller and has far less institutional support than IBBY sections in many other nations. IBBY UK connects the translated children's literature advocacy occurring within the UK today to an international movement whose history has not yet received sufficient serious attention from scholars of children's literature in translation. Although a full history of IBBY's impact around the world since the 1950s is beyond the scope of this thesis, one of my aims is to situate the world of contemporary British international children's literature advocacy within the context of this international movement, and as such certain elements of the organisation's international history are explored in some detail. This project also discusses the work of a number of other individuals and organisations whose work is associated with the promotion of international

children's literature in the UK today, including other non-profit organisations, small, specialist publishing houses, activist translators, and several institutes and centres based at universities.

Research questions

Over the course of conducting this research I have come to understand that the definition and boundaries of 'children's books in English translation' are contested and contingent. Early in the research process, examining the contents of the OIW and WKL collections and lists of 'children's books in English translation' raised a number of questions about what they did (and did not) contain, and why: Where is the line between translation and adaptation or re-writing, especially when it comes to 'folktales', 'myths' and 'fairytales' from outside the Anglosphere? Do bilingual books produced simultaneously in English and another language count? What about comics, including specific sub-genres like Japanese manga, or novelisations of films and TV? When 'international' or 'world' literature is used interchangeably with or alongside 'translated literature', do all or only some books published (or written?) by authors from outside the UK count? Even where there is a clear understanding of which children's books are at stake, what is the most 'telling' statistic, in terms of the 'state' of international children's literature in English? Publications? Sales? Award nominations? Even if it were possible to come to a definitive consensus on the answer to any of these questions, they inevitably lead to another series of equally murky debates. What, exactly, are the statistics telling us? Is a low percentage of translations for children into English, relative to other languages, a problem? If so, why? And where does the problem lie? With publishers or parents? Translators or teachers? Are policymakers implicated? Finally, once the landscape has been accurately mapped, problems agreed upon and responsibility pinpointed, how best should any given individual, group or institution go about trying to improve things?

The primary subject of this research, in the end, is the group of people in the UK today who are united by their belief that some or all of the questions listed above can be answered, and that attempting to do so is not only worthwhile but imperative. This project does not seek to answer these questions necessarily, but rather uses them to guide focused enquiry into the beliefs and structures that the 'committed' engagement of organisations and individuals who believe that promoting 'children's books in English translation' is a powerful tool for countering what they perceive to be the insular, Anglocentric hegemony of mainstream British children's publishing. These advocates promote some (but not all) books for children in English translation, some (but certainly not all) books originally published in

the UK that go on to be translated abroad, and many children's books circulating in Britain which may not be translations at all but are in some other sense 'international' (in terms of the origins of their authors, their settings, or the cultural context in which they take place). As is described in more detail in the methodology section, this research uses ethnographic methods based on a 'grounded theory' approach. Grounded theory encourages researchers to avoid testing hypotheses set in advance of the data gathering process, and instead to begin with data collection and then to follow an iterative process in which data continues to be gathered in a more focused manner as theory organically emerges from preliminary analyses. As such, rather than offering answers to specific research questions set at the beginning of the research process, this thesis presents a series of narratives and theoretical frameworks which offer insight into the work of the organisations and individuals who are its central object of interest.

One central theme which has emerged from this study is the distinct role that non-profit advocacy organisations play in shaping the production and promotion of children's books. This is a feature of children's publishing which has no equivalent in the adult publishing field. These institutions conduct and disseminate research, publish criticism and industry news, award prizes, maintain collections and archives, and generally connect and facilitate exchange between publishing industry professionals, policymakers, librarians and teachers, and academia. Although this study focuses on translated and international children's books in Britain, the conclusions reached can also be applied to the study of more general children's reading charities such as BookTrust, and are by no means limited in relevance to the UK case. The next major theme of this research is the idea that literary translation for children is a persistent and integral feature of British children's publishing. The often-repeated observation that English-language markets tend to import a much smaller percentage of children's books than markets in other languages has led much existing research to treat those translations which are produced for children in English as isolated flukes. This research suggests otherwise. I argue that translations in fact represent a consistent, resilient counter-current in the history of British children's book production, and that this phenomenon can and should be subject to a systematic analysis. This thesis offers one such analysis, and suggests frameworks and methodologies which could support further investigations in this vein. Finally, this project highlights the role that translation and international children's literature advocacy have played in the history of campaigns to diversify children's publishing in Britain. There is a gap, discussed in more detail in the literature review below, between existing scholarship on translation for children, and the work of scholars interested in the history of racial and cultural diversity in British children's books.

This research indicates that, in practice, these advocacy projects have long been closely linked, and that there is significant overlap between their histories.

Throughout this thesis, I will refer to the work on which this study focuses as 'international children's literature (ICL) advocacy', conducted by 'international children's literature advocates'. I argue that the 'committed work' of ICL advocacy is best understood using the heuristic of a *habitus*, a concept coined by Pierre Bourdieu and more recently widely appropriated and developed by translation studies scholars as part of a 'human turn' in the field (Bergantino in Chen 2023: 1). This thesis traces the development of the 'ICL advocacy *habitus*' in the British context, always with an awareness of international influences and connections given the fundamentally transnational nature of children's publishing in general and, of course, translation specifically. It pays particular attention to IBBY's history during the 20th century, arguing that this organisation has played a critical role in developing and maintaining the boundaries of the *habitus* in question. In the contemporary era, which begins for the purposes of this project in the early 1990s, ethnographic methods including interviews, field work and reflections on my own experience as a researcher-practitioner of translation for children make it possible to identify key 'ICL advocates', trace the networks within which they operate, and explore how the 'ICL advocacy' *habitus* shapes their work in a variety of fields and professional contexts. The thesis concludes with a series of case studies describing the recent English-language translation and publication of several Latin American children's books by UK-based publishers. These cases demonstrate how developing a sociology of children's literature in translation, and specifically an understanding of the 'ICL advocacy' *habitus*, can offer new ways of understanding the UK's role in the transnational children's literature field (Guijarro Arribas 2022), as well as the role of ICL advocacy in the British publishing field. I conclude by considering what further research this framework could enable, as well as how it could productively inform the work of future advocates.

Thesis Structure

Part 1 – Introduction, Literature Review and Methodology

Part One introduces this study of international children's literature advocacy in British children's publishing, beginning with a description of the motivations behind the study, key actors and scope, guiding research questions and structure. The literature review orients the reader by outlining existing scholarly and public discourse around the 'special case' of English-language literary translation for children and providing an overview of existing

scholarship related to the role translation plays in the production and consumption of children's books in the UK. It locates this study within a range of adjacent research areas, including notably the history of British children's publishing, studies of diversity and multiculturalism in children's books, and the sociology of translation. Chapter 1.2 outlines the methodologies used in this study. It explains and justifies the specific combination of qualitative methods used, including interviews and field work, archival research, discourse analysis, 'grounded theory' ethnography and autoethnographic reflections. It also introduces the novel theoretical framework of the international children's literature advocacy *habitus,* and suggests how this tool opens up new analytical pathways for the study of children's literature in translation. Chapter 1.4 details the research methods used to gather and analyse the data on which this thesis is based, while this present section provides a detailed guide to the thesis structure.

Part 2 – International Children's Literature Advocacy in Britain: contexts and histories

Part Two describes the role that 'international' and translated children's books have played in the development of British children's publishing. This history begins in the early 18th century, with the emergence of specialist children's publishing as an independent professional field. It points to the frequent exchanges and close cultural connections between Britain and continental Europe which shaped English-language children's books during this early period. This history continues into the 20th century, describing how translation comes to be seen by some in Britain as not merely as a way of making particular foreign-language texts available to British children, but as a committed act shaped by the UK's position in the expanding transnational children's book field. This chapter also pays particular attention to the origins and history of (and British connections to) the International Board on Books For Young People (IBBY), arguing that this organisation has played a critical, understudied role in mediating the international exchange of children's literature since the immediate post-WWII period.

Chapter 2.2 maps the major individuals and organisations active in the field of international children's literature advocacy in the UK today, linking their work to the histories described in Chapter 2.1 and describing the role that 'international' and 'translated' children's books play in the contemporary British children's literature field. The small, tightly-networked advocacy ecosystem described in this chapter includes non-profit organisations, research institutes, professional associations, specialist publishers, activist translators, librarians, and academics, among others. This chapter also integrates autoethnographic reflections on my own involvement and implication in the field of research, as a professional translator of

children's books who has worked closely with many of the individuals and organisations in question.

Part 3 – The International Children's Literature Advocacy Habitus

Part Three offers a detailed analysis of the characteristics and impact of the International Children's Literature Advocacy *habitus.* Chapter 3.1 focuses on the core beliefs that structure the international children's literature *habitus*: that children should (only) read 'good' books, that reading ('good') children' books 'builds bridges of understanding', and that these 'bridges' can and should be taken seriously as tools for addressing social and political challenges. This chapter traces the development of these traditions of thought, particularly as they have manifested among and been shaped by UK-based advocates.

Chapter 3.2 analyses the creation, maintenance and use of collections, lists, databases and reviews of 'international' and 'translated' children's books. This chapter argues that the curation, publication, promotion and consumption of these resources is one of the processes through which the ICL advocacy *habitus* is maintained and refined, and that indeed this is their primary function. Specifically, they reflect and reinforce a largely invisible curation process that is heavily shaped by the *habitus* core beliefs around the definition of a 'good' children's books and the ability of those books to 'build bridges' described in the previous chapter. Finally, this chapter addresses the ambivalent and sometimes troubled relationship between ICL advocates and national identity. While many British advocates use these canon-building projects to reject identification with 'Britishness' in favour of an imagined borderless 'Anglophone' community of readers, they can also be used to advocate for the possibility of multicultural, multilingual 'Britishness'.

Chapter 3.3 continues this discussion of the relationship between international children's literature advocacy and British national identity through the lens of awards and prizing. Among UK-based international children's literature advocates, prizing is seen as an opportunity to shape both how the world reads Britain, and how British children read the world. This chapter begins with a discussion of how these advocates have approached nominating UK authors, illustrators and translators for major international awards for children's literature, and in particular the Hans Christian Andersen Award, launched in the 1950s, and its 21st-century competitor, the Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award. It continues with an analysis of how the Marsh Award for Children's Literature in Translation (1997-2017) and the prestigious Carnegie Medals for children's writing and illustration have shaped the relationship between translations and elite British children's literary production.

The final chapter in this section turns its attention away from the adult-focused advocacy activities discussed in previous chapters in order to highlight how international

children's literature advocates attempt to reach young readers directly. In the contemporary British field, a particular style of school-based 'creative translation' workshop has become increasingly popular. This chapter details how the specific characteristics of the 21st-century British educational, economic and cultural context have interacted with the core beliefs of the transnational *habitus* to produce this style of intervention. In addition to considering the development, aims and impacts of these workshops, this section discusses how they function as a point of convergence and synergy between advocates working in a variety of professional and institutional contexts, including notably translators, activist publishers and academic researchers. Section three opens and closes with descriptions of a recent international children's literature advocacy intervention in Reading, England, in which I was involved alongside the research and writing process for this thesis. These codas demonstrate concretely how the *habitus* shapes current British ICL advocacy and research, as well as offering another opportunity to integrate autoethnographic reflections on how my own positionality as a researcher-practitioner of literary translation for children has shaped both this thesis and the field in which it is interested.

Part 4 – Latin American Children's Books in the UK: a Case Study

Part Four presents three linked case studies describing the recent translation and publication by UK-based publishers of several Latin American books for children and young people. Historically, very few English translations of Latin American books for young readers have been produced in the UK. Today, however, some actors are beginning to regard the region as a largely-untapped potential source of 'high-quality' books for children and young people which could help meet continued calls to diversify production. These cases examine the targeted interventions and structural factors that have led to this recent 'micro-trend' in British children's publishing. By presenting a detailed analysis of the motivations and actions of a variety of actors involved in making these translations possible, a more complete picture of the factors and networks that shape translation for children in British publishing today emerges.

Chapter 4.2 suggests a series of conclusions drawn from the case studies laid out in Chapter 4.1 which challenge the narratives laid out in the existing literature around where decision-making or gatekeeping occurs with regards to which books for children are translated into English from other languages. Specifically, this chapter argues that the importance of individual decision-making at the level of the target-language publisher in determining which books are translated into English has been overstated. Rather, it argues, systemic and structural factors, including national and international funding sources and powerful consecrating institutions such as the International Board on Books for Young

People, the International Youth Library and the Bologna Children's Book Fair, are most influential in shaping which non-English-language books are made available to young readers in the UK.

Part 5 – Conclusion

The conclusion to this thesis reviews the arguments presented throughout the work. It presents a concise summary of the history and characteristics of the international children's literature *habitus,* as described in Part Three, and notes the ways in which that *habitus* can enhance our understanding of production and reception of translations for children in the UK in the 21st century. Finally, it offers suggestions as to how both advocates and researchers might productively use the methodologies and frameworks presented in this work to inform future investigations and interventions, within the UK context and beyond.

Chapter 1.2 – Literature Review

Introduction

This is a transdisciplinary project which is informed by existing research in several fields. Much of its novelty lies in the application of sociological methods developed in the context of publishing and literary translation for adults to the study of children's books in translation. The literature review thus aims to situate this research in the context of comparative or world literary studies, children's literature studies, book history, and translation studies, with a specific focus on the sociology of translation. It begins with a discussion of academic discourse around the concept of 'world literature', and particularly notes the differences between the use of 'world' in the study of literature for children vs. literature for adults. The next section introduces the sociology of translation, focusing on the use of Pierre Bourdieu's *habitus* and other related heuristics within translation studies. Finally, after presenting an overview of existing 'maps' of children's literature in (English) translation and 'diversity' discourse in the contemporary Anglo-American children's publishing field, the literature review ends with a note on the issues often associated with the use of statistics in studies of English-language literary translation, and an explanation for why this study forgoes quantitative methods in favour of a qualitative approach.

'World Literature'

Since 1998, 'World Book Day', celebrated on the first Thursday in March, has been a staple of the British school calendar. This charity event (inspired by, but not officially affiliated with, UNESCO's 'World Book and Copyright Day') takes place only in the UK and Ireland and

encourages children to embrace 'the fun of reading' by dressing up as their favourite book characters and taking home heavily-subsidised copies of books produced especially for the event, which are made available in collaboration with major British children's publishers (World Book Day 2025). Despite the name, World Book Day is an essentially local event. The authors of the specially subsidised titles for 2025, for example, were all Irish or British, including iconic *Gruffalo* author Julia Donaldson and British Children's Laureate and Carnegia Medal winner Joseph Coelho. All of the titles were English-language originals, with the exception of one title each 'representing' Irish and Welsh (*Ag Buzzáil sa Ghairdín* by Áine Ní Ghlinn and *Gwyrdd ein Byd* by Duncan Brown and illustrated by Helen Flook, respectively) (LoveReading4Kids). The distinctly inward-looking character of 'World Book Day', which has no explicit connection to or interest in the world outside Great Britain and Ireland, is a particularly egregious example of the widespread under-theorisation of the 'world' in 'world literature' for children, in the context of literacy and reading promotion advocacy. This loose conceptualisation of the 'world' of children's books and Britain's place in that 'world' is also evident even in the work of the much more purposefully outward-looking organisations which are central to this thesis, such as Outside In World (OIW) and World Kid Lit (WKL). OIW, for example, describes itself as dedicated to '*world literature and children's books in translation*', while WKL refers in its mission statement to a remit which covers '*inclusive world literature*', '*globally inclusive and diverse literature*' and *'literature in translation'* for young people. IBBY UK is even broader in its scope, claiming that it aims to promote '*the international aspects of children's books*' by 'representing UK children's books outside the UK' and '*children's books from around the world within the UK*'. As a study of the work of promoting 'international children's literature' in the UK, one of this project's aims is to investigate both the explicit and implicit understandings of the international and/or transnational children's book field, or the 'world' of children's books, upon which this work is built.

Since Goethe coined the term '*Weltliteratur*' in 1827 to refer to a global canon of literature whose quality and cultural impact transcended national and linguistic boundaries, academics have continuously debated the meaning and use of the concept of 'World Literature' (Mani 2017). Beginning in the 1990s there was a 'revitalization of interest in the term' (Mani 2017: 14), led by postcolonial theorists who sought to unpack the 'ostentatious neutrality' of the 'world' in this 'world literature', pointing out the limited 'world' (Eurocentric, anglophone, Western, literate, developed, etc.) from which said literature is usually drawn (Wiemann, Mazumdar, and Raja 2021: 3). These theorists have argued for the use of the term to refer to 'literature produced within and in response to a globalizing world', rather than

Goethe's imagined selection of 'the best ever written' (Boehmer 2014: 299). David Damrosch's seminal 'What is World Literature' (2003) argues for a phenomenological rather than ontological approach to the concept, with 'world literature' referring not to any given selection or category of literary work but rather to the transformational process(es) which literature undergoes in travelling beyond its original cultural context (14). Until relatively recently, one thing most scholars could agree on was that the 'literature' in World Literature referred to writing for adults. Children's books only began to be considered 'literature' as such by academics in the twentieth century (O'Sullivan 2011), and the theorisation of what has been variously described as 'world children's literature' (Nikolajeva 2008), 'comparative children's literature' (O'Sullivan 2011) or 'international children's literature' (Tomlinson 2003) has developed much more recently and quite separately from the theorisation of 'world literature' for adults. Mani points out that in contemporary scholarship on world literature for adults, there is a tendency toward 'excessive attention to the conceptual' and a focus on debating department names and the boundaries of academic fields at the expense of studying 'the larger public interaction with world literature' (Mani 2017: 13). The opposite is true when it comes to 'world literature' for children. Here, there has been an overwhelming tendency to focus on the practical questions of what books children read (or *should* read, or should *not* read) and why, with the academic study of children's books (particularly in the UK and the US) taking place most often in the context of teacher or librarian training rather than literature departments (O'Sullivan 2011: 194-5). In a 'brief outline of the emerging field of comparative children's literature' published in 2011, Emer O'Sullivan admits that despite the rich potential of comparative children's literature studies, this seam remains mostly unmined.

This is despite the fact that children's literature, in its academic, commercial and artistic dimensions, has always been notably international in character, transcending linguistic and national boundaries 'since books specifically intended for young readers were first produced in eighteenth-century Europe' (O'Sullivan 2011: 190). In a 2022 article, Delia Guijarro Arribas aims to address the fact that 'sociologists have not as yet considered the transnational and international dimensions of children's literature' (Arribas 2022: 3). Guijarro lays out the 'origins and development of the International Youth Library in Munich, IBBY [the International Board on Books for Young People] and the Bologna Children's Book Fair', institutions which she argues play an essential role in the 'international sub-field of children's literature' which preceded and continues to condition 'the majority of national sub-fields'. She further begins to identify the elements of the logic of this field which are 'different to those seen in relation to books produced for adults' (Arribas 2022, p. 19). One particularly notable feature of Guijarro's work is the central position of non-profit institutions such as the IYL and

IBBY in her analysis. As I will argue in more detail elsewhere in this thesis, advocacy organisations like IBBY, OIW and WKL are an integral and understudied element of the children's publishing field, whether considered at the local, regional or global scale.

Universalism is another common theme in discussions of 'world literature for children', such as in Maria Nikolajeva's attempts to establish a universal 'historical poetics of children's literature' which demonstrates what she frames as 'a common literary evolution' shared by all children's literatures (14; Nikolajeva 2015). In his 1932 work *Les livres, les enfants et les hommes,* ('*Books, Children and Men*') Paul Hazard, one of the earliest theorists to seriously address children's literature, imagined the existence of a 'république universelle de l'enfance' or 'world republic of childhood', a 'romantic vision of unlimited exchange of children's books across borders and international understanding' which continues to echo through children's literature discourse to this day (O'Sullivan 2011: 195). As O'Sullivan points out, Hazard's utopian vision has at times 'functioned as an ideology' (2011: 195), and is foundational to the development of the 'international children's literature advocacy' which is at the heart of this project.

Finally, Brian James Baer's exploration of the tensions between scholars of 'translated literature' and those interested in 'world literature', two closely-related, overlapping and yet never quite synonymous categories, is another framework from the field of 'world' literary studies to which I have returned repeatedly in seeking to understand 'translation' as both a professional practice and an ideological object in the context of 'international children's literature advocacy'. Baer argues that the theoretical appropriation of 'translation' as a metaphor for experiences of border-crossing and encounters with cultural difference by some scholars in the postmodern era 'elides or mystifies the fact of translation' (2020: 146). In Baer's view, claims such as those advanced in Emily Apter's influential 2013 work *Against World Literature: On the Politics of Untranslatability,* which 'conflates untranslatability and incommensurability' (146) obscure, diminish and distract from 'the fact of translation' (literary and otherwise) as a real, everyday practice (157). This insistence on the importance of grounding theories of both 'world literature' and 'literary translation' in studies of the actual flow of books across borders and boundaries of various kinds has inspired this project to approach the literary translation for children that occurs into English not as a series of flukes or exceptions to the rule, but as a phenomenon with a long-standing and ongoing role in the larger children's literary system: in Baer's words, 'a complex generative site of negotiation and world-making' (158), regardless of how small or marginal it may be in the context of mainstream English-language children's publishing. Finally, B.

Venkat Mani's concept of 'bibliomigrancy', a term he has coined to refer to the 'migration of literature as books', offers an avenue into one such approach to understanding the shifting boundaries and expansive possibilities of 'world literature' for children (10). Mani argues that it is through this bibliomigrancy, particularly as manifested in collections (both physical and virtual), that works of literature 'acquire new identities' and are 'recoded as world literature' (10). This framework guides this project's interest in how OIW, WKL and other subjects of this research who are engaged in collecting, curating and cataloguing 'world', 'translated' and 'international' literature for children 'operate on the probability of imagining the world' and how these collections can themselves be read as 'prolific, substantial and expansive […] *texts* that rely on the collective fiction of knowledge about the world' (Mani 2017: 11). Ultimately, this project is interested less in producing a definition of 'world literature for children', and more in exploring the often-unspoken understandings of the boundaries, hierarchies and rules that govern the global 'world' of children's books in the eyes of OIW, WKL, IBBY, and the other international children's literature advocates who are the subject of this research.

The sociology of translation and publishing

Given its focus on the individuals, institutions and narratives surrounding children's literature in translation in the UK, rather than on textual or paratextual analyses of specific translations, this research draws on the relatively recent sub-field of the sociology of translation. Beginning with prescriptivist approaches in the 1960s and 70s such as Eugene Nida's 1964 text *Toward a Science of Translating*, through the movement toward descriptivist approaches such as those advanced by Gideon Toury or Itamar Even-Zohar in the 1980s and 90s and the so-called 'cultural turn' exemplified by the work of Lawrence Venuti and Susan Bassnet, among others, in the late 1990s and early 2000s, scholars of translation in the West long remained squarely focused on text. The sociology of translation, in contrast, goes beyond acknowledging translations as 'embedded within [a] network of source and target cultural signs' (Bassnett and Lefevre, 1990 in Zheng 2017: 28) to framing translation itself as 'a social practice' (Zheng 2017: 28). In 2008, *Translatio: Le marché de la traduction en France à l'heure de la mondialisation*, edited by Gisele Sapiro and featuring contributions from a number of translation scholars, expanded Pierre Bourdieu's work on the sociology of publishing, applying his economy of symbolic goods and field theory to establish the groundwork for 'a global sociological analysis of the circulation of books in translation' (Sapiro 2008b: 9). Although *Translatio* is focused on the sociology of translation in France specifically, this field theory lens can be and has been applied to translation in other national

contexts. In a 2010 article entitled 'Globalization and cultural diversity in the book market: The case of literary translations in the US and in France', for example, Sapiro uses a Bourdieusian lens to '[reveal] a more nuanced picture' (422) of globalisation as it manifests itself in the US and French publishing industries.

Bourdieu's habitus in translation studies

Some of Bourdieu's most enduring contributions to sociological theory are a set of relational heuristics through the application of which he sought to 'understand, explain and disclose' the power imbalances and complex interplay between structure and agency that shape so many different aspects of any given society (Costa and Murphy 2015: 3). These include the interplay between what he called *capital*, *field*, *symbolic violence*, *doxa,* and *habitus.*[1] The latter has been particularly popular among translation theorists, and with the 'human turn' in translation studies and associated rise of the sub-field of 'translator studies' has taken on a life of its own in the academic field of translation studies (Chen 2023: 1). This thesis adds to the existing body of work which sees *habitus* as a particularly useful heuristic for understanding the social and professional dynamics at play in the world of translation. Specifically, I argue that the development and persistence of the beliefs and behaviours I describe using the umbrella term 'international children's literature advocacy' can be understood as a *habitus*. For the purposes of this analysis, a *habitus* is a 'a system of durable dispositions' (Chen 2023) or a 'socialised subjectivity' (Costa and Murphy 2015: 7). It describes the way individuals constantly draw on an 'internal archive' of personal and collective experiences that inform their 'way of being' without necessarily corresponding to formally articulated rules or norms (Gouanvic 2014: 7; Chen 2023: 3). A *habitus* is an 'embodied history', which interacts with institutionalised histories in the form of *fields* (Vorderobermeier 2014: 12). As one of Bourdieu's theoretical 'thinking tools', *habitus* has been applied and appropriated across a wide variety of disciplines since the 1990s (Costa and Murphy 2015: 3). As used here, this 'thinking tool' or 'heuristic notion' is applied from a constructivist and interpretive perspective, to be understood as an explanatory framework rather than a fixed object of study existing independent of the research process through which it is identified (Gouanvic 2014: 30). To take this one step further, the analysis of the ICL advocacy *habitus* also embraces Bourdieu's concern with reflexivity (Costa and Murphy 2015: 5). It 'aims to bring individuals' unconscious practical knowledge to a conscious level' (Costa and Murphy 2015: 6), empowering advocates, researchers and researcher-advocates, including myself and my interviewees, to better understand the

[1] Instances of these terms are italicised throughout when used to refer specifically to Bourdieu's 'thinking tools', to distinguish them from other uses of, for example, 'capital' or 'field'.

traditions, structures and networks within which we are working, thus enabling more mindful and effective interventions.

Bourdieu's original application of *habitus* has been subject to a variety of refinements and adjustments over the years, particularly within translation studies (Chen 2023: 2). While Bourdieu described a one-to-one correspondence between individual, *habitus* and field (a given individual has a single professional *habitus* which informs their behaviour within a single corresponding professional field), scholars such as Simeoni (1998), Lahire (2011) and Hadas (2021) have moved away from this 'one-to-one correlation', describing individuals as carrying with them a 'plural habitus', shaped by both personal and professional experiences, which informs their choices, actions and reactions within any given *field* or *fields* (Chen 2023: 2). Some debates around the use of *habitus* in translation studies, and particularly its correspondence with the concept of *field*, have centred on discussions of whether 'translation' can indeed be understood as an autonomous *field* (Simeoni 1998: 19). Understanding children's literature as a *field* presents many of the same complications and contradictions. Both translation and children's literature, as Guijarro Arribas identifies, are fundamentally transnational in nature, refusing Bourdieu's original characterisation of 'habitus as confined in the borders of nation-states or state-societies' (Simeoni 1998: 19; Guijarro Arribas 2022: 3). Both *fields* also defy simple definition as subordinate *sub-fields* of mainstream literary production, with children's books in particular being strongly shaped by dual roots in education and literature (O'Sullivan 2011: 190). They also share an ambivalent relationship between theory and practice, with relatively young corresponding academic disciplines which overlap and interact with the realms of professional production, and yet maintain a certain distance from them. Gouanvic points out, for example, that while translation as a practice remains embedded within and beholden to other *fields* (literary production, law or medicine, for example), 'translation studies' has been a 'specific autonomous field' of academic research since the early 1980s' (Gouanvic 2014: 39). Although children's literature studies has not received the kind of attention from scholars outside the field or broad cross-disciplinary application as has translation studies in recent decades (see, for example, Baer 2020), the existence of specific, specialised networks, publications and gatherings for scholars of children's literature since the 1970s points to a similarly independent, if recent, academic discipline.

Rather than a *habitus-field* correspondence, this analysis emphasises the dialectical relationship between *habitus* and *field*(s). Individuals form a *habitus* through internalising their experiences with the structures, norms and demands of their professional

environment(s). This *habitus* shapes their future behaviours, which in turn impact the structure of the *field*(s), in a continuous and iterative process (Chen 2023: 1). The 'ICL advocates' described in this thesis do not all operate within a single professional *field*, although many of them overlap in a handful of related professional contexts. This multiplicity of *fields* is one of the defining characteristics of the ICL advocacy *habitus,* which operates as a site of convergence where knowledge, ideology and expertise from *fields* as disparate as commercial publishing, international development, library science, translation studies and educational philosophy precipitate around the object of the children's book, crystalising into a *habitus* which then goes on to impact all of these *fields* and many others, as it shapes the practices of those who carry it, including librarians, translators, authors, illustrators, teachers, critics, publishers and academics, among others. Given that the ICL advocacy *habitus* does not correspond to a particular profession or field, the people who carry it with them ('ICL advocates') are identifiable not by their title or professional experience but rather by those 'durable dispositions' and 'ways of being' which they share with each other, but not necessarily with everyone else within their professional field(s). Some who work in children's publishing, for example, are steeped in the ICL advocacy *habitus*, while others are barely aware of it, and certainly it does not directly shape their everyday work.

Existing Maps of the translated children's literature field

The sociology of both publishing in general and translated literature specifically have tended to focus on books marketed to adults. When Bourdieu discusses the disruptive *symbolic capital* of 'literature for youth' in France in the 1980s and 90s, he is referring to writing by and for '25-35 year olds', not books marketed to children and teens (Bourdieu 2008: 143). In *Merchants of Culture*, a sociological analysis of commercial publishing in the US and the UK published in 2010, Thompson notes that his work does not cover 'the more specialized domains of trade publishing such as children's books' (Thompson 2010: 404). Sapiro takes a similar approach: in *Translatio*, children's books are acknowledged only briefly, in a caveat that although children's literature is the single 'genre' that has contributed the most to recent increases in literary translations in France, this 'specialised sector has its own history' and 'does not follow the same principles' as that of literature for adults (Sapiro 2008a: 16). Sapiro goes on to offer a brief overview of the 'rise of children's literature' (Sapiro 2008a: 17), focused on trends in the source language of children's books published in France and the expansion of specialised imprints and publishing houses between 1985 and 2002. Beyond this short section, children's books are mentioned only to note that statistics related to this field have been 'eliminated' from *Translatio*'s 'comparative analysis of translated genres' in

France (16). This project, then, aims to fill this gap by applying elements of the Bourdieusian approach to the sociology of publishing and translation specifically to the international transfer of children's literature.

Despite recognition of the value of such research going back to at least the 1970s (Goldsmith 2009: 3), there is a persistent lack of studies in the children's field focused on the many aspects of the international flow of children's books beyond textual and paratextual transformations (Lathey 2015: 127). Gillian Lathey's 2010 book *The Role of Translators in Children's Literature: Invisible Storytellers',* which examines the roles that translators have played in shaping English-language children's books from the 18th century to the present day, is one such work. Emer O'Sullivan's 2019 article 'Translating Children's Literature: what, for whom, how, and why. A basic map of actors, factors and contexts' is another recent attempt to 'identify, in a systematic manner, the multifarious factors that are in play when we talk about the field of translating for children' (14-15). Lathey has also written a number of chapters and articles since *Invisible Storytellers* which touch on the question of 'mapping' the (contemporary) field of children's literature in translation. The final chapter in her 2015 book *Translating Children's Literature*, for example, covers 'matters such as who decides what gets translated, when and how; the marketing and packaging of children's books; international developments in children's literature and the role of the translator in aspects of children's publishing' (Lathey 2015: 127). Lathey's 2020 article '"Only English Books": The mediation of translated children's literature in a resistant economy' is one of the few scholarly works which focuses on diagnosing the 'special case' of translation in contemporary British children's publishing in more detail. Clémentine Beauvais' 2018 article 'Translated into British: European Children's Literature, (In)difference and Écart in the Age of Brexit' is another.

Strong patterns emerge in the treatment of the 'special case' of British and more generally English-language children's publishing in this existing scholarship which 'maps the field' of children's literature in contemporary English-language translation. There is a tendency to repeat observations about powerful market pressures and the global centrality and dominance of English-language publishing since the 19th century, while simultaneously assuming some degree of wilful resistance to translation on the part of British publishers and/or readers. When describing the translations that do make their way into the British market, there is an emphasis on the random, serendipitous nature of these publications, and the altruistic or 'committed' motivations behind the 'personal crusade[s]' that drive the small, independent publishers who do actively seek out translations (47). For example, Lathey

writes: ‘Fluctuations in the numbers and sources of translations for children in the UK since 1945 defy any conclusive analysis: economic pressures, chance encounters and the determination of pioneering individuals all play a part’ (231). Clémentine Beauvais agrees, claiming that ‘in children’s book translation […] predictions are difficult; individual initiative is essential; the key to activating the circle virtuously has not yet been found’ (2018: 14). In the words of O’Sullivan: ‘Why any individual book may or may not be (re)translated can be influenced by all kinds of factors […] and sometimes it may simply be a case of serendipity.’ She goes on to offer, by way of example, the story of Cornelia Funke, ‘Germany’s J.K. Rowling’, who purportedly came to the attention of a British publisher and was translated into English (to great success) only after a young girl wrote a letter ‘to ask why there wasn’t an English version of her favourite book, [Funke’s] *Herr der Diebe*’ (an example which Beauvais and Lathey also cite) (2019: 21-22).

This insistence that there is something mysterious, serendipitous and almost magical about how translations for children reach the UK obscures the prosaic work that goes into making any given publication a reality. There are also echoes of the self-mythologising double-think Bourdieu identifies as a distinctive feature of literary publishing more generally: the money vs. art, capitalism vs creativity dichotomy (Bourdieu 2008). In the case of children’s literary translation advocacy in the UK, this is mapped onto a supposed dichotomy between altruistic, diversity-conscious, open-minded, pro-translation outsiders vs the profit-focused, xenophobic, Eurosceptic, chauvinistic mainstream publishing industry. For example, after noting the low percentage of translations published in the US and the UK, by way of explanation Jan Van Coillie ‘points to the widespread view among American publishers ‘that books in translation do not sell’ and that ‘with all the good books already written in English, there is no need to translate more’ (2020: 142). Lathey mentions ‘a resistance to fiction for children originating outside the UK,’ attributing this to ‘deep-seated wariness of the entity formerly known in the UK as “the Continent”’ (2020: 42). Discussing the minority of publishers who *do* translate, O’Sullivan echoes this sentiment, describing them as ‘altruistic,’ ‘fuelled by idealism’ and driven by a desire to ‘redress […] the geopolitical imbalance in the publishing world’ (2019: 26).

The studies cited above, even those which discuss a variety of different actors within the field, also tend to silo their analyses of translators, publishers and ‘organizations’ or ‘initiatives’ that support or promote translation (O'Sullivan 2019: 26; Lathey 2020: 49). Lathey’s interest in children’s translator studies is welcome, as is Annette Goldsmith’s detailed discussion of the motivations of US-based publishers of children’s books in English

translation (2009), but there has thus far been little research considering the complex connections, entanglements and interactions that surround and shape the behaviour of translators and publishers in the 20th and 21st centuries. There is an assumption that it is publishers who are the 'decision-makers' determining what gets translated and published, that translators are primarily concerned with and responsible for the interlingual and to some degree intercultural mediation of the text, and that 'charities and non-profit organizations who work to promote translations' (O'Sullivan 2019: 27) are essentially engaged in awareness-raising activities, whether directed at (potential) publishers or readers of children's books in translation. The work of non-profits who promote international and translated children's literature in Britain has received particularly little scholarly attention. Furthermore, the role of academic institutions in children's publishing and the impacts of the overlap between the activity of researchers and translators, publishers and advocacy in the British children's literature in translation field have not been studied. Finally, as Lathey (2020) and Van Coillie (2020) point out, the relevance of literary translation for children to public debates and advocacy campaigns focused on broader questions of diversity and representation in British children's media has not received sufficient attention.

'Diversity' discourse in UK children's publishing

The question of how translation fits into discussions around diversity and representation in children's publishing and children's books is one that arose repeatedly in this research process. Though conversations about and advocacy to address the overwhelming whiteness of children's publishing (both in terms of those working in the industry and in terms of characters in children's books) have been occurring since at least the 1960s (Mabbott 2017: 509), Rudine Sims Bishop's 'windows and mirrors' framework for understanding the importance of representation in children's literature (1990: 11) is frequently referenced as a starting point and framework for contemporary discourse in the UK and the US (see Mabbott 2017, Thomas 2016, Crisp *et al*, 2020, for example). Bishop's work has also been influential in the development of international children's literature advocacy in the 21st century. This is notably the case in advocacy and scholarship addressing the ways in which translation can hinder as well as help the cause of promoting diverse children's literature, by contributing to the global dominance of books originally produced in major European and North American markets at the expense of local production in the rest of the world.

The #WeNeedDiverseBooks (WNDB) and #OwnVoices movements, which began as Twitter campaigns in 2014 and 2015, respectively, have also been enormously influential in shaping the contemporary Anglo-American children's publishing field (Mabbott 2017: 509;

Crisp *et al.* 2020: 5). WNDB began with tweets from US children's authors Ellen Oh, Malinda Lo and Aisha Saeed, protesting the fact that every panel at the 2014 Book Con gathering 'was comprised of white male children's authors' (Mabbott 2017: 509). #OwnVoices was first used by YA author Corinne Duyvis, co-founder of the website Disability in Kidlit, and calls for more 'kidlit about diverse characters written by authors from that same diverse group' (Crisp *et al.* 2020: 5). Both campaigns define diversity broadly, including gender, sexual orientation, disability, racial, ethnic, cultural and religious identity, and both focus on representation in the identities of those involved in producing books (authors and publishing professionals) as well as of the characters and storylines in the books themselves (Ramdarshan Bold 2018: 385; Crisp *et al*. 2020: 5). The translation-focused #WomenInTranslation/#WITMonth and #WorldKidLit campaigns, launched on Twitter in 2013 and 2016 respectively, arose during the same period and in conversation with #WNDB and #OwnVoices, and cannot be understood in isolation from these broader international movements addressing diversity in English-language publishing for both children and adults.

Melanie Ramdarshan Bold has written extensively on representation and race in contemporary British children's publishing. In a 2018 article entitled 'The Eight Percent Problem', Bold uses statistics drawn from the British Library's British National Bibliography (BNB) to assess the current status of authors of colour in the British YA market specifically. In addition to her own assessment of the BNB data, Bold refers to the CLPE Reflecting Realities study, which found that 'only 1% of children's books published in the UK in 2017 had a "BAME" [Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic] protagonist' (2018: 386). Although Bold's article does not make specific reference to translation, her title echoes Chad Post's seminal book 'The Three Percent Problem: Rants and responses on publishing, translation and the future of reading' (2011). Likewise, the CLPE Reflecting Realities reports which Bold discusses were referenced by a number of my interviewees as inspiring and shaping their translation advocacy work. Karen Sands-O'Connor, in her work *British Activist Authors Addressing Children of Colour* (2022), offers a history of the 20th century movements which set the stage for the contemporary field which is the primary subject of Bold's studies. Although Sands-O'Connor also does not explicitly discuss translation, a number of the actors and institutions which she identifies as central to British anti-racist children's book campaigns in the second half of the 20th century were also strongly interested in translation and active in the world of international children's literature advocacy during that same period. These include, notably, activist authors Rosemary Stones and Bob Leeson and historian of children's literature Kimberley Reynolds, whose contributions to British translation advocacy campaigns are discussed in detail in this thesis (Sands-O'Connor 2022: 5).

J. R. Coleman offers another perspective on 'multiculturalism' in the contemporary British children's book field in a 2018 article focused on literacy and reading promotion charity BookTrust. Coleman describes BookTrust as 'mainly […] a conduit for commercial publishing firms, distributing millions of free books every year to students in England, Wales and Northern Ireland' via their book-gifting programmes, which largely rely on the school system to reach children and young people (Coleman 2018: 3). The article frames BookTrust as a point of articulation between the commodified, commercialised children's publishing field and 'educational and curricular reforms in the UK' intended to promote 'wider social aims of consolidating a "multicultural" and "diverse" society' (Coleman 2018: 4). This work offers a compelling analysis of the complex ways in which educational policy, Arts Council England funding requirements, the commercial interests of publishers and the stated aims and unstated biases of non-profit organisations, shape the production, marketing and reception of children's books in Britain. Like Bold and Sands-O'Connor, Coleman focuses on the representation of non-white authors and characters in English-language children's books and makes no mention of translation. Nevertheless, the article's framework, which presents government policy (in both the arts and education), commercial publishing and non-profit work as integral parts of a single ecosystem is useful for understanding the translation sub-field explored in this thesis. Ultimately, although it is true that translation is not mentioned explicitly in many histories of activism related to racial, ethnic and cultural diversity in British children's books, I contend that these two traditions of advocacy have developed in close conversation and are linked by a number of overlapping key figures, publications and campaigns. This thesis highlights these elements, and suggests that both movements would benefit from further research which foregrounds their commonalities and shared histories.

The problem of literary translation statistics

In a 2021 chapter entitled 'Conceptual tools in translation history', Anthony Pym cautions that 'the manipulation of raw percentage-based concepts can be highly political' (Pym 2021: 3). Pym gives the example of a comparison between literary translations published in Hebrew and in Arabic between 2000 and 2005. He points out that while 'translations accounted for 46% of the books published in Hebrew but only 16% of the books published in Arabic', the actual number of translated books published in each language is almost identical, with the difference in percentages reflecting the fact that 'almost three times as many non-translational books were published in Arabic as in Hebrew' (Pym 2021: 2). This point is well worth keeping in mind when studying the state of translation in the UK children's

publishing field, particularly given the ubiquity of the 'three percent' statistic in contemporary discussions about the state of literary translation into English. The data source(s) and methodology originally used to establish this figure are unclear (Chitnis 2016: 11) but its meaning, to those who invoke it, is not: the state of translated literature (for children and/or adults, in the UK, or the US, or both, depending on the source) is 'dire' (Beauvais 2018: 11) and 'embarrassing' (Venuti in Lathey 2020: 43), particularly compared to other markets where the percentage of books published in translation is much higher, up to around 50% or more in some cases (the examples cited are usually European, see Van Coillie 2020). The question of statistics and percentages is usually passed over relatively quickly, with authors acknowledging to varying degrees the difficulty of getting an accurate answer to the question of what and how much is published in English translation in a given time period. The most recent and comprehensive data for the UK was compiled by Literature Across Frontiers in a series of reports between 2012 and 2017 (Donahaye 2012; Büchler and Trentacosti 2015). These reports outline the challenges posed by incomplete and unclear source data and the difficulty of defining the parameters of the field. Relying on both raw and laboriously processed data sets drawn from the British Library, they go on to present statistics that broadly confirm received wisdom in the field: around 4% of books published in the UK that fall into the 800 Dewey Decimal category ('literature') have been translated from a language other than English, with large, nearby European markets (namely France and Germany) leading the source-language tables.

In 2022, *The Bookseller* published an article with the headline 'Translated fiction enjoys golden age as Manga surge boosts sector to record high'. This article states that 'over £1 in every £10 spent on a fiction title in the past year in the UK was used to purchase a translated book', which supposedly 'shatter[s] the "3% rule", the long-held notion that translated titles make up three per cent of the entire UK fiction market' (Tivnan 2022: 1). This piece is one of a number in the popular and industry press in recent years claiming that translations are more popular than ever among UK readers. These are largely based on reports commissioned by the Booker Foundation on a regular basis since 2016, using data from Nielsen. The first of these reports coincided with the reincarnation of the Man Booker International as the International Booker Prize, which recognises the author and translator of a single work of fiction in English translation. Despite the claim made in the *Bookseller* article quoted above, both it and previous Booker reports analyse sales rather than production, unlike the Literature Across Frontiers reports and the widely-circulated 3% statistic they set out to verify. The *Bookseller* article discusses the sales figures for 'translated fiction', with and without manga, including various sub-categories of graphic novels and genre writing

such as erotica, crime, fantasy, and horror in addition to 'general & literary' fiction, but not including drama, poetry, literary non-fiction, or writing for children or young adults (other than manga and graphic novels, many of which are marketed to younger readers). The LAF studies use a much broader definition of 'literary translation', including poetry, drama, narrative non-fiction and children's/YA in their data set. For the purposes of their analysis they treat 'children's books' as a 'genre' comparable to fiction or poetry, noting that around 10% of translations from the data set analysed were children's books, compared to around 67% adult fiction (Büchler and Trentacosti 2015: 18-19). Although the LAF reports are generally very comprehensive in pointing out the limitations of their own analyses, this reflects a failure to acknowledge the degree to which the children's publishing field is distinct from publishing aimed at adults. LAF points out, for example, that despite small changes in percentage, absolute numbers of literary translations published in English have grown steadily year-on-year for the period studied, in line with substantial sustained growth in the total number of titles published in the UK each year. They do not, however, give figures comparing the number of children's titles published to the total number of titles published, meaning that their statistics do not reflect any difference that might exist between the UK children's and adults publishing fields in terms of their openness to translation. The Booker-commissioned reports, for their part, do not make any mention of children's books, even when discussing genres like manga and graphic novels where there is heavy crossover between the adult and children's/YA markets.

Contradictions in the discourse around literary translation during and shortly after the Brexit referendum offer clear examples of the drawbacks of using quantitative approaches to draw conclusions about the 'state' of literature in translation in the UK (for adults and/or children and teens). In a chapter published in 2020, Gillian Lathey cites the 3% statistic, which she attributes to the LAF reports, as evidence of Britain's 'deep-seated wariness' of European children's books (Lathey 2020: 42). A similar article from 2018 by Clementine Beauvais also claims that 'the imbalance of children's literature in translation in comparison to Anglophone literature [in the UK] […] give[s] us some clues to understanding the advent of Brexit' (Beauvais 2018: 14). A 2019 Guardian article, in contrast, announced that 'as Brexit looms […] the country's readers are gulping down European fiction at an unprecedented rate, with sales at their highest since records began', citing the Booker-commissioned studies showing that sales of fiction in translation 'have risen steadily' while 'sales of English-language literary fiction […] have plateaued' (Flood 2019: 1), with French and other European countries 'overwhelmingly' the most popular sources for books in translation. In 2023, when the Booker organisation published figures indicating that translated fiction was

most popular among (adult) readers under the age of 35, Jacques Testard, publisher and founder of Fitzcarraldo Editions, was quoted as saying that 'Brexit is in there somewhere. It might not be a direct correlation. But lots of young people voted to stay in the EU. Maybe being interested in cultures outside the UK is cool' (Self 2023: 1). So, which numbers tell the truth? The apparently paltry production percentages, or the steadily rising production numbers? Does the persistent 3% statistic prove Brits' deep-seated Euroscepticism, or do the sales numbers indicate that British readers are more excited about books from France and Germany than ever before? Are British children starved of international literature, or are they being raised to read in translation like no generation before them? Ultimately, these pieces demonstrate that interested parties, including researchers, tend to see what they are hoping and/or expecting to see in the figures available to them. Both for this reason, and due to the very small sample sizes in question, this study forgoes statistical arguments in favour of a qualitative approach.

Chapter 1.3 – Methodology

Towards a sociology of children's literature in translation

As discussed in the literature review above, despite the embrace of sociological methods in general (and Pierre Bourdieu's theories in particular) among book historians and translation studies scholars since the 1990s (Sapiro 2008: 155), the sociology of children's publishing and translation for children have lagged behind. In studies where children's books have been partially or fully excluded from consideration, (see for example Sapiro 2008, 2010; Thompson 2010; Donahaye 2012), this is justified by an assertion that there is something 'different' about the way children's books are produced and circulate. What might this difference be? Guijarro offers one answer, identifying the major influence of a 'transnational network of actors striving to improve the moral standards of children's books' organised around three institutions, the International Board on Books for Young People, the International Youth Library and the Bologna Children's Book Fair, all founded in Europe in the mid-20th century (2022: 3). The strength of this network's influence and the fact that in many cases it predates the development of independent national fields, Guijarro argues, differentiates it from any potential equivalent in adult publishing. Furthermore, the importance of the pedagogical and moral responsibilities given to children's literature set the latter apart from literature intended for adults: as Nikolajeva puts it, 'the notions of childhood and the educational aspects of reading have crucially influenced the evolution of children's literature and have gone hand in hand with pedagogical views of literature as a powerful

means for educating children' (2015: 3). The consequences of this difference are broad, and go far beyond editorial decisions around 'appropriate' content or instances of censorship and self-censorship. The priority when designing the methodology for this study, then, was to establish an approach which takes into account these differences, rather than simply reproduce the methodology used by Sapiro, for example, in her examination of literary translations for adults in the US and in France (Sapiro 2010: 420-21). The Bourdieusian approach is based on the understanding that 'in order to understand the significance of a single publisher's selection principles, one has to reconstruct the whole space in which he or she acts' (Sapiro 2008: 155). In the case of children's books, as demonstrated by Guijarro's inclusion of IBBY and the IYL in the 'transnational field' (2022) or Coleman's characterisation of reading promotion charity BookTrust's central role in the British field (2018), the 'whole space' in which children's publishers act includes individuals and institutions whose role has no equivalent in the adult field.

Nikolajeva also makes the argument that this focus on the pedagogical qualities of children's literature has greatly impacted the development of the academic field of children's literature studies. Scholars have tended to focus on 'subject matter, ideology, and didactic and educational values' (Nikolajeva 2015: 4), offering an analysis of the 'functional or pragmatic' role of 'children's literature in relation to society' (Nikolajeva 2015: 3). Despite the proliferation in recent decades of scholarship treating 'children's literature as literature' (Nikolajeva 2015: 4), studies of the production and reception of children's literature remain highly conditioned by this long tradition of differentiating 'good' children's books from 'bad' ones. The consequences of this can be seen in scholarly writing on translated children's books that focuses on the 'problem' of low translation into English, seen as part of the problem of lack of diversity in children's literature. The study of these processes is often framed by a moralistic assumption that encouraging translation is 'good' and failure to translate (or failure to translate the 'right' books, or failure to get those 'good' books into the hands of children) is 'bad'. Furthermore, in English-language scholarship on children's books in translation, the division between academia and advocacy, like the division between advocacy and publishing, is rarely clearcut, and frequently non-existent. This can be seen at an international level, for example, in the fact that *Bookbird*, the first international journal for children's literature and a major forum for contemporary scholarship in the field, is published by advocacy organisation IBBY. Within the UK, close ties between the children's literature departments at the University of Roehampton and Newcastle University and advocacy initiatives such as the Marsh Award for Children's Literature in Translation, the Seven Stories National Centre for Children's Books, the Centre for Literacy in Primary Education (CLPE)

and the current incarnation of the UK section of IBBY, as well as ongoing collaborations between Outside in World, the University of Portsmouth library and the University of Reading Centre for Book Cultures and Publishing (CBCP) are examples of the strong overlap between academia and advocacy in the field. For this project, then, it was important to use methods which enable reflection on these entanglements between the production of knowledge about and practice within the field, not least through continuous acknowledgement of the ways in which the design, execution and dissemination of this thesis itself continues this tradition of collaboration between academia, industry and activism.

Grounded theory

With all of this in mind, I have used qualitative, ethnographic methods. These are in part inspired by the principles of grounded theory, particularly the constructivist and interpretive version espoused by Kathy Charmaz (2006), as well as elements of the 'multilogical middle way' approach to qualitative research set out in Orne and Bell's *An Invitation to Qualitative Fieldwork* (2015). Orne and Bell encourage a flexible use of grounded theory's tools rather than a rigid adherence to all of its associated processes. Most importantly, in their 'multilogical middle way' grounded theory offers a starting point for inductive qualitative research. Grounded theory is the brainchild of American sociologists Glaser and Strauss, who first developed it in the 1960s while studying the experience and management of death and dying in US hospitals (Charmaz 2006: 4). Early versions of the methodology offered a novel combination of rigorous, systematic, repeatable methods inspired by Glaser's quantitative, positivist tradition with 'notions of human agency, emergent processes, social and subjective meanings […] and problem-solving practices' from Strauss's pragmatist Chicago-school background (Charmaz 2006: 7). Since the 1990s, Charmaz and others have moved away from the positivistic framework that theory exists independently of the researcher and is 'discovered' from the data, preferring the idea that 'we are part of the world we study and the data we collect [and] we *construct* our grounded theories through our past and present involvements and interactions' (Charmaz 2006: 10).

At its core, grounded theory advocates '*developing* theories from research grounded in data rather than *deducing* testable hypotheses from existing theories' (Charmaz 2006: 4). Glaser and Strauss originally advocated for delaying the process of reviewing the literature until after data collection and analysis had been completed, to avoid 'importing preconceived ideas and imposing them on your work' (Charmaz 2006: 165). More recently, even very strict grounded theorists acknowledge that some prior knowledge of the literature is inevitable and

even desirable, recommending 'theoretical agnosticism' and a critical approach to existing theory rather than total ignorance of it (Henwood and Pidgeon 2003 in Charmaz 2006: 165). This framework is useful for the study of the sociology of children's book translation in the UK, a subject which has not been studied extensively and is not adequately explained by existing theories from adjacent fields of study. For this project, I approached reviewing the literature as a continuous process, reading before, during and after my data collection and analysis, but delayed writing up a formal 'literature review' until after the bulk of my analysis was complete. Developing an early familiarity with relevant literature allowed me to design a study which addressed the gaps I identified, while delaying the writing of this section allowed me to be responsive to my data when selecting the most relevant literature.

Defining features of grounded theory research include:

- Sampling 'aimed toward theory construction, not for population representativeness' (Charmaz 2006: 6)
- A simultaneous and iterative approach to data collection and analysis, rather than data collection being completed before analysis begins
- Basing units of analysis on the data rather than preconceived notions based on existing literature in the field

The grounded theory concept of theoretical sampling offers a powerful tool to address the differences between the children's and adult's publishing fields outlined above. In this approach, the selection of interview subjects (or organisations, texts or other data types) for inclusion in the data set is conducted in stages, in response to categories and theories that emerge during the research process. Using this method, I allowed each round of interviewees to point me towards other individuals and organisations who were involved in or relevant to the work of children's translation advocacy in the UK. Orne and Bell refer to this as 'snowball sampling' or 'relational sampling' (76). Rather than making assumptions about who might be involved in this field based on studies from other countries or of translation publishing for adults, the contours of the field emerged organically from the data collected. Importantly, theoretical sampling 'is *not* about representing a population or increasing the statistical generalizability' of the study, but rather 'pertains only to conceptual and theoretical development' (Charmaz 2006: 101). In other words, theoretical sampling rejects the need to interview a 'representative sample' from the assumed population(s) of interest. In this project, for example, as I discuss in further detail in my analysis, I interviewed only a very small number of editors from large, commercial publishing houses. Rather than

trying to represent a wide variety of attitudes towards and experiences with children's books in translation, I focused on the subjects most relevant to my emerging theories of the field.

Grounded theory suggests the use of a strict analytical process known as 'coding', specifically 'open coding' followed by 'focused coding'. At its most basic, coding involves 'naming segments of data with a label that […] categorizes, summarizes and accounts for each piece of data' (Charmaz 2006: 43). Grounded theorists advocate for beginning with an extremely detailed, comprehensive open coding process, where early interviews are analysed word by word or line by line, in their entirety, using only codes which describe actions ('coding with gerunds') (Glaser 1978 in Charmaz 2006: 49). These initial codes are then compared and combined to produce 'more directive, selective and conceptual' codes (Glaser 1978 in Charmaz 2006: 57) which are used to sort through larger volumes of data and develop analysis. Following stricter versions of this process has the advantage of sensitising researchers to patterns in the data which may fall outside of preexisting theoretical frameworks or challenge their own preconceived notions about the research subjects. It has the disadvantages of being extremely time and resource intensive, and may involve spending inordinate amounts of time transcribing, rereading, coding and recoding data which is irrelevant to the arguments being built (Orne and Bell 2015: 90). The action-focused practice of coding with gerunds can also prejudice analysis towards a 'focus […] on the social psychological dynamics of the participant' and is ill-suited to types of data other than interview transcripts or detailed field notes. Given these considerations, this project involved some 'incident-by-incident' open coding of early interviews, combined with immediate post-interview notes recording potential points of interest and areas for further investigation, analytical memo-writing to record emerging theoretical frameworks, and later indexing of interview data based on the analytical frameworks developed through the earlier stages of the analytical process.

Towards a history of the *habitus*

One of the results of following a grounded theory process is that this project features a significant historical element which was not necessarily envisioned when the research began. This interest in the history of international children's literature advocacy arose from a need to clearly articulate how the contemporary subjects of my research understand the work in which they are engaged. In the early stages of interviewing and field work, I became curious about certain core beliefs and patterns of rhetoric which arose repeatedly. I was particularly intrigued by the assumptions that seemed to be shared almost unanimously by those who I identified as operating within the ICL advocacy *habitus,* and yet were sometimes

met with confusion or misunderstanding by others. One of these patterns was the way in which advocates used the category of 'translated/in translation' to describe the children's books which are the subject of their advocacy. What is it about the process of linguistic transfer into English that they understand as uniting children's books in an enormous variety of genres and formats, produced across different time periods and cultural, regional, and national contexts, into a coherent category for which it is possible and desirable to advocate? I also observed that there were tacit processes of evaluation and gatekeeping taking place across the groups in which I was interested. My interviewees and the organisations and publications with which they were associated also made frequent reference to a specific interest in 'good' or 'high-quality' children's books. How, I wondered, had this tacit shared understanding of what makes a children's book 'good' or 'quality' developed, and how specific is that understanding to this group of advocates? Finally, I was struck early on by the transnational nature of these shared understandings. I observed that, although their work was shaped by and reacted to the specific national circumstances in which they were operating, the core beliefs about translation and children's books which drove the British ICL advocates I interviewed were clearly shared with advocates working in many other national and regional contexts.

As is discussed briefly in Chapter 1.2, a *habitus* can be understood as an 'embodied history' (Vorderobermeier 2014: 12) or 'internal archive' (Gouanvic 2014: 7) of professional and personal experiences, ideological orientations, institutional norms and rhetorical patterns. This is thus fundamentally a methodological framework which takes an interest not only in describing contemporary actors and institutions, but also in tracing the histories which have shaped them. In the case of the international children's literature advocacy *habitus* in the UK, there is a notable lack of institutional memory or scholarly record of these histories. The individuals I interviewed seemed to have little access to information about the work which preceded their personal involvement in international children's literature, which in the earliest cases extended to the late 1970s, and mostly began in the 1980s or 1990s. Other than a handful of names of prominent advocates and groups (translators Patricia Crampton and Anthea Bell were mentioned regularly, as were IBBY UK and BookTrust), details about this earlier period were scarce. Within IBBY and BookTrust, major restructuring and staff turnover had led to a lack of continuity between the contemporary organisations and their predecessors. The existing scholarly histories of translation for children in Britain I encountered tended to focus on text-based analyses of particular works, language pairs or genres, while histories of advocacy and activism in British children's publishing, as described in Chapter 1.2, did not substantially examine the role translation played in those histories.

Given this project's focus on the international children's literature advocacy *habitus* in the UK today, the historical elements of this research are primarily interested in tracing the origins and describing the development of the 'durable dispositions' (Chen 2023), rhetorical patterns and core beliefs which I observed in my analysis of contemporary British ICL advocacy. The history presented here is essentially a history of discourses: it is interested, first and foremost, in how the way that people in Britain have spoken and written about the international exchange of children's books has evolved over time. My approach draws on aspects of 'Critical Discourse Analysis' (CDA) methodologies. In this case, this means that these discursive histories are one part of a larger project which can be characterised as a 'transdisciplinary analysis of relations between discourse and other elements of the social process' (Fairclough 2013: 10). I understand the discourse described and analysed here as having a dialectical relationship with other elements of the *habitus,* shaping and being shaped in turn by ideologies, economic factors, institutional structures and personal relationships. This approach is particularly appropriate for understanding the development of an object of study as complex as the international children's literature advocacy *habitus*, which has economic, philosophical, political, educational, artistic and social dimensions.

I have based the historical elements of this research on a variety of sources. I began with the oral histories provided by my interviewees, which provided insight into the contours and development of the *habitus* since the 1980s. I supplemented these interviews with materials published by Outside In World and World Kid Lit on their respective websites, as well as interviews, articles and other publicly-available materials from a range of sources describing recent international children's literature advocacy work in the UK. Based on these oral histories and contemporary materials, I then explored the history of IBBY UK in more detail. Interviewees pointed to this as the longest-standing UK-based organisation focused specifically on promoting the international exchange of children's literature, with a presence reaching back to the early 1950s. This led to an interest in the origins and development of IBBY as an international organisation and its ongoing relationship with British children's book advocates, which I came to understand as central to the development of the *habitus.* I drew extensively on materials from IBBY International's online archives, hosted by Austrian Literature Online. These included Biennial Reports published in association with the organisation's biennial world congresses reaching back to 1976, the full archives of IBBY's *Bookbird* journal of international children's literature (1963-present day), and institutional history pamphlets commissioned by IBBY's executive committee in the 1970s and 1980s. *Bookbird: A Flight Through Time* (2021), a history of *Bookbird* journal compiled by editors Valerie Coghlan and Evelyn B. Freeman, provided additional insight into the history of this

network, as did the extensive personal archives of long-standing IBBY UK member Ann Lazim, who has been collecting and organising information related to the group's history since the 1980s. The digital archives of *The Junior Bookshelf* are also referenced. Founded in 1936, this was one of the UK's first publications dedicated specifically to criticism and commentary of contemporary children's books, and was edited by early and enthusiastic British IBBY supporter Edith Woodfield. Finally, this research features extensive close readings of IBBY founder Jella Lepman's memoir *A Bridge of Children's Books,* published in the original German as *Die Kinderbuchbrücke* in 1964, and first made available in English translation in 1969. This autobiographical text describes Lepman's work in Germany in the 1940s and 1950s, which resulted in the establishment of the International Youth Library in Munich in 1949 and, in 1953, the creation of IBBY.

By and large, these sources reflect the history of international children's literature advocacy from the perspective of its most dedicated proponents. The narratives they contain are necessarily biased and incomplete, often having been produced with at least the partial aim of promoting and consolidating advocacy projects in which their authors were deeply invested. Where inconsistencies or substantive gaps appear across different narratives of the same event or project, I have pointed these out and discussed their implications. As I have stated above, however, the aim of this research is not necessarily to produce an exhaustive chronological narrative describing the many forms that international children's literature advocacy has taken in the UK since it emerged as a *habitus* in the post-WWII period. Rather, I am interested in the evolving discursive patterns and strategies evident in the ways that British international children's literature advocates have described their work over time. There are many events, figures and institutions on which this research touches relatively briefly, which could easily be the subject of a thesis in their own right. In addition to historicising the analysis of the *habitus* which is at the heart of this research, a secondary aim of this projects is to sketch the contours of a historical movement which I hope will be expanded, filled in and examined in further detail in future scholarship.

Autoethnography: writing myself into the history

This project itself is an integral part of the most recent phase of this history and is deeply intertwined with the state of international children's literature advocacy in the UK today. As such, the final section of Part Two offers an overview of major evolutions in British translated children's literature advocacy between 2016 and 2025, with a focus on integrating autoethnographic reflections on my own development as a translator and translation researcher during this period and the impact of this PhD project on the world it purports to

investigate. The case studies presented in Part Three also contain reflections on my own involvement in the cases in question. This approach is in keeping with both Bourdieu's interest in reflexivity and more generally best practices in contemporary ethnographic research across a wide variety of fields. Orne and Bell, for example, suggest researchers 'be upfront' about the ways in which they impact their field of research, both through identifying and foregrounding the position from which they research and through making visible the narrative choices which that positionality produces (Orne and Bell 2015: 54-56).

Given my professional background as a translator and children's bookseller and my preexisting interest in and involvement with translation advocacy in the UK, I began this project thinking of myself as an informed insider, reporting on a field with which I am familiar and in which I was a participant before I became a researcher. I drew on preexisting relationships developed through my work in translation to make contact with interview subjects, and in many cases established a strong rapport with interviewees based on shared experiences and a mutual understanding of the joys and frustrations of working in translation and with children's books. Many participants expressed an interest and investment in the outcomes of this project. This positionality also provided me with a number of 'sensitising concepts' and 'hunches' (terms used by proponents of grounded theory to describe preexisting knowledge of the field which guides research) (Orne and Bell 2015: 49). To a large extent, my initial research questions were designed based on what I, as a translator, felt would be most useful to me and others in my field. Although my research questions have since evolved, as has my understanding of the (actual and potential) utility of this project, my personal implication in the field has continued to be a major element of this research. My understanding of my own positionality has also shifted over the course of the project, leaving me with a sense of being ultimately both more-informed and better-networked within the field than I was when the project began, yet also more distanced from and even in some cases at odds with my subjects, as my research produced conclusions that challenged certain narratives commonly held within the field.

The autoethnographic recent history presented in Part Two thus connects the past of ICL advocacy to the present day, laying the groundwork for the analysis of the *habitus* presented in Part Three and the case studies in Part Four. My encounters with the actors involved in the cases in this latter section through the process of my research has had an impact on all of them, to one degree or another, most notably through having facilitated each of them becoming the subject of a University of Reading Centre for Book Cultures and Publishing (CBCP) webinar, as part of an ongoing series of events produced in collaboration

with OIW and highlighting children's literature in English translation. Additionally, although holding a full-time, funded research position has both allowed and required me to retreat somewhat from the practice of literary translation, as a UK-based 'emerging' translator of French and Spanish with an interest in children's books, I have a material interest in learning how the children's book translation 'successes' contained in these case studies could be built upon or replicated. As such, throughout this project I aim to acknowledge, foreground and examine the integral role that academic institutions and researchers such as myself, my supervisor, and our colleagues around the UK play in this field.

Chapter 1.4 – Methods

Data Gathering

Interviews & Fieldwork

I conducted formal, semi-structured interviews with 20 individuals between November 2022 and October 2024. Two interviewees (Ruth Ahmedzai Kemp and Claire Storey) also participated in full-length follow-up interviews during that time period. A number of interviewees provided further information via follow-up emails, both unprompted and in response to requests from me. Most interviews were conducted remotely via video calls, although three interviewees opted for in-person interviews. Interviews typically lasted between one and two hours. As per the stipulations of the University of Reading Department of Languages and Cultures Ethics Committee, who reviewed and approved the research proposal in October 2022, all interviewees were given an information sheet with a brief overview of the project and asked to sign and return a consent form prior to any interview being conducted. In addition to collecting these consent forms, I began each interview by verbally confirming that the subject understood and was comfortable with the purpose of the interview, and offered them the chance to ask any questions they might have about me, the project in general and how their interview might be used. In both the information form and at the beginning of each interview, participants were also reminded that they could opt for all or part of their contribution to be cited only anonymously by alerting me that they would like to do so at any point during or after the interview. Audio recordings were produced of all interviews, and rough transcripts of the recordings were produced for my reference. Where quotations from interviews are cited in this thesis, I have checked and corrected the initial rough transcripts against the audio recordings.

In keeping with the spirit of grounded theory methods, I opted for a semi-structured approach to the interviews. Beyond a short set of questions which I endeavoured to ask all

interviewees, I allowed conversation to flow naturally, following the subject's lead as often as possible. Earlier in the research process my pre-prepared questions and my own pre-existing knowledge of and hunches regarding the field were more influential in guiding the conversations, while later in the process, once I had established initial analytical categories and areas of interest, I focused more on drawing out connections between interviews and saturating my theoretical categories.

The basic structuring questions for all interviews were as follows:

- How did you come to be interested in/work with children's books and translation?
- How has the world of children's books in translation in the UK evolved in recent years, in your opinion?
- Do you or your organisation work with or have connections with other individuals or organisations who are interested in children's books in English translation? Are you aware of any such individuals or organisations? If yes, which?
- When you think about children's books in translation in the UK, what would you like to see more of?

Participant selection and theoretical sampling

Based on the initial literature review I undertook in my first year and my existing professional connections to the field, I started my data collection with a series of interviews using the theoretical sampling approach discussed in the methodology section above. I selected a small sample of interviewees who I knew to be highly invested in the state of children's literature in English translation in the UK today and conducted semi-structured interviews, largely allowing the subjects to guide the conversations. During this first phase I interviewed two of the three OIW co-founders, one very active OIW trustee, one high-profile British translator of children's books, and two translators and activists who contribute content to WKL's website and social media feeds. I then completed an initial analysis of those interviews using a coding process discussed in more detail below. Using the theoretical framework which began to emerge from this process, I continued to select interviewees and conduct interviews between February 2023 and April 2024 for a total of 22 interviews with 20 individuals. During subsequent rounds of interviews and based on my emergent theories, I also selected three case studies and pursued interviews with this in mind. These cases include one publishing house (*The Emma Press*), one translator (Claire Storey), and one translated title (*The Invisible Story*), which together represent different facets of the surging interest in Latin American children's books which had begun to emerge as an important theme within my data. In addition to the formal interviews, I collected data via email

exchanges with interviewees and others in the field, kept track of relevant news items, and gathered other relevant documentation, such as successful grant applications from organisations within my field of interest, material from institutional websites, internal organisation communications and relevant articles from industry publications. For a full list of the interviews conducted over the course of this project, see Appendix 1.

The OIW placement

As part of the research process for this project I worked closely with Outside In World, supporting the development and delivery of a number of projects during a transitional period for the organisation. The funding body which has supported this PhD, the AHRC South, West and Wales Doctoral Training Partnership (SWW DTP), encourages and provides specific support in the form of funding extensions for PhD researchers to undertake placements which involve working with non-HEI organisations during their period of study. My period of most active involvement with OIW took place between October 2022 and June 2024. During this time I was officially engaged in a part-time placement with the organisation for which I received funding from the SWW DTP. This placement was one element of a broader cooperation between OIW and my supervisor at the University of Reading, Dr Sophie Heywood, which began in 2020 and continues to the time of writing. I also continue to have contact with OIW and to support their work on a number of projects. With all of this in mind, for the purposes of this project, I consider all of my work with and for OIW to have constituted opportunities for ethnographic and autoethnographic observation, data collection, and reflection, including that which falls outside of the official 'placement' period. There are, however, specific projects in which I was more heavily involved and which are discussed in more detail in this thesis than others. These include:

- Developing signage and promotional material for the OIW collection in collaboration with the University of Portsmouth library.
- Reviewing and editing the Business Development Plan produced by an external business advisor as part of an Arts Council England-funded organisational review process.
- Conducting workshops based around the OIW collection for trainee teachers at the University of Portsmouth.
- Planning, delivering and publicising events as part of the CBCP x OIW webinar series on children's books in English translation (see below for more detail).

- Drafting and reviewing an Arts Council England grant application to support the redevelopment of the OIW website and the delivery of a number of in-person events using the collection at the University of Portsmouth and University of Reading.

The CBCP x OIW Webinar Series

Since early 2021, the University of Reading Centre for Book Cultures and Publishing, of which my supervisor Dr Sophie Heywood is a co-director, has produced a series of webinars in collaboration with Outside In World. Billed as 'Explorations in Translation for Children', these events are aimed at a combined audience of academics, industry professionals and members of the general public with an interest in children's books in English translation. They are part of a larger calendar of in-person, hybrid and remote CBCP events open to the public, featuring guest speakers and panels addressing a wide variety of topics related to book cultures and publishing. My involvement in these webinars, as an audience member, guest speaker, facilitator and organiser has often blurred the lines between my roles as a researcher, translator and advocate for children's literature in translation. In particular, my role in connecting several of my interview subjects with the webinar organisers, leading to them being invited to participate as guest speakers, constituted an active and direct intervention in my field of research. As such, I have used this series of events, alongside the placement and my other involvement with OIW, as a framework through which to incorporate an element of autoethnographic analysis into this thesis. This aspect of the project developed organically through the research process, and as such was recorded throughout my process of memo-writing and iterative analysis. Discussion of the webinars, their impact on the field and my own role in their production is featured in the case studies, where each case was the subject of a webinar, as well as in the autoethnographic section of the history laid out in Part 2.

Analysis and theoretical development

In keeping with grounded theory methods, this research involved an iterative analysis process, where preliminary analyses informed further data gathering, which in turn served to refine emerging analytical categories and theories, and so on. During the initial 'open coding' process, transcripts from the first round of interviews as well as some relevant non-interview material (email communications, website copy, news articles, etc.) was 'coded' using NVivo, a qualitative data analysis software which has a variety of tools designed to support the coding, organisation, and visualisation of various types of qualitative data. The open coding process involved going through each interview transcript and identifying the actions, processes, inhibiting and motivating factors, ideological frameworks and relationships

described by the participants. Beginning at quite a granular level (e.g. 'concern about racist content in books'), these codes were then consolidated to identify themes and areas of interest (e.g. 'good books vs. bad books'). I then used these emerging themes, as well as connections established through the interview process and other networking efforts, to select the next round of interview subjects. These interviews were then added to the existing data in NVivo, and coded using the existing codes where appropriate, and new codes where necessary. I paused the process of seeking out new interview subjects once I determined that I had reached the point of 'theoretical saturation'. This grounded theory concept refers to the point at which gathering further data generally ceases to yield new theoretical properties or categories, and instead tends to confirm the theories being developed (Charmaz 2006: 189).

At this point, the rough outlines of the 'ICL advocacy *habitus*' theory were established and I had selected three case studies which emerged during my interviews. I then shifted my focus to the historical element of the research. This aspect of the research had two aims: first, to produce a timeline of events, organisations and individuals who were relevant and known to many or all of my interviewees, but which might not be familiar to the readers of this thesis. Given that the theories developed here are transnational and interdisciplinary in scope, coupled with the fact that several key elements (notably the history of IBBY and Jella Lepman's work) have rarely been the subject of significant academic attention, it was not possible to rely on references to existing histories or to assume prior knowledge on the part of potential readers. The second aim of the historical elements of this thesis was to identify and describe the origins and development process of the contemporary ICL advocacy *habitus* identified through my study of the contemporary British context.

As mentioned above, one way of understanding a *habitus* is as an 'embodied history' which develops through interactions with 'institutionalised histories' (Bourdieu's *fields*) (Vorderobermeier 2014: 12). As such, a central part of presenting the theory of the ICL advocacy *habitus* involved laying out the details of the history which ICL advocates embody, as well as the histories of the professional institutions with which they and their predecessors have interacted. In terms of historical sources, I drew on published memoirs and autobiographical reflections, articles and criticism from specialised publications, 'official' institutional histories published by organisations such as IBBY, as well as archival materials including private communications, conference proceedings, meeting minutes, etc. from public and private archives. Given this project's interest in the negotiation of ideological and political frameworks by ICL advocates, much of the discussion of this historical material

takes an approach informed by ‘critical discourse analysis’ (Fairclough 2013). This is to say that its primary interest is in the relationship between the discourse contained within the documents in question, the subjects of that discourse, the person or institution who produced it, and the audience or audiences for whom it is intended and who it has actually reached. Put more simply, how the author of a historical document described an event or object is often more relevant to the analysis presented here than the details of that event or object itself. Finally, I also regularly documented my thoughts and spontaneous reactions to the data-gathering process, which grounded theorists refer to as ‘memo writing’. These memos were used to support my understanding of the source material through the process of theoretical development. They also served as reference material for the autoethnographic portions of this thesis, allowing me to reflect on how my own perspective and positionality had evolved throughout the research process.

Part 2

Introduction

The UK children's publishing field is one of a minority of 'national sub-fields' which substantially predate the post-WWII transnational children's publishing network as identified by Guijarro Arribas. Nevertheless, international exchange has been part of the dedicated production of leisure reading material for children in the UK since it began in earnest in the 18th century. This includes both the import and export of books translated to and from English, as well as eventually exchange with other major English-speaking markets, most notably the US. This history is laid out in some detail in Lathey's *Invisible Storytellers* (2010), which focuses specifically on the role that translators as a profession have played in the development of English-language children's literature. Although Lathey is aware of and discusses the importance of several of the major actors and initiatives that feature in the following chapters of this thesis, *Storytellers* does not necessarily consider their advocacy activity as part of a broader movement which is related, but not entirely subordinate, to the professional *fields* of translation and publishing for children.

This section offers a brief history of advocacy, activism, and public discourse around books for children and young people made available to young people in the UK through translation into English. It discusses the 18th and 19th centuries only very briefly, focusing primarily on developments since 1945. As is argued throughout this thesis, it is in this post-WWII period that 'international' and 'translated' children's literature came to be understood as a 'cause' which motivated the activity of professionals from a variety of fields, including, but not limited to, the translators and publishers addressed in existing histories. The aim of this section is to offer context for the advocacy taking place in this field today, and specifically for the development of the 'international children's literature advocacy' *habitus* which is central to my analysis. In the process of doing so, it offers a broad overview of an understudied history, suggests potentially fruitful avenues for future research, and emphasises that translation is and has long been integral, not incidental, to children's literature in the UK.

This history particularly focuses on IBBY's emergence during the post-WWII period and Britain's relationship with that organisation, beginning in the early 1950s and continuing through the present day. This is both because of this organisation's central role in the development of ICL advocacy, and because it is an example of the lack of institutional memory which plagues both advocates and scholars interested in the history of translation

for children in British publishing. Despite having had a presence in the UK since 1953, the organisation has collapsed twice, losing records and knowledge of its own history in the process. Associated institutions like BookTrust or the University of Roehampton, which for periods of time served as hubs for related advocacy work, have also experienced leadership changes, funding cuts and shifts in strategic priorities which have limited their ability to preserve this history and promote a sense of continuity among advocates. Where historical materials have been preserved it is often in spite of rather than thanks to their relationship to translation. Translated books are sometimes treated as not 'British' enough to be part of this country's literary tradition, while simultaneously having been subject to interventions which distance them from their source context. Furthermore, many of the people interviewed for this project, and notably the current leaders of OIW and IBBY UK, are nearing or well past retirement. Their personal and professional experiences of children's literature and translation stretch back to the late 1970s and early 1980s. They have kept, in their memories and often in their homes and on their computers, substantial records of the advocacy work that has taken place in this field over the past 40-odd years. Without an obvious institutional home, this history risks being lost or buried in a generational shift, as happened to many of these advocates' predecessors. This section aims to preserve and contextualise this recent history, creating a foundation and reference point for future academics and advocates alike. Finally, as detailed in the methodology section above, it is impossible to adequately explore the most recent decade of international children's literature advocacy in the UK without addressing my own involvement in this world, and specifically the impact of this research process on the organisations and activities in which it is interested. As such, the final chapter of this section connects the history to the present day and presents a series of autoethnographic reflections which provide crucial context for the analysis of the *habitus* and the case studies presented in parts three and four.

Chapter 2.1: International Children's Literature in Britain: A brief history

The 18th and 19th Centuries: children's literature comes into its own

As Lathey describes in Part One of *Invisible Storytellers,* translations played a substantial and well-recognised role in the development of English-language children's literature in the 18th and 19th centuries (2010: 9). This early period was initially characterised by the extensive adaptation and abridging of foreign tales originally produced for adult audiences, and eventually the widespread production of books explicitly intended for the entertainment

of children, both as English originals and in translation. Strong exchange with Europe in general, and France and Germany in particular (two of the top source languages for children's books in English translation to this day), has been a feature of British children's literature since this time. Fairy tales from Charles Perrault and the Brothers Grimm and E.T.A. Hoffman's *Nutcracker* were all translated into English during this period, and quickly assimilated into the British children's canon (Blamires 2009: 2-3; Lathey 2020: 42). Carlo Collodi's *Pinocchio* is another oft-cited example of a translated children's book (in this case from the Italian) that gained popularity among British readers in the late 19th century. As Daniel Hahn has described in an entry for the *Oxford Companion to Children's Literature* (2015)*, The Swiss Family Robinson,* most familiar to English readers from a translation by William Godwin published in various editions between 1814 and 1818, is a particularly interesting example of the ongoing conversation between English, French and German-language children's literature during the 18th and 19th centuries. Inspired by Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe,* Swiss pastor Johan David Wyss wrote a German-language story about a family marooned on an island. One of Wyss's sons edited and published this story in 1813. French translator Isabelle de Montolieu translated and added material, publishing *Le Robinson suisse* the next year. Shortly thereafter, William Godwin translated the story into English, publishing *The Family Robinson Crusoe* (reissued in 1818 as *The Swiss Family Robinson*) as a translation 'from the German of M. Wiss [sic]' despite the fact that it featured changes introduced in the French by Montolieu. Later expanded and abridged versions were published in French and English by Montolieu and a number of other French and English editors (Hahn 2015: 1) In the history of just this text we can see the international impact of English literature on children's writing (Wyss inspired by Defoe), the invisibility of (female) translators (Montolieu's work being elided by Godwin), and an undeniable if minor appetite for Continental writing among English readers. All of these remain fundamental characteristics of British children's literature in translation to this day.

Despite the fact that books for children were being translated and imported into the UK even prior to the 18th century, the concepts of 'translated' and/or 'international' children's literature, in the sense that they are used by contemporary ICL advocates, did not come into play until the post-WWII period. Discussions of the risks and benefits of offering British children foreign books from prior to the 1940s tend to focus on specific countries and languages of origin ('French' or 'German' literature) or content that crosses international borders and arises in books of both British and foreign origin (e.g. Enlightenment philosophy), rather than considering all non-Anglophone literature as a coherent category that one could be for or against. Lathey has pointed to the anti-French tirades of Sarah

Trimmer, editor of children's literature periodical *The Guardian of Education* (1802-1806), as evidence for the long-standing 'resistance to fiction for children originating outside the UK' among certain influential figures with an interest in British children's reading (Lathey 2020: 42). As Matthew Grenby indicates in a study of British Children's Literature and the French Revolution (2003), however, neither Trimmer and her allies nor those who held opposing political stances drew a firm distinction between books written *in* France and those written *about* topics associated with France by British authors. Trimmer was single-mindedly focused on her belief that Revolutionary Jacobinism was infiltrating Britain through the medium of children's literature. Although she did rail against what she called 'that torrent of infidelity and immorality' pouring into Britain from France (Trimmer, 1803 in Lathey 2020: 42), she was equally suspicious of texts produced by British authors who she suspected (sometimes, Grenby points out, mistakenly) of blasphemy or Revolutionary politics (Grenby 2003: 5). She was also not above expressing an appreciation for certain French texts and authors, as evidenced in her critique of the English 'vulgarisms' introduced by the translator into a work which she regarded as having been 'originally published in elegant and easy French' (Lathey 2010: 67).

There are certain patterns in the public discourse around children's literature in Britain from prior to the 20th century whose influence can be observed in the international children's literature advocacy *habitus* which emerged in the post-War period. Grenby argues that British children's literature remained remarkably free from overtly political content during a period when many other British literary outputs were heavily shaped by the debates which surrounded the French Revolution. This was the case both in texts for children produced by those who took Trimmer's side and by left-wing and even radical public intellectuals such as William Godwin and Mary Wollstonecraft (Grenby 2003: 12). Although there were plenty of exceptions to this rule, Romantic ideas of childhood innocence which precluded obvious proselytising in books aimed at young audiences were strong enough among influential members of the bourgeois British literary class to 'impose restraint' on those who were otherwise forthright in declaring their allegiances (Grenby 2003: 19). Versions of this position have been central to the international children's literature advocacy *habitus* since its inception, as is explored further in Section Three of this thesis.

Where the ICL advocacy *habitus* emphasises cultural exchange and puts a high value on accurate and sympathetic representations of the 'source culture' in texts translated for children, during this earlier period Blamires writes that 'the important thing was to produce a book that British parents would buy for their children; it was of quite subordinate

significance whether it accurately conveyed the meaning of the [source] text or made [the source country's] life and culture more comprehensible to the British reader' (2009: 4). In one example of this strong preference for domestication, Lathey points to Wollstonecraft's heavily 'naturalised' translation of *Elements of Morality for the Use of Children* by German author Christian Gotthilf Salzmann (1790) (2010: 75). Wollstonecraft declared that she had 'altered many parts' of the story, out of a desire to 'avoid introducing any German customs or local opinions' so as not to 'puzzle children by pointing out modifications of manners' (Wollstonecraft in Lathey 2010: 46). Despite this, elements of her translation reflect a concern with offering children positive portrayals of diverse, international characters which prefigures core elements of the modern ICL advocacy *habitus.* For example, Wollstonecraft inserted an anecdote into the text in which she 'emphasises the humanity' of a Native American character not present in the original, and made the denunciation of anti-Semitism present in the original more explicit (Lathey 2010: 77). The tension between the imperative to avoid overt political proselytising described above and a desire to ensure children's books promote a positive moral message remains a central issue among international children's literature advocates to this day.

The 20th Century: Children's books become 'international'

It was during the early 20th century, beginning in the interwar period and gaining momentum through the 1940s and 50s, that cultures of advocacy developed that described themselves as being in favour of the translation and international exchange of children's literature in general. During this period, translation came to be seen (by some, at least) not merely as a way of making particular foreign-language texts available to British children, but as an ideological act reflecting and engaging with an increasingly 'international' world. Western nations increasingly committed to 'childhood as a special time' (Fass 2006: 28), not least through the expansion of education throughout the middle and lower classes and rising age of attendance requirements (Fass 2006: 32). Childhood, including notably children's literature, came to be seen as a site for the creation not only of future adults, but of future citizens. *Children's Books from Foreign Languages: English translations from published and unpublished sources* (1937), a bibliography produced by US children's librarians Ruth A. Hill and Elsa de Bondeli in 1937, is an early example of the kind of the approach to translations for children which characterises the modern *habitus* (Lathey 2010: 136). Listing 950 titles produced by both American and British publishers, this reference was intended to support teachers and librarians working with the diverse, multilingual immigrant populations that had begun to characterise many US cities by this time. Its editors emphasised the importance of

selecting ‘high-quality books’ for translation, and were interested in the ability of children’s books to promote ‘world understanding and friendship between nations’ (Lathey 2010: 138). As Lathey points out, although Hill and de Bondeli included the work of British translators and publishers in their bibliography, the attitudes of these American librarians towards ‘international’ children’s books would not become widespread among their transatlantic counterparts until after the Second World War (2010: 139).

The involvement of British children’s book professionals in what would become a transnational movement of international children’s literature advocates is closely linked to the history of the International Board on Books for Young People (IBBY), founded in 1953. Considered a subject-defining authority on the field of international children’s literature to this day, IBBY was the culmination of a series of projects initiated by the US military and spearheaded by Jella Lepman, a Jewish German journalist and children’s literature activist who emigrated to England in the late 1930s. In 1946 in the immediate aftermath of the Second World War, the US Military recruited Lepman as an ‘adviser on the cultural and educational needs of women and children in the American zone’ (Lepman 1969: 15) and flew her to Germany. Her role was to translate the American military’s vision for Germany’s future into resources and events aimed at children and families (Lepman 1969: 9). In keeping with her strong belief in the unifying power of children’s literature, Lepman began by putting together ‘an exhibition of the best children’s books from various nations’ (Lepman 1969: 33), which would go on to form the seed collection for the International Youth Library (*Internationale Jugendbibliothek*) in 1947 (Lepman 1969: 84). The International Board on Books for Young People (IBBY), an organisation whose ‘stated aim was “to promote international understanding through children’s book”’ (Pearson 2016: 9) was founded by Lepman and others in 1953. Although it has always operated with a veneer of political neutrality, IBBY was (and continues to be) closely linked to US soft power initiatives around the world. Paraphrasing Robyn McCallum, Kelen and Sundmark argue that ‘fiction reflects relations between societies and individuals, and reading becomes an integral process in children’s development out of solipsism into a society […] to play their part in the machinations of an empire’ (2013: 161). In this case, the empire in question was the Western side of the Cold War: founded in the early years of this conflict and amidst the utopian fervour for world government that characterised the post-War period, many IBBY sections explicitly associated literacy and access to books with liberal democracy and the fight against communism. British advocates have been involved in IBBY since its establishment, and the impact of this network on British discourse around international and translated children’s literature is explored in more detail below.

IBBY in the UK

The Early Years: 1950s-1960s

The IBBY UK website claims that 'the British National Section of IBBY was a founder member of the organisation in 1953' (IBBY UK 2024). Although IBBY was not in fact organised into independent 'National Sections' until later (Guijarro Arribas 2022: 6), it is true that two British representatives were elected to the IBBY Executive Committee when the organisation was officially founded in Zurich in 1953: Pamela L. Travers of *Mary Poppins* fame and Edith Woodfield, co-founder with her husband H. J. B. Woodfield of a journal dedicated to reviewing children's books, *The Junior Bookshelf* (Bamberger 1973: 17). In December 1953, *The Junior Bookshelf* published a version of Jella Lepman's opening speech from the Zurich gathering, entitled 'The Work and Tasks of the International Board on Books for Young People'. In this, Lepman briefly lays out the post-war origins of the International Youth Library and announces the creation of IBBY, which she calls 'the first international group to occupy itself exclusively with all matters concerning children's literature'. As Guijarro Arribas points out, IBBY members were originally concerned with promoting 'good' children's literature which would support 'children's moral improvement' (2022: 7). The potentially ruinous effect of 'poor-quality' 'periodicals, radio, cinema and television' and especially 'the misuse of Comic Strips', in other words 'the dissemination of publication likely to have an injurious influence on children and adolescents', was an urgent matter of concern for Lepman and her colleagues at this time (1953: 278-79). Lepman states that IBBY's first concrete mission would be to disseminate surveys and draw up reports on 'the state of youth's literature in the chief civilised nations' (1953: 277). Although Britain is not named specifically, this hints at how the British children's literature field understood itself in relation to the rest of the world in 1953: as a sophisticated, cutting-edge leader with a handful of respectable European and North American peers and, some felt, a moral obligation to share its expertise with other, 'less civilised' nations in the rest of the world.

Continued strong interest in IBBY's activities among influential British figures in the children's book world throughout the 1950s belies the isolationist tendencies sometimes attributed to the mainstream of the field in retrospect (see, for example, Lathey, 2020, or O'Sullivan, 2019). Lathey even calls the mid-20th century 'a golden age for the translation of children's literature into English', observing 'a commitment' among publishers and editors to 'bringing international writing of a high calibre and from a range of languages' to young audiences (2010: 145-46). Although the UK did not have representatives on the IBBY Executive Committee in 1956 and 1958, legendary British children's librarian Eileen Colwell

attended the IBBY World Congress in Florence in 1958 as a member of the Hans Christian Andersen jury and reported on her experience in another piece published by *The Junior Bookshelf*. Colwell had a few practical reservations about IBBY's project, particularly regarding the impossibility of comparing Hans Christian Andersen award nominees in any meaningful way, given the limitations of the jury's linguistic abilities, and the related challenge of networking effectively given 'the language difficulty' from which 'all international gatherings suffer' (Colwell 1958: 102). She was generally very positive about the Congress, however, arguing that Britain should continue to participate, support and attend IBBY gatherings, even if the 'smaller and less developed countries have the most to gain by membership' (Colwell 1958: 104). *The Junior Bookshelf* added an editorial note supporting this last statement, stating that 'one might expect countries like ours with a highly developed library service to join the movement with a view to sharing the results of their years of experience with others less fortunate' and boasting that 'in all the countries mentioned by this article *The Junior Bookshelf* has subscribers' (Colwell 1958: 104).

In that same issue, the editors double down on their support for exposing British children to international literature by introducing what would become a regular feature reviewing 'Books in Foreign Languages', specifically French and German. In the introduction to this first feature they concede that there are some significant and potentially problematic differences between English children's books and those produced on the Continent, but argue that their 'addition to the literary experience of English children could do nothing but good' given that 'international understanding cannot be born too soon, and children must be allowed to discover that there is infinite pleasure in appreciating a point of view they differ from' (Guyonvarch 1958: 105-07). Although British children's book experts had been reviewing and discussing French and German children's books since the 18th century, these reviewers now approach this task with from within the 20th-century framework of an interest in promoting 'international understanding'. Notably, the editors state that although 'some of the books reviewed may also be available in English translation', they expect that 'more and more English children are being educated to the point of venturing to contemplate' reading books in the language of origin, and the recommendations avoid 'authors whose works are almost inevitably translated and reviewed in this country' (Guyonvarch 1958: 103-04). The casual acknowledgment that certain children's authors were 'almost inevitably translated' in Britain indicates that, at this time, translation was a well-established and familiar feature of the British children's publishing industry. As I explore in more detail in Part Three, the ICL advocacy *habitus*, which grew out of and alongside IBBY, was never a response to total lack

of translation for children in the UK, but rather a movement to promote a particular vision of the relationship between children's books, 'international understanding' and national identity.

By 1962, 'IBBY Great Britain' was officially one of what now numbered fifteen National Sections (Binder 1973: 57). Around this time IBBY underwent a major reorganization, coming to more closely resemble the organisation that exists today. Direct individual membership of IBBY International was replaced with a model whereby independently-operating National Sections paid annual dues to the central secretariat for the privilege of sending representatives to the biennial World Congresses and submitting nominees for the Hans Christian Andersen Award and the IBBY Honour List. The *Bookbird* journal, which chronicles the work of IBBY sections around the world in addition to publishing scholarship and commentary related to the international children's book field, was launched in 1963. That same year, IBBY secured official status with UNESCO (Guijarro Arribas 2022: 6-7). These changes were accompanied by what Guijarro Arribas identifies as 'a strategic discursive shift' away from the moralising, high-brow, often specifically anti-comics rhetoric which had characterised much of IBBY's activity during the 1950s towards an emphasis on 'promoting universalism and peace' (2022: 7). This first official British IBBY section operated under the auspices of the National Book League (the predecessor of today's BookTrust) with support from the Library Association, and ceased operations in 1969. Although present-day IBBY UK members have speculated that this may have been due to a lack of publisher support for membership fees (Lazim 2023), Leena Maissen, IBBY International Executive Director from 1970-2003, claims that the British Section 'withdrew in protest' of the agreement to admit National Sections from 'the communist countries' taken at the 1968 IBBY Executive Committee meeting (Maissen 2002: 19). Although few details have been recorded about this early British association with IBBY, this report of staunch anti-communism is intriguing. It is far from the only instance of geopolitical conflict erupting within IBBY (see, for example, the 1998 anti-nuclear-proliferation boycotts of the IBBY World Congress in New Delhi (Dearden 2010: 59), a topic which is mostly beyond the scope of this thesis but offers many rich avenues for further investigation.

Britain was never far removed from IBBY, even during the period between 1969 and 1972 when no official section existed. In issues of *Bookbird* from 1970, for example, the fourth edition of an International Summer School on Children's Literature in Loughborough is advertised ('Meetings and Exhibitions', 1970) and publisher Kaye Webb's win of the Eleanor Farjeon Award for distinguished service to children's books is celebrated alongside British illustrator Edward Ardizzone's birthday ('International News', 1970), despite no

representative from Great Britain being reported among the 34 existing National Sections at the time. In notes from a 1971 IBBY executive committee meeting concerning the (re)admission of several new potential sections, librarian Virginia Haviland and publisher Elizabeth Riley of the US report being in touch with 'colleagues in London', where 'there was interest mixed with reluctance' when it came to forming a new National Section. Some in England, Riley reports, 'thought that IBBY would be just another organization without much advantage to them'. Riley responded, like Colwell and Woodfield had in the 1950s, that sceptics should 'not [ask] what IBBY could do for them but [think] what they can do for others, eg. by getting good books spread' (IBBY 1971). Margary Fisher, critic, editor and founder of the influential children's book review magazine *Growing Point* in 1962, is mentioned as a supporter of England rejoining IBBY. Finally, the minutes note that there is 'the question' about the membership fee for England, which 'by number of titles [published annually]' would be in the highest tier.

Given England's relative wealth and highly developed children's publishing industry, it is extremely unlikely that IBBY UK would ever have been allowed to pay less than the full membership fee. The 'question', then, was whether a potential British section felt the fee was worth it. Evidently someone did, as by 1972 IBBY UK was in the process of submitting an application to officially rejoin the international organisation. In August of that year, Marilyn Edwards of the National Book League wrote to IBBY president Niilo Visapaa (Finland) to confirm the submission of the application and express the tentative possibility of sending official representatives to the upcoming 1974 World Congress (Edwards 1972). In the December 1972 issue of *Bookbird,* the Executive Committee was reportedly 'very pleased to accept the application of Great Britain to rejoin IBBY' ('News of IBBY', 1972: 43). More details were reported in the September 1973 issue of *Bookbird,* which explained that the aims of the British Section were 'the promotion of books for children and young people in accordance with the objectives set in the Statutes of IBBY, both within the United Kingdom and also by representation of British Children's Books internationally'. The new organisation reported an impressive 70 'paid up' members and had managed to draw 75 attendees to an open meeting at which Erik Haugaard discussed his translations of Hans Christian Andersen tales ('News of IBBY', 1973: 49).

IBBY Great Britain: 1970s-80s

This marked the beginning of the '20 years' during which Colin Ray (listed as Deputy of the section in the 1973 Bookbird announcement) would later claim, in response to calls to revive IBBY UK again in the early 1990s, that he and his colleagues 'struggled, usually at their own

expense, to keep the [British IBBY] section going' (1993: 18). Many luminaries of the British children's literature world were associated with IBBY during the 1970s and 80s, including notably translator Patricia Crampton, literacy education pioneer Margaret Meek, critics, authors and publishers Aidan and Nancy Chambers, and children's author and historian of children's literature Robert Leeson, among others. In some sense, IBBY UK was indeed 'just another organisation' (Leonard 1992: 11) among many in the country concerned in one way or another with the promotion of children's books and children's reading practices. Although Great Britain is regularly mentioned in the 'international news' section of *Bookbird* during this period, the events listed are rarely organised directly by IBBY Great Britain, with the notable exception of the 1982 IBBY World Congress in London. Instead, these reports attest to a varied and thriving landscape of children's literature research and advocacy across the UK, with regular events organised by a wide variety of non-profit organisations, professional associations, specialised publications and academic institutions. IBBY Great Britain was distinguished from these other groups less by its activities, which were minimal, and more by the way it served as a focal point and outlet for British children's book professionals who shared a particular set of beliefs and priorities when it came to their work.

A 1975 article by Patricia Crampton published in *Signal,* Aidan and Nancy Chambers' influential journal of children's literary studies and criticism, captures the essence of this shared spirit. The article is a version of a talk Crampton gave 'to a joint meeting of the IBBY British section, the children's writers group of the Society of Authors, and the [Society of Authors] Translators Association' (Crampton 1975: 75). Crampton emphasises the power of children's books, pointing to their potential to 'influence the minds of our children very greatly' and endorsing the idea that they can and should 'promote international understanding'. She goes on to explain that translations specifically can 'give children a picture of the very different backgrounds against which other people live their lives' and 'supply children with some insights […] which may not be provided for […] in their own literature' (Crampton 1975: 77), but that first and foremost they must be 'good' books. She also makes a point of differentiating between 'good' books which focus on 'laughter and fantasy, humanity and gentleness, astringency and love' and those inferior works which 'attempt to channel young children's minds into ideologies', such as those that descend into what she calls a 'crass' 'Marxist muddle' (anti-communism was, apparently, still alive and well within British IBBY). Translators, she argues, should 'cut out the ideological passages', an action which she thinks 'may even promote international understanding if one does it right!' (Crampton 1975: 79).

As Crampton's article demonstrates, IBBY Great Britain also tended to attract publishers, authors, critics and translators who saw themselves as creatives and custodians of one of Britain's great cultural traditions. To them, children's books were to be treated first and foremost as an art form, and never 'only' or primarily as educational or ideologically instrumental. This stance, which reaches back at least to Trimmer, Wollstonecraft and their contemporaries in the early 19th century and remains influential in the contemporary British children's literature advocacy field, was more controversial than IBBY's members would have liked to believe. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, the group found itself torn between increasingly high-profile and mainstream denunciation of the 'racism and Eurocentrism' that 'saturate children's books […] both overtly and covertly' (Ray 1981: 3) and the old guard of white British authors, illustrators and publishers who made up much of its membership, some of whom perceived these calls to anti-racism as attacks on their artistic freedom and integrity. A 1981 *Bookbird* feature entitled 'Racism and children's writers', introduced and edited by Sheila Ray, captures the challenge that this conflict presented to the organisation's understanding of itself as deeply committed to 'building bridges' and celebrating diversity. Ray treads very carefully, stating that 'Britain […] has become a multi-ethnic society' and 'it is felt by many people that children's books should reflect this' while framing the issue as a primarily historical one, noting that 'Britain has a long tradition of children's literature' and thus many books, some still in print, that 'were written for a very different kind of Britain from the one which exists today' (1981: 3). The article is the culmination of a dialogue that began when the Children's Writers Group of the Society of Authors, home to many of IBBY Great Britain's members, took offense at a report on the pervasiveness of racism in children's books presented at the 1978 IBBY World Congress. The SoA group asked for 'substantiation' of this claim, leading British anti-racism and children's rights activist Rosemary Stones to write a paper in which she helpfully offered 'criticisms of specific titles'. This, predictably, did nothing to assuage the offended authors, and things escalated to the point of the BBC hosting a televised debate on the topic in late 1980 (Ray 1981: 3).

Ray's introduction precedes duelling editorials by Stones and *Stig of the Dump* author Clive King, then Chairman of the SoA Children's Writers Group. Stones praises the 'noble ideal' of 'promoting international understanding through children's literature', arguing that an actively anti-racist approach is very much in the spirit of 'Jella Lepman's pioneering vision of the role of children's books […] in the fight against prejudice' (1981: 5). King, in contrast, offers a dismissive four-paragraph summary of human 'racial relations' which is 'not centred on Europe' in an attempt to demonstrate that 'the total truth about "racism" cannot possibly be the property of any single book […] checklist or set of guidelines', then

complains that the ‘militant and provocative rhetoric’ used by ‘political campaigners’ is ‘inadequate for the job of literary analysis’. He sees the ‘nagging unofficial censorship’ of activists (like Stones) as antithetical to the project of ensuring children ‘gain wider understanding with children of other origins’ through ‘access to a variety of freely-published books’ and the promotion of ‘translations, adaptations and discovery of original talent’ and ‘the exchange of more and more books between different culture and language groups’ (1981: 6-7). These articles reflect an argument which rages on through the present day, in culture war editorials across the children’s book field and beyond. What is notable here is the way in which both Stones and King see IBBY’s mission as not only compatible with but fundamentally affirming of their contrasting positions. Lepman’s ‘bridge-building’ gospel spoke to both the radical and the conservative factions of the British children’s book advocacy field. Certainly, King’s dismissive approach to the problem of racism in British children’s books would not be within the bounds of acceptable discourse for contemporary ICL advocates. Nevertheless, the pride in the movement’s ability to unite behind shared ideals and welcome all who believe in the power of children’s literature that is reflected in Sheila Ray’s ecumenical introduction remains alive and well among ICL advocates in the UK today.

International children’s literature advocacy in the UK today

This second incarnation of the British IBBY section ceased operations around 1991, this time due to lack of funds and an aging and exhausted leadership team (Ray 1993). In 1992, children’s author Alison Leonard published an impassioned editorial in *Books for Keeps* arguing that the UK should urgently rejoin IBBY. Leonard had been inspired by her experience at the 23rd IBBY World Congress, which she had attended in Berlin earlier that year. In the article, she calls on her British colleagues to ‘stop resting on past laurels, and end our intellectual isolation’ and to instead take inspiration from the work of the children’s book advocates she encountered in Berlin from Albania, Croatia, South Africa, Japan and Israel, among other nations. Leonard’s entreaty did not go unremarked. The following issue of *Books for Keeps* included a number of letters in response, including one from an indignant Colin Ray, who wondered where exactly Ms Leonard had been for the past 20 years, accused her of naïve ignorance when it came to the children’s book advocacy already taking place in the UK, and complained bitterly about the poor value for money offered by IBBY membership. Marianne Adey, then chair of the Federation of Children’s Book Groups (FCBG), also defended the international outlook of British children’s book advocates, arguing that the FCBG had a ‘long tradition of taking an interest in the children’s book world outside

this country', citing the fact that the organisation had 'sent books to Zambia' in the 1970s and 'a number approaching 100,000 books to the Third World' since 1990 through its 'Story Aid' programme, as well as their support for UNESCO's 'Books for All' project. Undeterred by the mixed response from her predecessors to her editorial, Alison Leonard continued to pursue the idea of resurrecting the British national section, soon with the help of children's literature scholar Kimberley Reynolds and librarian and children's literature advocate Ann Lazim.

During this period in the late 1980s and early 1990s, ICL advocacy in the UK was buoyed and shaped by the expansion of the adjacent fields of literary translation for adults and children's literature studies generally. This was reflected in the establishment of a number of academic and research institutions, such as the British Centre for Literary Translation at the University of East Anglia (founded in 1989 by W.G. Sebald), an MA in Children's Literature and National Centre for Research in Children's Literature at Roehampton University (established by Professor Kimberley Reynolds in 1991), the early stages of work on what would become the Seven Stories National Centre for Children's Literature, associated with the Children's Literature Unit at Newcastle University, as well as the campaign to resurrect a British national section of IBBY. Between 1995 and 2005 a new generation of British ICL advocates developed and expanded projects and networks, co-constructing and promoting a renewed version of the existing narrative around the importance of increasing the profile of translated children's literature in the UK. The 1996 launch of the Marsh Award for Children's Literature in Translation (Reynolds 2023) was one of the first instances of a British initiative focused wholly and exclusively on children's literature in English translation. The next major milestone would be the publication of *Outside In: Children's Books in Translation* (Milet 2005). Created by Deborah Hallford, Edgardo Zaghini and Alexandra Strick, all of whom had recently left jobs at major national literacy charity BookTrust, this project billed itself as a 'guide to and review of children's books that have been translated into English' (Hallford and Zaghini 2005). Published nearly 70 years after Hill and de Bondeli's *Children's Books from Foreign Languages: English translations from published and unpublished sources* (1937), *Outside In* and the Marsh Award heralded a renewed era of interest in international and translated literature, this time with the full participation of British children's book professionals, although still often in close collaboration with their US counterparts.

Despite somewhat disappointing sales figures, Hallford and Zaghini felt that *Outside In* was received enthusiastically by their peers (Hallford 2022; Zaghini 2023; Billings 2022). Hoping to capitalise on this momentum, they then established Outside In World as a

non-profit organisation in 2007. This marks the early stages of a very active period for ICL advocacy in the UK, peaking between 2010 and 2016. Notable initiatives include OIW's Reading Round the World (2009) and Reading the Way projects (2014 and 2016), the launch of the Translation Nation and Translators in Schools programmes (2010-2014 and 2013-18 respectively), administered by the Stephen Spender Trust, and Daniel Hahn's first translation of a children's book and subsequent increasing involvement in and impact on the field (2012). Hahn, who was awarded an OBE in 2020 for services to literature, is the most prominent example of a small group of influential and prolific activist translators whose individual commitment to promoting children's literature in translation has had a disproportionate impact on the field. Others interviewed for this project who fall into this category include Sarah Ardizzone and Lawrence Schimel. This era of British ICL advocates approached their work with a combination of idealistic, internationalist attitudes echoing back to the early 20th century and the social-justice-minded, anti-racist priorities that had made significant inroads in the children's publishing industry since Stones and King's duelling *Bookbird* editorials in the 1980s.

In 2016, the first World Kid Lit month marked the beginning of another phase for the field (Ahmedzai Kemp 2022). Important events from this period include the 2017 cessation of the Marsh Award for Children's Literature in Translation and a 2015 change to the eligibility criteria for the Yoto Carnegie and Kate Greenaway Medals for children's books, explicitly rendering books in translation eligible to compete against books originally written in English for these prestigious awards (Hope 2022). By this point in the mid-2010s, many of the ICL advocates active in the UK had over a decade of experience working specifically on children's literature in translation, in addition to their background in adjacent fields such as translation advocacy or children's books more generally. While by certain metrics much of their work had been very successful in raising the profile of translation for children, a substantial change in the percentage of children's literature published in English translation had failed to materialise. Organisations like OIW and Stephen Spender Trust began to consolidate their work and focus more on specific niches and activities, while World Kid Lit debuted new decentralised and social-media-led strategies for tackling the challenges their predecessors had been wrestling with for decades. Shifting public discourse around diversity in children's literature also led to new rhetoric and realigned priorities across the field. Finally, international children's literature advocates were as affected as anyone by the COVID pandemic. The 2020 launch of a popular and ongoing webinar series co-sponsored by Outside In World and the University of Reading Centre for Book Cultures and Publishing, the 2021 acquisition of the physical OIW collection by the University of Portsmouth and World

Kid Lit's decision in early 2023 to formalise their 'informal, relatively unstructured group of volunteers' into an 'unincorporated association' (Kemp 2023) are all major shifts that will define the field in the decade to come. This period, which coincides with the first decade of my own professional involvement with translation and children's books, is explored in more detail in the following chapter.

As is outlined in this chapter, and as Lathey demonstrates to great effect in *Invisible Storytellers*, translations have been a part of British children's book production since such a field can be said to have existed independently, and arguably before. The fact that they have been subject to critiques and varying degrees of resistance for nearly that long receives far more attention, in both scholarly and public discourse on the subject, than the equally true observation that they have also inspired centuries of enthusiasm and advocacy among British children's book professionals. Particularly since the early 20th century, as this chapter lays out, discussions around the value of translations and the international exchange of children's literature have functioned as a space in which children's book professionals debate and push the boundaries of the political, social, and educational frameworks which condition the production and consumption of children's books in Britain. Although this activity has often been understood as marginal and embattled, even (or perhaps especially) by those involved in it, the history presented here shows that it has been both more continuous and more expansive than is often acknowledged. Finally, the ways in which this long history of advocacy has shaped the work of the contemporary organisations and individuals who are the primary subject of this research is central to the analysis presented in Part Three of this thesis. I argue that the international children's literature *habitus* leads today's advocates to operate in conversation with the work of their predecessors, even when they have little access to the details of that history.

Chapter 2.2: Autoethnographic Reflections

2016-2019: Plans, hopes and dreams

Just over a decade after the publication of *Outside In: Children's Books in Translation,* OIW faced a turning point. The organisation had never had core funding or regular income, relying instead on a series of project-based grants, most often (although not exclusively) from Arts Council England. Of the organisation's co-founders, Edgardo Zaghini had been working full-time as a children's librarian in South London since shortly after he and Deborah Hallford left BookTrust, while Alexandra Strick was busy with a number of other projects, including notably Inclusive Minds, a disability-focused children's publishing consultancy non-profit she founded in 2013. Over the years it fell to Hallford to keep the organisation going, storing the growing collection of children's books in translation in her home, updating the OIW database with each new book received from publishers, reviewing books and leading the grant application process for new projects. Patricia Billings, publisher of *Outside In* at Milet and long-time international children's literature advocate, was also deeply involved in the design and implementation of various OIW projects, alongside an evolving international career as an author, publisher, mindfulness coach and social justice activist.

The second phase of the disability-focused 'Reading the Way' project, a series of school workshops, was funded by ACE and the Unwin Charitable Trust from 2016-2018. As this project ended, Hallford and Strick scheduled a call with Billings to talk about the future of OIW (Billings 2022). During this and subsequent conversations, the group discussed the feeling that they were 'really running out of steam' (Billings 2022). Hallford worried 'if anything happened to [her], what would happen to the books? […] Would the organisation just collapse?' (Hallford 2022). In Billings's characteristically blunt words: 'we [had] elder problems […] We were all old' (Billings 2022). They discussed closing down the project entirely. On the one hand, the 2016 Brexit vote and what Billings and Hallford perceived as a drop in translations for children being published in the UK felt like signs that they were fighting an increasingly uphill battle, and maybe it was time to 'let this translated children's book advocacy thing go and die, because [the situation] was bad' (Billings 2022). From a more positive perspective, thanks to arrival of World Kid Lit in 2016, there was a feeling in the group that maybe 'eventually we can let go because somebody else has the baton' (Billings 2022). Ultimately, however, they decided 'that we still had a reason to be and [to] give it one more push before we let go' (Billings 2022). Their first priority was to find a

long-term home for OIW's physical collection of children's books in translation. Billings suggested finding a university who could take over full responsibility for the organisation's operations, including the collection, website and database. Hallford preferred to retain more control and involvement, worrying that handing over the project entirely could result in OIW's legacy falling victim to future budget cuts in the precarious higher education sector. They all agreed that in addition to getting the collection 'a home so people could see it' and 'a continued stream of funding', they hoped to connect with 'young people' who would 'take the wisdom forward' (Billings 2022). It was with these goals in mind that Billings and Hallford put in motion the events that led to the funding of this PhD. Strick was less actively involved with OIW from this point onwards, having shifted her focus to Inclusive Minds, although she has remained supportive and in regular contact with Hallford and Billings.

Although I had not yet heard of OIW at the time, I was certainly the kind of 'young person' Billings had in mind. When I was growing up, my parents owned and ran an independent bookstore with a large children's section in a suburb of Seattle. I was raised by adults who took children's books very seriously, and who taught me to appreciate them and approach them critically from an early age. At 16 I started to work in the children's section of the bookstore on weekends and school holidays. As I outgrew the children's section as the target-audience reader I immediately transitioned to spending time there as a bookseller and interacting extensively with the customers, a mix of parents, grandparents, teachers and younger children. I worked as a part-time and holiday-season children's bookseller in two other bookstores during my university and MA studies, solidifying my professional interest in and respect for children's literature. This lifelong interest in books developed into a fascination with literary translation in my late teens, and led me to complete an undergraduate degree in Comparative Literature at Wellesley College in the US, including a year studying abroad in the translation department of the Université de Montréal in Quebec. The liberal arts style programme at Wellesley was flexible, allowing me to take classes across a number of departments as well as pursue independent studies translating literary texts from French and Spanish into English. My experience of a very practical, vocationally-oriented translator training programme in Montreal proved to me that this was an industry in which it was possible to build a career, something my Wellesley professors and career advisors didn't seem to know anything about. I graduated in 2016 more certain than ever that I was deeply interested in the theory and practice of literary translation, but with little to no understanding of the language services industry in the US or the position of translators in publishing. Unsure if it was even possible to pursue a full-time career as a translator of French and Spanish into English, let alone whether that was what I wanted to

do, I decided to pursue an MA in translation. After my experience in Montreal at a Francophone university, I knew I wanted to study translation in an Anglophone country, and the shorter, less-expensive and more numerous UK translation masters programmes were more appealing than staying in the US. I moved to England to begin an MA in Translation at Lancaster University that same year.

By 2018, when the OIW team were discussing the future of their project, I was living in Brighton, England, and doing everything I could to immerse myself in the worlds of commercial and literary translation that I had discovered while at Lancaster. I was making a good living as a freelancer, translating press releases, HR documents, hotel brochures and e-commerce material from French and Spanish into English for a handful of European translation agencies. The translation of a literary memoir by a Haitian journalist which I had partially completed for my BA and MA capstone projects was under contract with a university press based in the US. They were occasionally difficult to work with and paid me an insultingly small honorarium, but I was happy to be fulfilling my dream of becoming a 'real' literary translator, with my name on the cover of a book. I joined a translator's collective in Brighton where I shared a cheap office with a dozen other freelancers and learned about the industry over shared lunches. I also started attending monthly workshop sessions with a small group of local literary translators, and spent a few hours each week developing fundraising strategies for *Asymptote Journal*, a precariously underfunded but prestigious online journal of English-language literary translation run by an international group of volunteers. During this period, children's books occasionally resurfaced as a potential area of interest in the context of my translation career. Several members of the monthly Brighton literary translation workshops specialised in translating children's books, and I learned about the British children's publishing landscape from their tales of scouting, pitching, contract negotiations and debates with editors.

In 2016, as I began my MA in Translation and OIW began the final phase of Reading the Way, another major force in the UK international children's literature advocacy landscape was coming into being. '#WorldKidLitMonth' was launched in 2016 by journalist and Arabic literature advocate Marcia Lynx Qualey, with support from translator, author and publisher Lawrence Schimel and Literature Across Frontiers co-founder Alexandra Buchler (Ahmedzai Kemp 2022). The original structure of the project, which involved a Twitter campaign based around a newly-created hashtag and a related Wordpress blog, was very much a product of its time. This was the era of the #WeNeedDiverseBooks (#WNDB) and #OwnVoices movements, launched as Twitter campaigns in 2014 and 2015, respectively, (Mabbott 2017:

509; Arnold and Sableski 2020: 20) as well as 'Women in Translation month' (#WITmonth), also created on Twitter in August 2014 (Morgan 2016). The Twitter networks within which these campaigns emerged and circulated were closely linked to an active landscape of book blogs, such as #WITmonth originator Meytal Razinski's 'Biblibio', Ann Morgan's 'A Year of Reading the World' and Qualey's 'ArabLit'. Qualey, Schimel and Buchler chose to designate September 'World Kid Lit Month' to coincide with existing celebrations of National Translation Month in the US, the Council of Europe's European Day of Languages on 26 September and the UN's International Translation Day on 30 September (World Kid Lit 2025b). In its third year the project expanded beyond a monthly burst of blogs and Twitter posts with the creation of a dedicated Twitter account ('@worldkidlit') and a gradual shift to publishing on the blog and Twitter year-round, rather than primarily in September as previously (Ahmedzai Kemp 2022). This expansion can be largely credited to the efforts of translator Ruth Ahmedzai Kemp, who helped consolidate a number of related Twitter advocacy campaigns under the 'WKL' umbrella and eventually took over as editor of the blog. Translator of Chinese children's literature Helen Wang, who had recently won what was to be the final edition of the Marsh Award for Children's Literature in Translation for her translation of *Bronze and Sunflowers* by Cao Wenxuan, was instrumental in running the Twitter account from 2017 onwards. Translator Claire Storey, whose work is the subject of one of the case studies highlighted in Part Four of this thesis, became heavily involved as an editor and contributor to the WKL blog in 2018 (Ahmedzai Kemp 2022). WKL has continued to accumulate regular and occasional contributors from across the field since this time, quickly becoming 'a really big project' with 'a whole spreadsheet database of volunteers' (Ahmedzai Kemp 2022).

2020-2022: COVID, webinars, and PhD funding

On 18 December 2020, Kemp sent an email to the Emerging Translators Network forum (ETN) with the subject line 'Applicants sought for a bid for a funded PhD on translation for children'. Kemp included the following message, along with a brief note encouraging anyone interested in the opportunity to contact Heywood directly.

> Dr Sophie Heywood (Centre for Book Cultures and Publishing, University of Reading) and Dr Catherine Butler (Cardiff University) in partnership with Outside in World are putting together a bid to secure funding for a PhD project, and we are looking for a student to join the application.

> The project is a timely examination of translation for children in contemporary children's publishing, and is based around the unique collection of children's books in translation and database of translated children's literature compiled by Outside in World since 2005. It would include a placement working with Outside in World, and training with translators, publishers and authors, as well as opportunities for studying further languages and research training with the University of Reading.
>
> We are looking for applicants who share our passion for children's/YA literature and translation. You will need to have an MA in a relevant subject, and speak at least one additional language.
>
> The first scheme we are aiming for is the AHRC's South West and Wales Doctoral Training Partnership funding scheme https://www.sww-ahdtp.ac.uk/. The deadline is 25 January, and the projected start date (if successful!) would be September 2021.

I read this post with interest. Although I had not had any direct contact with Kemp, her name and that of WKL were familiar to me from her regular posts on the ETN forum and conversations at the literary translation group I had been attending since 2018. I was not familiar with OIW, nor had I been actively pursuing PhD applications, but the description of the project appealed to me. In particular, I was drawn to the idea of a funded project with a professional focus and good opportunities for networking with 'translators, publishers and authors'. Having enjoyed research and academia during my undergraduate and masters studies, I had occasionally considered a PhD. At the time, however, despite the global upheaval of COVID, I was busy with satisfying, well-paid freelance translation work. I worried about losing momentum and letting hard-won client relationships atrophy while focusing on research for four years, with nothing but an increasingly competitive and limited academic job market awaiting me at the end. Kemp's email offered the tantalising possibility of a third way. What if, instead of distancing me from the career I was establishing, a PhD could open the door to the kind of literary translation work I had always dreamed of? I imagined spending a few years getting paid a stipend to read and write about translation, all while getting to know and be known by the publishers, translators, agents and other gatekeepers

who seemed to hold the keys to getting book translation contracts. Two days after reading Kemp's message, I emailed Heywood to express my interest in the project.

As I would discover later, Kemp's message was one of a handful of outcomes from OIW's hunt for an institutional home for their collection. Heywood had come into contact with OIW in 2019, when the organisation began reaching out to universities across the US and the UK in the hopes of finding a home for their collection. Heywood, a historian of French children's literature with an interest in translation and co-director of the relatively new Centre for Book Cultures and Publishing (CBCP), had hoped to convince the University of Reading to acquire the collection. Although the collection would ultimately end up at the University of Portsmouth, Heywood, Hallford and Billings continued to discuss potential avenues for collaboration between the CBCP and OIW. As the 2020-2021 academic year began and widespread COVID lockdowns and social distancing orders showed no sign of ending, Heywood and the OIW team also decided to collaborate on the production of a webinar series which was eventually (in 2023) given the official title 'Explorations in Translation for Children'. Heywood and the CBCP provided the digital infrastructure for these sessions and advertised them to academic audiences, while Hallford and Billings contacted potential speakers and audience members from the children's publishing and translation communities. During this period OIW was also awarded an Arts Council England grant which covered the costs of an external audit of their website and broader operations with a view to establishing a path towards financial sustainability and independence. Finally, by the end of 2020 OIW was in the process of entering into an agreement with the University of Portsmouth to donate the OIW collection to the University of Portsmouth library, where it was intended to act as a 'seed collection' for a larger collection of bilingual, translated and non-English language children's books known as 'Near and Far World Books @ UoP' (NFWB@UoP). Ultimately, the deciding factor in selecting a home for the books was financial: Portsmouth, unlike Reading, was willing and able to cover the costs of cataloguing the collection, including both the initial donation of around 1600 titles as well as ongoing contributions from publishers via Hallford.

In 2020, Heywood and the OIW leadership had also submitted an application to the South, West and Wales Doctoral Training Partnership (SWW DTP) to establish a Collaborative Doctoral Award (CDA). The CDA programme advertises pre-funded doctoral studentships delivered as collaborations between two consortium universities and at least one non-HEI organisation, which in this case would have been OIW (SWW DTP 2025b). When this first application was unsuccessful, they sought out a prospective PhD student with

an appropriate resume and an interest in the OIW collection in order to apply again, this time through the SWW DTP's 'student-led awards' pathway. The design of this project, particularly OIW's close involvement, the planned placement and its relevance to and potential to enhance my career prospects outside of academia all appealed directly to the funding priorities of the DTP, which was one of around ten regional consortia administered by the Arts and Humanities Research Council under the umbrella of UK Research and Innovation (UKRI), the body responsible for distributing government funding for research within the UK. Each DTP has a number of official non-HEI partners who provide placement opportunities, training, as well as the CDAs, which the SWW DTP says 'embed the opportunity to gain first-hand experience of work outside the university environment and enhance the employment-related skills and training which a student may gain during the course of their award'. The SWW DTP further describe themselves as 'champions of the benefits of networks and co-produced outputs between academia and the public and private sectors' (SWW DTP 2025c) and a header on the landing page of the DTP announces that its funding 'is designed to route our researchers into productive careers whether in academia or professional practice'. This emphasis on collaborations with industry and employability outside academia is part of the UKRI's larger 'impact agenda', through which the UK government is prioritising support for 'problem-focused, interdisciplinary research aimed at practical applications' and 'complex, real-world problems' in order to 'break down the barriers between research and […] wider society' (Duncan 2025). A former member of the SWW DTP leadership team was known for putting it more bluntly, regularly telling us that we should be able to 'explain to our postman why his taxes are paying our salaries'.

In November 2021, Outside In World announced the acquisition of their collection of children's books in translation by the University of Portsmouth as part of UoP's 'New Near and Far World Books @ UoP collection' (University of Portsmouth 2022). In the same press release, OIW also announced this PhD project:

> Partnership with the University of Reading:
>
> Through generous funding from the Arts and Humanities Research Council's South West and West Doctoral Training Partnership granted to the University of Reading, translator Emma Page is undertaking a PhD that will feature the first in-depth study of the data compiled by OIW, as part of a wider examination of the interactions between different stakeholders in the children's literary translation publishing ecosystem. By mapping this understudied field, this project investigates the

> relationship between advocacy, diversity and translation for children, asking: what kind of books do these circumstances produce? Who is being translated, and how?
>
> […]
>
> Commenting on these exciting new partnerships, Deborah Hallford at Outside In World says: "Translated children's literature is now being integrated into wider campaigns for diversity of creators and content, helping to ensure its sustainability and growth, thanks in part to the energies of translators, academics and advocates, like OIW. Our partnerships will make a vital contribution to this field and expand the worlds of young readers, now and in the future."

As this message hints, well before I even began work on it, this project was invested with a variety of powerful hopes, expectations and assumptions from a number of different parties. In the short term, Outside In World expected that I would undertake an SWW DTP-funded placement with them during which I would provide time and expertise to support and expand their new partnerships with the Universities of Reading and Portsmouth. More generally, they hoped this project would justify to a broader public the value of the work on which they had spent decades, conferring a sense of legitimacy and institutional prestige on a collection which otherwise risked being misunderstood and even forgotten once its creators were no longer able to vouch for it. Ultimately, as Billings said, they hoped this project meant that a 'young [person]' would indeed be '[taking] the wisdom forward' (2022). In an early research interview, Ruth Ahmedzai Kemp expressed her own hopes for the project. Specifically, she hoped it might uncover 'potentially racist biases' in what is presented to or selected by UK publishers for translation, as well as shedding light on 'ways in which publishers and translators and readers are connected' (2022), and how those connections impact what gets published for children in translation. Finally, Kemp mentioned the lack of comprehensive and reliable statistics on translation publishing in the UK, expressing a hope that perhaps my research might involve at least partially synthesising the fragmented data from the WKL annual reports, the OIW database and publisher-populated Nielsen metadata. For my part, I hoped that in the process finding answers to these questions, I would develop a network of professional relationships with publishers and literary translators that would lead to ongoing opportunities for work that was more aligned with my passions than the steady but often uninspiring and anonymous freelance commercial translation I had been doing since finishing my MA.

2022-2024: New ways of working, facing new realities

New ways of working

In a research memo from September 2022, one year into my PhD, I wrote:

> ‘An implicit undercurrent in all my interactions with Outside In World is the idea that I am “on their team”. OIW sees the idea of their collection being used for academic research as validating their choice to donate the collection to a university library. They have asked me (and I have agreed) to contribute a clip explaining how the collection can benefit researchers for a promotional video discussing the collection at UoP. OIW also sees my involvement as proof that a new generation is excited about their work and ready to ‘carry the torch’ for them. […] The way this PhD project came about […] has contributed to this feeling that I am here to produce research that will *further the cause* of translated children’s literature in the UK, and breathe new life into OIW at a moment when their leadership, mission and overall structure are in flux.

I reflected on my previous experiences working in translation advocacy, and how the research process had shifted my perspective:

> ‘During my time working as a communications manager marketing for the Translated Book Club at Asymptote Journal [2017-2019], I used every cliché in the book to convince people to sign up and receive a *carefully selected, brand-new title representing the best of contemporary literature from around the globe, translated into English.* Our marketing materials emphasized crossing borders and building bridges, discovering new worlds and opening minds, freedom of speech and powerful young voices. We leaned heavily on our status as a small, under-funded, independent, volunteer-run organisation, asking potential subscribers to spare the cost of *just a few coffees a month* to support the vital work of uplifting excellent literature from around the world. The initiative initially appeared successful, but after six months we more or less topped out our subscriber numbers. We were preaching to the choir. Despite all our talk of connection and diversity and reaching out, we totally failed to break out beyond the borders of this particular bubble. As I have begun researching for this thesis and familiarising myself with the literature on children’s books in translation and literacy advocacy in the UK, I have frequently found myself knee-deep in the same cliches.’

I had also begun to realise that all of the excitement about and investment in my research by OIW and others in the field might be a double-edged sword:

> 'When I started this project, it didn't occur to me that this could pose a problem. It wasn't until after I had received funding and begun reading more about the field that I began to see Outside In World as the *subject of* rather than the *medium for* my research. One major factor was the lack of existing research into the field– as I went to find sources to include in my literature review, I realised that there was almost nothing talking specifically about the history, recent or otherwise, of children's literature advocacy in the UK in general, let alone with a focus on translations. In order to study what I feel is most urgent and interesting, I need to treat Outside In World as the subject of my research, rather than simply referencing their collection as a resource. Although I am deeply sympathetic to the OIW founders and their desire to promote translated children's literature, I need to establish some distance from them to avoid repeating those tired cliches. I am also very aware that translation, children's translation, publishing etc. are very small, relationship-based worlds and that any bridges I burn or relationships I damage risk having knock-on effects for my own future career as a translator or in any other role in this world.'

As the 2022-2023 academic year began, I cautiously approached my first rounds of research interviews and a part-time placement working for Outside In World with all of this in mind. For OIW, this was a trial period for the various plans they had put in motion to ensure the organisation's longevity, including most importantly their collaborations with the Universities of Portsmouth and Reading and their latest series of ACE grant applications. I was closely involved with some of this, notably negotiations with the UoP library regarding signage and marketing material for the OIW collection, workshops introducing the collection to trainee teachers at UoP, and an ultimately unsuccessful Arts Council England grant application intended to fund an overhaul of the OIW website. World Kid Lit also underwent a major restructuring during this time, evolving from an informal collective to a UK-based Community Interest Company (Brill 2024). I was not directly involved in this, although I received regular updates from Kemp throughout the process. My research aims, thesis structure and understanding of my own positionality evolved as I watched all of this unfold.

Facing new realities

When I met with Billings and Hallford in late 2022 to discuss the plans for my placement with OIW, our conversation largely centred on how I could support their relationship with the

University of Portsmouth. The OIW team were particularly interested in ensuring that the collection was clearly and accurately labelled in the UoP library, and that OIW's mission and work were accurately represented in UoP communications about the collection. Hallford and Billings had initially become concerned after UoP circulated a press release in February 2022 which blurred the distinction between the new NFWB@UoP collection and OIW, and in which OIW's collection was repeatedly mischaracterised as being 'in many different languages' or featuring 'bilingual' books, rather than featuring primarily books in English translation. The books had also been catalogued using Dewey Decimal categories which bore little relation to the way the corresponding database on the OIW website was presented, and notably did not facilitate navigation based on country, region or language of origin, or by target age group. Although they remained grateful that the collection had found a home and hopeful about the possibility of collaboration with a variety of different departments at UoP, OIW were increasingly aware that they did not necessarily share an understanding of the value and meaning of the collection with its primary advocates at UoP. As part of my placement, I was tasked with bridging this gap. Specifically, I would communicate extensively with the UoP library staff in an attempt to align their signage and communications with OIW's, while also exploring collaborations with other departments and individuals at UoP to promote wider use of the collection.

This process of mediating between OIW and various stakeholders at UoP was a major turning point in my understanding of the object of this research. My beliefs about the nature, purpose and potential of OIW's 'translated children's literature advocacy' work were challenged through encounters with logics external to the international children's literature field. Early on in my placement, for example, I reached out to faculty members at the University of Portsmouth involved in teaching on the Translation Studies MA. It quickly became clear that the OIW collection was of little to no interest to them as it stood, because it was made up of translations without corresponding source texts. From this particular 'translation studies' perspective the collection constituted an assortment of signifiers without referents, a list of answers without questions, rather than a coherent object of interest in and of itself. I began to suspect that producing and maintaining the coherence of the concepts behind what they refer to as 'translated children's books' and 'international children's literature' was a major part of the work being done by OIW, WKL and others in the field. One member of the UoP Translation studies department suggested acquiring a small 'mirror collection' of source texts that students on the Translation Studies MA could reference for research. My original research proposal for this project had included 'case studies' on this model, where I would analyse translation strategies by comparing source and target texts

from two books selected from the OIW collection. As I explored the logistics of acquiring a selection of 'mirror' source texts, I became less interested in text-based analyses of translation strategies represented within the OIW collection, and more interested in how this disconnect between the interests of 'translation studies' departments and a 'translation advocacy' group had arisen in the first places, and its consequences.

Through OIW's efforts to publicise the collection as widely as possible at UoP, I was also invited to deliver several workshops for trainee teachers in the School of Education and Sociology. An education lecturer with whom I was in contact expressed that the department was interested in helping students consider 'how to both include children with EAL [English as an Additional Language] within the classroom and also explore the range of literature available from a range of other cultures' (Cox 2022), and gave me free rein to design a two-hour, stand-alone session to be delivered to both undergraduate and postgraduate cohorts studying primary education. These sessions, which I led in February 2023, involved a lecture followed by a workshop in the library during which the trainee teachers answered a series of open-ended questions guiding them to explore the physical collection. The OIW team were excited about the idea of these workshops. Teachers were a familiar target audience for them, and they envisioned a positive cascade of impact, whereby a single teacher might go on to inspire an interest in translated children's books among many classrooms of students. We began to refer to these as 'pilot' workshops and made plans to integrate more trainee teacher workshops into a future ACE grant application which I also planned to work on during the placement.

For me, creating the content of the workshops became an opportunity to synthesise some of my initial findings about the translated children's literature advocacy field. Operating on the assumption that most of the trainees would have very limited familiarity with literary translation, in theory or in practice, I began the session with a basic introduction to what OIW means by 'children's books in English translation', the differences and overlaps between 'translated', 'international' and 'multicultural' children's literature, and the position of translations into English in the UK children's book field. This presentation was in effect a summary of the logic of the *habitus* which produced the OIW collection. As I had become aware, during the beginning of my PhD, of the degree to which many of the specific points on which this logic relies, such as the definition of a translated text, or the relationships between translation, international cultural exchange and multiculturalism, are contested and contingent, I had simultaneously become aware of the high degree of consensus around these points which exists among UK children's literature and translation advocates like OIW.

The presentation I gave to the trainee teachers was based on that consensus, as I understood it at the time. The students were a generally receptive audience, with many expressing a real interest in and enthusiasm for the collection. For almost all of them, this seemed to be the first time they had ever considered translation as a factor in selecting texts for classroom use. Ultimately these workshops were a hopeful moment for OIW, during which their collaboration with Portsmouth and my DTP-funded placement seemed to be creating the possibility that their decades of work on the collection and database might be reaching the kind of target audiences they had envisioned.

Another moment of optimism from this period was a four-session pilot library-access and read aloud programme using the collection led by non-profit Portsmouth City of Sanctuary (CoS), a grassroots organisation which supports asylum seekers, refugees and migrants in the greater Portsmouth area. This programme was designed by a CoS staff member who led various initiatives helping vulnerable migrants access public spaces and integrate into the Portsmouth community through her role as 'Action Asylum' project lead. The read-aloud programme took advantage of the fact that the University of Portsmouth library is free to access for members of the public through its external membership programme, without any requirement for affiliation with the University. The CoS staff member identified a number of recently-arrived families housed in local hotels for asylum seekers who were already connected with Portsmouth CoS and had expressed an interest in accessing libraries. During four weekend sessions, the families were offered support for transport costs to the library. On arrival, the asylum seeker young people (ranging in age from toddlers to teens) were paired with University of Portsmouth student volunteers who supported and encouraged them to explore the OIW collection. Meanwhile, the parents were shown how to register for external membership to the library, given a tour of the facility and made to feel as welcome as possible in the space. During a visit to observe the last of these sessions, I spoke with a teenager from Afghanistan who described her excitement at finding books in the OIW collection which told stories she recognised from home, and a Turkish academic with a toddler who was pleased to have access to a university library again. Several parents expressed that children who had previously shown little interest in books were now seeking them out and reading for pleasure in the hotel accommodation. The older children were taking advantage of the opportunity to practice their English with the university student volunteers, while the younger ones seemed to be happily pulling colourful picture books off the shelves. It appeared to be, in short, an ideal use of the collection from OIW's point of view, and a validation of their understanding of its potential to support social and educational inclusion. It also demonstrated the potential of multiple organisations coming

together to contribute existing resources and expertise to a project which none of them could have delivered on their own: OIW provided the books, Portsmouth CoS identified services users who would benefit and provided an experienced facilitator equipped to support these very vulnerable people in accessing the programme, while the University of Portsmouth provided the space, library access and student volunteers.

In these moments, as I watched trainee teachers pore appreciatively over the collection or listened to a teenage asylum-seeker from Afghanistan tell me how the books made her feel welcomed, I could briefly believe that OIW had been entirely successful in their mission to find a sustainable, high-impact outlet for the resources and expertise they had acquired over the years. OIW imagined opening future workshops to teachers and librarians from other schools and universities, and of making the City of Sanctuary sessions a regular feature of library programming. As the partnership with Portsmouth stretched into its second and third year, however, it became clear that OIW's operations were in many ways no less precarious than they had been prior to the partnership with Portsmouth and Reading. In 2023, Billings and Hallford finally received the OIW 'business plan' they had commissioned from an independent business advisor using funds from an ACE grant which had also covered an audit of the OIW website. The plan, which they had hoped would contain at least a few actionable suggestions for income streams going forward, was a major disappointment: poorly-written and riddled with factual errors, gaps and fanciful suggestions that revealed a fundamental misunderstanding of both the organisation and the field in which it operates. I spent a substantial amount of time during my placement cleaning it up to the point where Hallford and Billings felt comfortable presenting it to the OIW Board of Trustees. Ultimately, it confirmed what they already suspected: without a complete overhaul of the website and funding to cover staffing costs in at least the short term, OIW would soon have to cease operations.

Faced with this reality and buoyed by the success of the pilot programmes at Portsmouth described above, as well as the ongoing co-presented webinars hosted by the University of Reading CBCP, Hallford decided to go back to ACE and apply for another grant. In this grant application, on which I also worked extensively, they requested funding to cover the website redesign and to contribute to the costs of further webinars and teacher training events at Reading and Portsmouth. From the OIW perspective, this was a fairly conservative request. The website overhaul was suggested as a top priority by both the business plan and a separate website audit conducted with the support of the 2021 ACE grant, and the collaborations with Reading and Portsmouth were to continue work that had

been successfully piloted. Nevertheless, in March 2024 they received news that the grant application had been unsuccessful. Despite the continued enthusiasm of various individuals at Portsmouth, no one at the university seemed to have the administrative bandwidth, let alone the funding, to support further teacher training workshops. I spent nearly six months being passed from contact to contact in an effort to find a way to schedule more events using the collection. Lecturers from Modern Languages, Education and Childhood Studies all expressed interest, and someone suggested incorporating the collection into the university's existing outreach work with a local educational trust. Nevertheless, despite a series of positive-seeming calls and dozens of emails, when it came time to put something in the calendar I stopped getting replies. Our contact at Portsmouth City of Sanctuary who had organised the asylum-seeker pilot events left that organisation, and both the Portsmouth librarians and I were unable to find a new contact who was willing or able to continue the collaboration. It became apparent that even the relatively small administrative requirements and expenses involved in selecting appropriate service users and organising transport to and from the university library were beyond City of Sanctuary's capacity to provide. In another blow to momentum, the faculty member who had been the driving force behind Portsmouth's acquisition of the OIW collection retired and left the university.

In the grant application rejection letter, ACE suggested that OIW's application would have been strengthened by 'clearer evidence of audience demand and more details on how you will engage with children and young people' (De Souza 2024). For OIW, this was somewhat frustrating feedback. They felt that perhaps the assessors had 'misunderstood what OIW does' as they 'never claimed to be for young people directly' (Hallford 2024). In 2024, shortly after OIW received news of this rejection, Ruth Ahmedzai Kemp contacted me to let me know that World Kid Lit was also in the process of a major restructuring. Having operated since its origins as a loosely and unofficially affiliated network of volunteers, in 2024 WKL registered in the UK as a 'community interest company' (CIC). This legal structure is somewhere between a charity and a for-profit business, allowing them to conduct commercial activity while remaining eligible for grant funding. As part of this process, WKL would be shifting its focus to reaching children, young people and parents more directly. Describing the reasoning behind this strategy, Kemp conceded that WKL had 'traditionally had a bit of a lack of clarity' when it came to their target audience (Ahmedzai Kemp 2024), and mentioned being inspired by the school-based work of fellow children's book non-profit The Children's Bookshow, who she felt had been 'very successful at applying for grants' and 'consistently well-funded for their work' (Ahmedzai Kemp 2024). Kemp was explicit about the urgency of this overhaul of WKL's strategy. Like Hallford and Billings at OIW, she was facing

burnout from years of an unpaid, constantly-expanding role keeping WKL afloat. Without a financially sustainable model where Kemp and her fellow contributors and administrators were consistently compensated for their time, the project's days were numbered. Watching OIW and WKL embrace divergent strategies in the face of parallel crises, my understanding of my own research questions continued to develop. I became particularly interested in the misunderstandings, misrepresentations, miscommunications and lack of clarity that seemed to plague OIW and WKL, particularly when it came to attempts at collaboration with actors external to the translated children's literature advocacy field. Far from being isolated incidents, I began to suspect that these frustrations reflected some fundamental contradictions in the field's foundations. I came to believe that understanding how, when and why the object that is 'international children's literature advocacy' defines and presents itself, internally and externally, should be the first and most urgent focus of this project.

I also understood OIW's unsuccessful ACE grant application and WKL's urgent turn to a more commercial structure in the context of my shifting understanding of the importance of money in shaping the field. Early on in the research process, I would ask interviewees for details about how they made a living working with translated children's books partially out of personal curiosity. The people I was interviewing had all ostensibly been 'successful' in building careers producing and promoting beautiful, interesting children's books, whether as translators or otherwise. In line with the 'professionalising' priorities of my funder and my pre-PhD hopes that this project would open doors in my career as a literary translator, I wanted to understand what they had done to get to this point. I had many candid conversations where I shared my own experience balancing more lucrative commercial translation with chasing the elusive, poorly-paid literary jobs that had drawn me to translation in the first place. It was during these conversations about money that I was most acutely aware of my hybrid insider/outsider status. My professional experience helped me build trust and a rapport, as well as giving me a sense for when to dig deeper into a passing comment or broad description. On the other hand, I also benefitted from the slight separation from this professional milieu created by my current role as a funded academic researcher. Interviewees shared personal financial situations, complicated motivations, ambivalent feelings and challenging relationships that painted a more nuanced picture of the field than the one I was used to hearing espoused by my colleagues at the professional development and networking events I had often attended as an 'emerging' literary translator. I ultimately found myself shifting away from asking about financial realities in the hopes of learning how to break into the field more successfully myself. Instead, I focused on the question of how money (having it, not having it, chasing it, making it, spending it) fundamentally shapes a

field that has most often been understood as deeply uncommercial and driven primarily by altruistic and artistic motivations. It was at this point, when nearly all of the core assumptions I had brought to this project had been thrown into question, that the theory of the *habitus* which follows began to take shape.

Part 3 - The International Children's Literature *habitus*

Stories on the Move: The *habitus* in action

One morning in June 2024, around fifty-five fourteen and fifteen year olds crowd into the Global Studies Lounge on the Whiteknights campus of the University of Reading, on the second floor of the labyrinthine Edith Morley building. This large, multi-use space has projector screens at one end and a small circle of sofas and armchairs at the other. In the middle are three round tables where the teenagers eventually sit down, gravitating naturally towards familiar faces: students from the boy's private school sit at one table while the girl's grammar school attendees pick another, and the mixed group from the local comprehensive settle at the third. This doesn't last long: after the initial welcome and introduction they are rearranged into mixed school groups of six to eight students based on the language they are studying: all of the young people present are enrolled in either Spanish or French at GCSE level, and have been invited by their teachers to participate in an experimental pilot project led by children's literature and translation researcher Sophie Heywood, who is also my PhD supervisor. I am there to help facilitate the day's activities and, of course, to observe this piece of 'international children's literature advocacy' in action. The other three other facilitators Sophie has recruited to support the event have also been involved in previous collaborations: Claire Storey and Rafaela Lemos are both translators who have been featured in CBCP x OIW webinars, while children's publisher, author and activist Patricia Billings is part of the OIW team with whom I have been in close contact throughout my PhD. Storey is also a frequent contributor to World Kid Lit.

The keystone of the day's activities is *L'Ennemi,* a picture book written by Davide Cali and illustrated by Serge Bloch. Originally published in French in 2007, it has since been translated into dozens of languages and published in various editions around the world. These teenagers have spent the previous week using this text as a case study in what translation is and what happens to books in the translation process. They have been guided through the French or Spanish version of the book in their language classrooms, with the support of trainee MFL teachers currently studying at Reading who are using this project to fulfil one of the requirements for their course. Today, Sophie warms up the crowd by showing

a brief animation based on the book and reviewing its plot and themes. *L'Ennemi* tells the story of two soldiers, each sitting alone in his foxhole and contemplating his 'enemy'. The soldiers seem to be European and clad in WWI-era uniforms, although their nationalities and the specifics of the conflict are never mentioned. On the cover of the original French version, an officer looms, a sinister grin on his face and blood dripping from fingers raised in a salute. The narrative uses simple language to address heavy themes, as the two soldiers struggle with fear, isolation, uncertainty and homesickness. Each slowly realises that his 'enemy' may not be the monster he had been led to believe, but rather just another lost, lonely human wishing for an end to the conflict. The Italian edition has a different cover design and an additional subtitle ('Una favola contro la guerra', 'An anti-war story') , which are offered as examples of the changes a publisher might make to a translated children's book. The preparatory sessions spent more time on the US edition, which has been subject to a number of notable interventions. It is twenty pages shorter than the original, subtitled 'A book about peace', and features a cheerful, poppy-wielding soldier replacing the sinister General on the cover. The American English text itself has a saccharine, almost condescending tone which even these GCSE language students can recognise as at odds with the spare, serious language of the French and Spanish texts.

This is where the real work of the day begins. First, Claire Storey, whose CBCP x OIW webinar focused on her striking success selling her translations of Latin American YA to British publishers in recent years, gives a crash course in 'pitching', introducing students to the art of crafting an argument that might convince a publisher to commission a given translation. The groups are then tasked with putting together a strategy to pitch a new English translation of *L'Ennemi* aimed at the British market. Each table has a laptop, but they are difficult for more than one student to work on at a time and are more or less abandoned within the first half hour. The students are encouraged to divide up the work, with some producing 'sample translations' of a page or two of their choice, others colouring, cutting and pasting photocopies of the illustrations to create new cover designs, and still others crafting a pithy elevator pitch and connecting the new cover design to their marketing strategy. They come up with more or less cohesive campaigns, discussing creative marketing techniques, potential partner organisations (the original book is a co-edition with Amnesty International), and which audiences might benefit most from *L'Ennemi*'s combination of easy-to-read prose and sophisticated, challenging subject matter. Rafaela, Patricia, Claire and I circulate, offering the occasional bit of advice and encouragement, but mostly listening to the young people as they work through the task. Reactions to the book vary widely. Several students see the isolation and paranoia of the covid lockdowns, a recent and dramatically disruptive

moment in their young lives, reflected in the lonely soldier and his foxhole. A few talk about bullying and the risks of dehumanising people who are 'different'. Some embrace the anti-war angle, while others link it to the annual Poppy Appeal and talk about encouraging the British public to 'support our troops'. After lunch, each group is invited to present their 'pitch' to a mock 'publisher panel' made up of Billings and Storey, who applaud their efforts and offer gentle but honest feedback, ultimately designating one team the 'winner'. The day concludes with campus tours led by Reading student volunteers who encourage the young people to imagine the possibility of studying languages at university, before they pile back onto buses and head home.

Mapping the *habitus*

In Section Three, I aim to put this anecdote in the context of the international children's literature advocacy *habitus* which has produced it. From the choice of *L'Ennemi* as central text, to the structure of the workshops, to the group of individuals and institutions involved in its design and implementation, 'Stories on the Move' is one manifestation of the core beliefs, 'durable dispositions' and habits of action which characterise the ICL advocacy *habitus.* This *habitus* heuristic makes possible an analysis which peels back and lays out the palimpsest of narratives, experiences, beliefs and behaviours around children's publishing, language-learning, the nature of childhood, literary translation as craft and art form, war, peace, national identity and international cooperation which shape ICL advocacy in the UK today. The chapter is structured thematically, reflecting the results of the grounded theory coding process on which the analysis is based. Each section lays out a particular defining feature of the *habitus,* before returning to Stories on the Move to examine how these elements come together in practice to shape a recent ICL advocacy intervention. The themes around which the chapter is structured have been identified based on the patterns which arose during my analysis of contemporary international children's literature advocacy in the UK.

The first chapter focuses on the core beliefs that structure the *habitus*: that children should (only) read 'good' books, that reading ('good') children's books 'builds bridges of understanding', and that these 'bridges' can and should be taken seriously as tools for addressing social and political challenges. The development of these three traditions of thought, including through the contributions of their detractors, forms the backbone of the ICL advocacy *habitus*. The following chapters explore the kinds of activities in which ICL advocates engage, including how those core beliefs translate into action. The *habitus* brings together people and institutions from a wide variety of professional contexts. This includes

people working in all parts of the children's book publishing, distribution and reception ecosystem, such as writers, illustrators, editors, publishers, translators, teachers, librarians, and academics as well as employees and volunteers at charitable organisations with a variety of aims and purviews. These individuals bring varied skill sets and understandings of how best to approach the perceived challenges that unite them. The methods and actions favoured by advocates have also developed over time and across different local, national and regional contexts, in response to changes in technology, institutional structures and funding. The use of a shared vocabulary and the recognition of mutual priorities across different interventions is a key indicator of the ways in which the *habitus* shapes all of these actions, despite the diversity of contexts within which they take place. Chapters 3.2, 3.3 and 3.4 focus specifically on categories of activity which are most prominent among ICL advocates working in the UK today, including (physical and virtual) book collections, lists, awards, and 'translation in schools' interventions which target children and young people directly. Some of these activities, such as awards, are found among ICL advocates around the world. Others, such as the particular type of 'translation in schools' activity discussed here, reflect the interaction between the ICL advocacy *habitus* and the specific linguistic, cultural and educational landscape of the UK today. Finally, it is worth noting that there are other categories of ICL advocacy intervention which are beyond the scope of this thesis, such as mobile libraries ('bookmobiles'), which have a long history within the *habitus* and are commonly found in many parts of the world, but are virtually unknown in the contemporary British context.

These chapters also refer back to and occasionally expand on the history presented in Part Two, in order to trace the origins of particular features of the *habitus* and illuminate how they have developed over time, with a focus on the British context. I return frequently to the early days of the International Board on Books for Young People (IBBY) and the International Youth Library (IYL), and particularly the work of their founder, Jella Lepman. Created shortly after the second World War, the IYL's lofty mission was to 'gather and preserve the children's books of every culture for all time' and to provide a physical space in which they could be accessed and enjoyed by young people (Marcus 2016: 64). IBBY, launched a few years later in 1953, sought to expand the library's reach around the world by 'bringing children and books together worldwide' (Marcus 2016: 64). To this day, the IYL and IBBY continue to be crucial focal points for educators, activists and academics with an interest in children's literature across linguistic, cultural and national borders. Carl Tomlinson describes the IYL as 'the only institution in the world that systematically collects literature for children from around the world' (2003: 68), while Rosie Webb Joels notes that 'many

contemporary activities' that support the cause of 'internationalism' in children's literature are the result of Lepman's work, explaining that 'her accomplishments motivated and encouraged countless individuals, led to the formation of influential professional organizations, and resulted in events and forums through which her dreams are still carried on' (1999: 69). Lepman's vision was so influential that, in the worlds of literacy education, outreach and advocacy, in other words among 'people […] who are committed to bringing books and children together' (IBBY, no date) endorsement of IBBY's mission and ethos remain remarkably widespread to this day. From Tehran to Toronto, librarians, teachers, publishers and activists continue to promote her dream of 'international understanding through children's literature' (IBBY, no date). Although Lepman's importance to the modern international children's literature field is widely acknowledged, much writing about her treats her more as a kind of patron saint of children's literature than as an individual with a particular set of beliefs and biases which shaped the institutions she helped create. Likewise, the gravitational force exerted by IBBY and the IYL on discourses related to translation and the international exchange of children's books around the world since the 1950s is too often taken for granted, being so pervasive as to have become invisible. IBBY describes its own work in pointedly universalist terms, insisting on the timeless value of its mission to 'bring books and children together' (IBBY, no date). The 'ostentatious neutrality' of the 'world' in world literature has been repeatedly challenged by scholars of literature for both children and adults who point out the limited 'world' (Eurocentric, anglophone, Western, literate, developed, etc.) from which said literature is usually drawn (Wiemann, Mazumdar, and Raja 2021: 4). The 'international' in Lepman's vision for 'international understanding through children's literature' is similarly 'ostentatiously neutral', as are, for that matter, the terms 'children' and 'literature', in this context. One of the aims of this analysis is to challenge the neutrality of this framing, sketching a picture of the ICL advocacy *habitus* as a particular, culturally contingent approach to children's media with a specific history which shapes it to this day.

Chapter 3.1 – Core Beliefs

Children should (only) read 'good' books

Today, IBBY's mission statement explains that the organisation is dedicated to encouraging the publication and distribution of 'quality children's books' and 'books with high literary and artistic standards'. Many interviewees also expressed a concern with 'quality' when explaining why they felt it was important to advocate for translation for children: Claire

Storey, explaining her interest in translating and promoting YA from Latin America in the UK, noted that 'there's just *good literature* that's coming out of [Latin America]'. Daniel Hahn, perhaps the highest-profile British translator of children's literature today, consistently leads with this argument when asked to explain the importance of children's books in translation (and he has been asked to do so often). In a segment on Radio 4 in 2014, for example, he bemoaned the extremely low percentage of translations among English-language children's books, posing the rhetorical question: 'There are, what, 6.7 billion people in the world whose first language isn't English? And, what, none of them are writing *good children's books*?' Children's librarian Edgardo Zaghini, who is originally from Italy and reads Spanish, Portuguese and Italian in addition to English, spoke about visiting the Bologna Book Fair early on in his career as a librarian and concluding that the UK 'is really missing out on […] so many *good authors and illustrators* […] because they [are] not translated'. Although these contemporary advocates in the UK are focused on encouraging the translation into English of 'good' books from elsewhere in the world, related arguments about the importance of 'quality' in children's literature have historically been used to encourage the export of European literature to countries with less-developed publishing industries, and to argue for various degrees of gatekeeping and censorship to prevent British children from encountering 'bad' foreign books. This section explores what ICL advocates past and present have meant by 'good' books, how that concept has evolved over time, and the central role that the 'good' or 'quality' children's book (and its undesirable counterpart, the 'bad' book) plays within the international children's literature advocacy *habitus.*

In the 1950s and 60s, Jella Lepman and other early ICL advocates made frequent reference to the importance of promoting the international exchange, specifically, of 'the right kind of [children's] literature' and 'good literature for youth' (Lepman 1953: 277). Of IBBY and the Hans Christian Andersen award, Eileen Colwell claimed that 'the value of the whole movement is in the impetus given to the *improvement in standards of children's literature* throughout the world' (Colwell 1958: 104) (emphasis mine). Writing for *The Junior Bookshelf* on the 'Torments of Translation' (including the challenges of 'translating' British books for American children and vice versa), publisher Helen Hoke Watts explained that she sought to 'bring young readers *the best books* from abroad […] the *fine* books, the *good* and memorable ones, the prize winners, the loved favourites from other countries' (Hoke Watts 1960: 270). This concern with the 'quality' of the reading material available to children was not necessarily specific to those involved in translation or international publishing. Elizabeth West has pointed to the power that what she calls 'the ideology of "the good book"' held across British children's publishing in the first half of the 20th century (West 2022: 8). As

West indicates, the precise definition of the 'good' children's book was often debated, but its importance was not. Since Europeans first began to regard childhood as a 'special period of life' (Nikolajeva 2015: 3) during which the character of future adults (and therefore future society as a whole) is formed, children's books (and, eventually, children's media more broadly) have been broadly understood as a powerful tool for shaping this development. The concerns of these early international children's literature advocates reflected widespread anxieties during this period about Europe's future, given its recent wartime traumas and the impact of dramatically expanding US cultural influence. Lepman expressed this feeling in 1953, writing that the post-War generation 'presents us with many problems but at the same time is our future hope' (275). Most notably, these worries took the form of a full-blown moral panic about the damaging effects of newly-popular American comics (and, to a lesser extent, other mass-produced and serialised children's books) on the moral character of vulnerable European children.[2] The spectre of these 'bad' books galvanised early ICL advocates, whose work was given an urgency and a relevance as they found themselves on the front lines of this major culture war. A 1958 advertisement in *The Junior Bookshelf* for the first English-language version of already-iconic Belgian *Tintin* comics explicitly names the enemy. *Tintin,* the publisher assures concerned parents, teachers and librarians, is 'coming to Britain at last', offering 'an answer to the horror comic', 'a strip cartoon with a difference' and 'one of the best antidotes against all the crude comics that are sold by the million' ('May We Introduce Tintin', 1958: 85).

Writing in the late 1990s, Maria Nikolajeva claimed that the 'pedagogical' and 'social' functions of children's literature had up to that point been overemphasised by scholars in the field, to the detriment of scholarship treating 'children's literature as literature' (2015: 4). When Nikolajeva argues that children's books are 'literature', the claim being made is that they are suitable for analysis using the scholarly tools of literary theory and criticism. Although ICL advocates have long taken an interest in the literary and artistic qualities of children's books, the distinctions they draw between 'literature' and 'non-literature' have generally been based on a different set of criteria. For Lepman and her colleagues, questions of 'literariness' in the sense of artistic quality of children's books were inextricably entangled with concerns about the moral and educational value of the books in question. For

[2] These moral panics also occurred within the United States, and many American librarians, teachers and publishers were as horrified as their European colleagues were by these same comics. US publisher Helen Hoke Watts, in the same article quoted above, notes that she is 'not interested in importing rubbish, as plenty of this is available in the States' (1960: 270) However, as demonstrated by the French case, explored in detail by Heywood (2025) and Boulaire (2023), discourses about the dangers of American influence specifically were central to anti-comics campaigns in Europe, including the UK.

example, in *Junior Bookshelf* articles from 1953 and 1960 listing French and German books recommended for British children (either in the original or in English translation), the editors noted that although the French subject their children to 'the baptism of fire' in books laden down by 'complications of style, unnerving situations, adult discourse and lengthy description' (Guyonvarch 1958: 105), the best of their children's books 'set out to please the reader all the time and instruct him imperceptibly' (Bookshelf 1960: 278). With regard to German books, they observe that 'subject matter, moral values and degree of sophistication are not very unlike those found in English books for children of the same age' while 'the moralising, rather Victorian tone found immediately after the War is now giving way, albeit slowly, to a more modern atmosphere such as prevails in the best English books' (Guyonvarch 1958: 108). These reviewers draw no distinction between style and content as they assess whether the books being discussed are 'literary enough' to be worthy of recommendation.

As discussed in Part Two, a preference for ideological subtlety was a core value among the most influential ICL advocates during this period, and an important criteria when it came to assessing the 'quality' of children's books. At the fifth IBBY Congress in 1958, newly-elected IBBY President Enzo Petrini, who would go on to be a driving force behind the creation of the Bologna Children's Book Fair (Guijarro Arribas 2022: 55), announced IBBY's desire to simultaneously 'collaborate with all those who are trying to counteract the harmful effects of bad reading' while ensuring that 'all publications having a definite political tendency can be excluded from children's literature' (Colwell 1958: 101). This combination of an aversion to overtly moralising or ideological content with strong concerns about the potential corrupting influence of morally objectionable material produced a relatively narrow, uncodified but widely agreed upon understanding of what ICL advocates meant when they referred to 'good' children's books. Seventeen years later, Patricia Crampton, a generation younger than Lepman, Colwell, Petrini and other foundational ICL advocates, articulated this same vision of the international children's literature advocate's mission in an article for Nancy and Aidan Chambers' publication *Signal.* Every translator and publisher, according to Crampton, is constantly searching for 'the good book' (1975: 77), one full of 'enjoyment', 'joy', 'laughter' and 'magic', which is 'in some way, a life-enhancing experience' (79). She cautions, however, that 'it is a crime […] to attempt to channel young children's minds into ideologies' which seek to classify 'social groups as 'good' and 'bad', giving the example of otherwise beloved German and Swedish authors who, in her view, sully their work by descending into 'a Marxist muddle'. Crampton recommended that translators remove the offending 'ideological passages' when possible (79).

In that same article, in which Crampton primarily focuses on the benefits of translating children's books from around the world into English, she nevertheless proudly observes that 'English children's literature is at present […] the most creative and imaginative in the world. We have an inestimable treasure to pass on for discovery for children throughout the world' (1975: 76). This is another opinion which Crampton shared with her ICL advocate predecessors: In a 1953 article arguing that Britain was lagging shamefully behind the United States in providing specific training for children's librarians, Eileen Colwell wrote that 'England has the richest children's literature in the world' (283). Among British ICL advocates, this pride in the quality of local production was very much the rule through the 1970s. Even the most enthusiastic, internationally-minded translation advocates (of which Crampton was one) saw translations as a way of enhancing the already-excellent selection of literature available to young people in the UK. At the international level, a belief that Western Europeans and North Americans should serve as mentors to the fledgling publishing and education systems of the newly-independent nations of the Third World was widely accepted within IBBY and other ICL advocacy spaces. As it was originally used by ICL advocates, then, 'quality' was an essentially conservative concept, associated with preserving and promoting a shared appreciation for what they viewed as an important element of European culture in a rapidly evolving global media landscape.

By the time Patricia Crampton was praising British creativity and Scandinavian social commentary in literature for youth in 1975, challenges to the existing consensus among European ICL advocates on what constituted 'good' children's books were already percolating into the mainstream. As shown by the 1981 editorials by Sheila Ray, Rosemary Stones and Clive King in *Bookbird* discussed in the Section Two, there were mixed reactions to this cultural shift among British IBBY members. Some, like Stones and children's author and major IBBY proponent Robert Leeson, were eagerly (if imperfectly) supportive of the cause, which they linked to the related pervasive scourges of classism and sexism in children's literature. Others, such as King and many of his colleagues within the Children's Writers Group of the Society of Authors (Ray 1981: 3), were dismissive and resistant. For the (largely white and middle class) British ICL advocates of this era, accepting this premise meant admitting that the call might be coming from inside the house: even some of their beloved home-grown classics might not be quite as unimpeachably 'good' as they had previously believed. As Karen Sands O'Connor points out in her excellent, detailed history of this cultural moment in Britain, this shift in perspective on the intrinsic 'quality' of British children's books brought with it new reasons to promote international exchange. For one,

America, previously a source of corrupting comics, was now seen by some (including Stones and her colleagues at the London-based Children's Rights Workshop) to be leading the way in combatting racism in children's books (Sands-O'Connor 2022: 70). Furthermore, the idea that 'the importation of a great number of foreign books by countries with a poor local production' might not be entirely positive was beginning to gain traction at the international level, with some ICL advocates from the Third World rejecting this as 'intellectual enslavement' and even 'a new form of colonialism' (Maratheftis 1984: 32). That world-class 'good books' for children might be written and published by formerly colonised peoples became thinkable to the European gatekeepers: In 1982, Lygia Bojunga Nunes of Brazil became the first winner of the Hans Christian Andersen award from a country outside Europe other than the US. In her acceptance speech, delivered in Cambridge at the 18th IBBY World Congress, hosted by British IBBY around the theme of 'Story in the Child's Changing World', Bojunga Nunes declared:

> 'Writers in Latin America feel that there is a need for their books to penetrate the – as it appears to us – very closed literary market in North America and Europe. Historically, culture has flowed outwards from Europe, but if the bridge of children's books that Jella Lepman designed is to bring the increasing benefits we all look for, then the traffic must flow both ways across the bridge.' (Glistrup 2002: 66)

This increased attention to postcolonial power dynamics and serious (if still partial and inadequate) mainstream acknowledgment of the problem of racism and sexism in children's books were not the only elements of the child's world that changed dramatically between the late 1970s and the early 1990s. Concerns about the damaging effects of comics began to seem quaint in the era of TV and videogames. In the 1982 article discussing whether comics can be called literature mentioned above, Pierre Fresnault-Deruelle claimed that the European mistrust of the American 'comic' arose originally from 'various misunderstandings' regarding their target age group and was aggravated by what he dismisses as 'a protectionist reaction and a drive towards certain sets of standards which were idealogically [sic] upheld by the Christian and Marxist philosophies'. In the 1980s, he contends, it is long past time to move on and regard 'the comic strip as a cultural expression in its own right' (Fresnault-Deruelle 1982: 72). In the same proceedings, Hungarian author Balázs Vargha proclaims that 'television not only metaphorically but in reality is part of the worldwide pollution apparatus of our time' (44),

expressing despairingly that ‘world aggression has forced its way into our homes’ through violent news programmes and that ‘there is a limit to the daily gaping at the screen beyond which even the very best programme can have a paralyzing and mentally degrading effect’ (45). Vargha, born in 1921, sums up the degree to which the old guard of ICL advocates were shaken by all of this change, writing:

> ‘Are we, I wonder, able to believe in our absolute truth? Can we say, for instance, with a clear concience [sic] that the children of the developing countries really need *Snow White* and *Robinson Crusoe*? And can we hope that the offerings we present will stand up to competition from Superman comics and TV series in a similar vein?’ (41)

By the early 1990s, the fall of the Soviet Union and the establishment of the European Union put post-WWII anxieties about European reconciliation and Cold War anti-Communism fully in the rearview mirror (at least for the moment). In Britain, ICL advocacy underwent a generational shift during this decade, with, for example, IBBY UK reborn under new leadership, the creation of the NCRCL at Roehampton University and the launch of the Marsh Award. As described in Part Two, this is the period during which British ICL advocacy as it exists today began. Many of the advocates who launched new initiatives or reenergised existing projects in the 1990s are still active in 2025, such as Ann Lazim of IBBY UK and the Centre for Literacy in Primary Education, Dr Kimberley Reynolds of the NCRCL, the Marsh Award and IBBY UK, or Deborah Hallford of OIW and Patricia Billings of OIW and Millet. Superficially, there are stark contrasts between what this cohort understand by ‘good’ or ‘quality’ children’s books and what their predecessors meant by the same phrases. Comics are welcome (the 2010 IBBY UK/NCRCL MA Conference was on the theme ‘Going Graphic: Comics and Graphic Novels for Young People’), as are left-wing politics (long gone is the anti-Communism that led the original British IBBY to resign from the international organisation in protest of the admission of Eastern Bloc sections in 1968). Nevertheless, they share certain core understandings which form a fundamental pillar of the ICL advocacy *habitus:* Children should be offered books which are crafted with at least the same respect and care for their literary and artistic value as is afforded books for adults. The content of children’s books matters and its potential to impact the psychological, social, political and intellectual development of society cannot be overstated.

Building bridges of children's books

What does access to 'good' books do for young people, however 'good' is defined in a given context? Among ICL advocates, one answer stands out above all others: good children's books 'build bridges' across national, cultural and linguistic divides. From Paul Hazard's 'universal republic of childhood' to the #OwnVoices Twitter campaigns of the 2010s, for nearly 100 years ICL advocates have been arguing that children's books are on the front line of the battle against the human tendency towards tribalism, and all the ills that arise from it. This section traces the development of the belief, core to the ICL advocacy *habitus*, that the production and exchange of 'quality' children's literature, including but not only through translation, can and should lay the foundations for a more peaceful and understanding future world. Like the definition of a 'good' children's book, the details of this bridge-building discourse have evolved substantially over time, particularly with regards to which divides most urgently need bridging and what kinds of books are best suited to the task. In Britain, today's advocates tend to see this in the context of the postcolonial discourses on ethnic and cultural diversity described above, adapting arguments developed by their predecessors who were much more concerned with maintaining peace between European nations in the post-WWII and Cold War eras. Again as with the question of the 'good' or 'quality' book, in order to understand the ICL advocacy *habitus* in Britain today it is instructive to identify the ways in which IBBY's early and ongoing interest in promoting 'international understanding' through children's books has shaped the work of ICL advocates within and beyond that organisation.

The phrase 'a bridge of children's books' was one Jella Lepman used frequently, including as the title of her 1964 memoir (*Die Kinderbuchbrücke* in the original German). Explaining the origins of the newly-formed IBBY in 1953, Lepman quotes a famous passage from Paul Hazard's 1932 work *Les livres, les enfants et les hommes* ('"Give us books," say the children, "give us wings. Build for us palaces in enchanted gardens—give us our dreams"' (Hazard in Lepman 1953: 275)), in order to make the case that 'the children of a devastated world needed bread […] but they also needed books, to feed their minds' (275). This, says Lepman, is what inspired her to establish the International Youth Library in Munich, explaining that she created 'a centre for international understanding through children's books in the middle of war-shattered Europe […] because every child has a feeling for its fellows in other lands—it is not necessary to build a common world for children for it exists already' (276). This 'common world for children' echoes Hazard's 'universal republic of childhood', a utopian vision which remains his most influential legacy (O'Sullivan 2016: 32).

As O'Sullivan describes in her study of 'Discourses of Internationalism in Children's Literature (2016), Hazard's work is best understood in the context of 'the flourishing of liberal internationalism' that began in the late 19th century and accelerated in the wake of the First World War (34). This was the same intellectual and political movement which led, for example, to the creation of the modern Olympic Games and the short-lived League of Nations, which failed to prevent the Second World War and yet laid the groundwork for structures of international relations, including diplomacy, aid and soft power initiatives, which continue to this day in the form of the UN (O'Sullivan 2016: 34). Lepman's projects, most notably the IYL and IBBY, were intended as practical implementations of Hazard's theory that all children naturally embodied the peaceful, cosmopolitan future of which internationalists dreamed, and that with the right guidance they might carry this natural tendency into adulthood. Promoting 'international goodwill' (Lepman 1953: 277) was thus a primary aim of the earliest ICL advocates. In the coming decades it became so central to the *habitus* that advocates arguing a wide variety of points would use it as a kind of trump card in debates around what kinds of books should be made available to children. Patricia Crampton, when encouraging translators to cut out any 'crass' Marxism they might encounter in Swedish or German books, claimed that doing so 'may even promote international understanding if one does it right!' (1975: 80). Rosemary Stones insisted that fighting racism in children's books reflected 'Jella Lepman's pioneering vision of the role of children's books in fostering better understanding among the peoples of the world' (Ray 1981: 5), while Clive King, a children's writer best known as author of the bestselling picture book *Stig of the Dump* (1963), responded by protesting that what he called the 'nagging unofficial censorship' of anti-racist activists like Stones impeded 'the exchange of more and more books between different culture and language groups' and thus might hold children back from gaining 'wider understanding with children of other origins' (Ray 1981: 7).

As laid out in more detail in the previous section, Crampton, Stones and King were all making these claims at a pivotal moment for the ICL advocacy *habitus*. In the 1970s and 80s, the universalist internationalism which turned on 'the pre-lapsarian, innocent, universal child' as the 'utopian inhabitant of a utopian world who will right what was wronged […] through war and violence' (O'Sullivan 2016: 39) was widely subject to critiques by postcolonial and poststructuralist scholars who called for recognition of the structural inequalities obscured by this discourse. Even as the consensus among ICL advocates shifted and discussions around positive representation, inequality, racism and recognising the full, complex humanity of the 'world' beyond Europe and North America became the norm, the power of the underlying narrative about the ability of children's books to foster

cross-cultural understanding remained undiminished. In 2008, Patricia Aldana, then the President of IBBY, made a statement entitled 'IBBY in the 21st Century', published on the IBBY website. After invoking Lepman's early work and listing some of IBBY's long-standing programmes, she describes 'a new set of activities and programmes' promoting 'the Right of Every Child to Become a Reader' (IBBY, no date). What makes these programmes different from those that came before, she claims, is a new emphasis on 'books that are mirrors and books that are windows' (Bishop 1990). Historically, IBBY had been more focused on the 'windows' side of the equation: promoting international understanding through the mutual exchange of books across international borders. Thanks to the global dominance of books originally published in the UK, the US, France and Spain, she explains, books that are 'mirrors' are disproportionately available to the most privileged children across the world, while those from poorer countries must content themselves with reading 'windows' into worlds that have little to do with their lives. IBBY is working to 'address this imbalance', she writes, through programmes specifically designed to 'develop local capacity for production of high-quality books and reading promotion' in countries where the children's publishing scene is limited or non-existent (IBBY, no date).

Aldana's piece is very revealing in terms of how the ICL advocacy *habitus* was developing a decade into the twenty-first century. There is clearly an awareness that, on some level, advocates needed to update their mission from half a century earlier in order to remain relevant. It was no longer enough to simply advocate for access to 'international' children's books: advocates needed to show an understanding of the uneven power dynamics at play in the global book market. This also implies that, in a fairer world of truly free commercial and intellectual exchange, every nation would have a thriving grassroots industry of children's books reflecting the lived reality of the local young people and ready to be translated and traded around the world to promote international understanding and peace. The situation Aldana describes, of strong export markets around the world for US and European books, was created very deliberately during the mid-twentieth century through initiatives such as the Franklin Book Programs, which saw the US heavily fund translations of American writers and set up publishing houses around the world in order to counter Soviet influence in Eastern Europe, the Middle East, Asia and Latin America (Robbins 2007: 638). This was possible because, in most cases, there was little existing local publishing with which to compete. What Aldana is advocating for in 'IBBY in the 21st Century' is not, as she implies, simply levelling the playing field so the cultures of the world can shine equally on the literary stage. Rather, IBBY is taking the next step in a decades-long campaign to support the establishment of literary cultures palatable to the dominant European market in nations

where other forms of storytelling had predominated until the twentieth century. A bridge of books requires two solid 'shores' of literary culture. One of the core missions of ICL advocates in the 20th century was build those shores where they were lacking.

While from the 1950s-1980s ICL advocates focused on bringing the 'best' books for children to 'the developing world' when looking beyond Europe, today they are more likely to focus on bringing the 'best' books from that same 'developing world' back to the former metropole. They seek out books in translation whose content has a clear connection to its culture of origin and that challenge or at the very least go beyond common tropes and stereotypes about said culture. Deborah Hallford, OIW co-founder, says that she is particularly invested in promoting translated children's books that are 'representing the [source] culture' and 'give a feel for the country,' featuring 'something about a culture and its customs'. Hallford's fellow OIW co-founder Ed Zaghini agrees that it would be good to have a book 'from each country' translated into English, observing that it is 'tragic' that a child [in Britain] might not have access to a single text that 'reflect[s] their own culture or their own tradition'. Charlotte Ryland wants to see 'more contemporary texts from outside of Europe' like the *Akissi* series of graphic novels set in Cote d'Ivoire, which she praises as an alternative to 'very racist' portrayals of non-European cultures such as those found in, for example, *Tintin*. Claire Storey mentions wanting to see more translations of Latin American children's books that don't focus on 'narco trafficking and […] migration […] anything related to those issues,' but rather 'push boundaries as to what you might expect [from a Latin American book]', through stories that are still 'based in those cultures' but offer 'unexpected insights'.

Today's advocates often also express a belief that translation for children can support classrooms of students where a wide variety of spoken languages and cultural backgrounds are represented. Pam Dix, director of IBBY UK, described working as a school librarian in a London authority 'where more than 90 languages were spoken [and] there was a real need to find books that represented children's experience, both culturally and linguistically', observing that in British schools, 'children are seen as a problem if they can't function in English, but they're not celebrated for the languages they can [speak]', particularly when those additional languages fall outside of the Western European 'modern foreign languages' typically taught in British schools. Claire Storey, translator and member of the World Kid Lit collective, would agree: 'home languages should really be embraced,' she said, describing her experience volunteering in schools, 'they're overlooked so often and kids feel embarrassed […] I just […] want kids to feel empowered'. Storey sees raising the profile of translation in children's books

as another step towards helping multilingual children to see 'their [additional] language[s] as a superpower' and to understand 'the fact that they can actually go and do something with a language'. Edgardo Zaghini, London-based children's librarian and OIW co-founder, also mentioned the recent increase in Ukrainian refugees visiting his library as an example of the importance of seeking out and making available translated children's books. Charlotte Ryland, whose work with the Stephen Spender Trust is heavily focused on translation workshops in schools, describes working with 'community languages' in 'completely multilingual cohorts' as 'the most powerful type of workshop that we do, when […] those who are speakers of those languages become the experts in the room'.

Although the straightforwardly universalist internationalism invoked by Hazard and Lepman is 'no longer fashionable' (O'Sullivan 2016: 30), many of the beliefs advanced by those early advocates about the peace-building, prejudice-ending power of ('good') children's books remain foundational for advocates today. Ryland, Storey and others who hope to inspire an interest in language-learning and literature among British pupils are only the latest in a lineage of ICL advocates which includes the *Junior Bookshelf* contributors who claimed that offering such pupils books in French and German 'has educational aims in both the narrow and the broader senses', in the hopes that good books might inspire 'keenness to master the language[s]' and thus, eventually, an affinity for Continental culture (Guyonvarch 1958: 107). There are more commonalities than differences between the British children's book review which, in 1960, praised the benefits to English children of reading French author Andrée Clair's sympathetic portrayal of a young girl from Chad in *Tchinda* (Bookshelf 1960: 277) and the frequent praise of *Akissi* by British advocates today. The Second World War is more distant historical memory than lived experience for today's advocates, and yet their calls to fight Brexit and war in Ukraine through literary translation for children rely on rhetoric that would be perfectly familiar to their mid-20th-century counterparts. Children's author, translator, and scholar Clémentine Beauvais, for example, critiques Hazard's 'rather idyllic vision of translated children's literature as the key to world peace' and the associated uncritical assumption that 'bridges will be built' and common understanding encouraged through exposure to 'foreign' literature (2018: 12), while simultaneously connecting the 'dire' state of translated children's books in Britain to the Brexit vote and calling on 'committed' ICL advocates to encourage thoughtful reflection among readers on what she theorises as the 'écart' between cultures made apparent by literary translations (2018).

Politics and Conflict

Despite the dislike of overtly ideological or political content described above, one striking pattern resulting from this 'bridge building' discourse is that certain politically-motivated (or at least politically-aware) advocates see children's books as offering the possibility of a future in which persistent sectarian and partisan conflicts will be resolved and peace will prevail. Among the advocates interviewed for this research, a number cited a sense of alignment between their ICL advocacy work and their personal politics and values as a core reason for continuing to engage with children's books and translation. In the contemporary British context, the most politically-driven ICL advocates are explicitly left-wing in their orientation, and often came to their work with children's books after decades of activism in other contexts. Notable examples include Sian Williams, founder of The Children's Bookshow, who became a translator after starting the Writers & Readers publishing cooperative with her husband, putting out books that were 'definitely on the [political] left' and often translated from other languages. These eventually included a series of Italian children's books, some of which Williams translated into English. She characterises her career, which later included doing sales and publicity for the Centre for Literacy in Primary Education and decades of organising author/illustrator talks and book gifting programmes in schools through The Children's Bookshow, as fundamentally driven by the fact that she 'wanted to make [the world] fairer' by fighting 'racism and sexism'. Patricia Billings, OIW trustee and co-founder of publisher Milet Books, expressed that when she started Milet, which specialises in bilingual children's books, 'it was kind of a leap'. Like Williams, Billings was a long-time activist with a history of involvement in left-wing politics and causes related to the rights of migrants and ethnic and cultural minorities. She 'had never worked in children's books before', or shown much interest in children's media at all, to the point where 'nobody could believe it'. To Billings, however, the leap made sense: it was all about the 'ideological interest' and 'educational values' of supporting 'immigrant, refugee, asylum-seeker families' by providing them with children's books adapted to their needs. Publishing multilingual and translated children's books, for Billings, is just one part of 'the struggle'. Ann Lazim, co-founder of the current section of IBBY UK, is another prominent ICL advocate who takes every opportunity to combine children's books and her politics, as in a 2014 panel on 'what makes a radical children's book' which she co-organised and chaired at the London Radical Book Fair, or the campaign she led in the early 2000s to support the admission to IBBY of a Palestinian National Section.

Historically, this association between international children's literature advocacy and left-wing politics is not at all consistent. In the UK, during the Cold War period many

prominent advocates were explicitly anti-Communist, and more conservative positions on, for example, the racial injustices of Britain's colonial history, such as those taken by *Stig of the Dump* author Clive King, were not unusual. Internationally, IBBY has a long history of bringing together politically heterogenous delegates and representatives of countries and communities experiencing active conflicts. As Lepman describes in *A Bridge of Children's Books,* the creation of the International Youth Library in the 1940s and IBBY in the 1950s were in large part enabled by extensive support from the US military and the Rockefeller, Ford and Middle East Foundations, all institutions closely asociated with US soft-power initiatives during the Cold War, as explored in Inderjeet Parmar's *Foundations of the American Century* (2012). Nevertheless, and despite objections from Lepman and her British colleagues (who went so far as to resign in protest), the IBBY executive voted to admit a number of sections from Eastern Bloc countries in 1968 (Maissen 2002: 19). Geopolitical tensions have regularly and repeatedly bubbled up within IBBY since that time. Prominent examples include a number of countries participating in an anti-nuclear-proliferation boycott of the 1998 IBBY World Congress in New Delhi, major debates over the potential recognition of an independent Palestinian National Section in the early 2000s (Israel, a long-standing IBBY member, being vehemently opposed), and the Russian head of the Hans Christian Andersen Award Jury being forced to resign the position, in an event that remains controversial among IBBY members, after Russia's 2019 invasion of Ukraine.

As B. Venkat Mani points out, claiming (children's) literature as an apolitical cause would require thinking 'of human subjectivity itself as apolitical, as existing in an aesthetic space completely unmoored from history' (Mani 2017: 32). That ICL advocates tendency to engage with the politics of the day should thus come as no surprise. A certain amount of political conflict is actually valued within the ICL advocacy *habitus*, as long as it can be framed as contained and productive, because it demonstrates that international children's literature advocacy is the broad church which its proponents imagine to be, and that it has the potential to have a meaningful impact on the state of the world. The more intractable or complex the conflict at stake, the more its presence in the room is taken as a sign that, through the exchange of 'good' children's books, it will be peacefully resolved at some point in the future. In retrospect, the events described above have been discursively incorporated into IBBY's history as evidence of its eclectic, ecumenical, bridge-building quality, and of its broader relevance to society at large: Carmen Diana Dearden, IBBY president at the time, described the controversial 1998 Congress in India as 'wonderfully argumentative' (2010: 59), while Leena Maissen, IBBY Executive Director from 1970-2003, reported that the 1968 Executive Committee meeting was marked by 'passionate outbursts, eloquent appeals,

political statements [and] misunderstandings' which put her in awe of 'these people who felt so strongly about children's books, reading promotion and international cooperation' and inspired her to spend a lifetime working for IBBY because she 'shared their conviction about the importance of books and reading' (Maissen 2002: 18-19). The choice by British IBBY leadership in 1981 to air the internal debates occurring among their membership around racism in British children's books on the international stage in dueling *Bookbird* editorials is another example of this attitude. To a large extent, the political diversity and transnational nature of the *habitus* becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy, seeming to those within it to provide proof through its continued existence that a belief in the importance of 'bringing books and children together' can overcome otherwise insurmountable differences. It is also worth nothing that, although this research focuses on the activity that takes place within the *habitus,* it is certain that there have existed and continue to exist individuals and groups who find themselves excluded from these networks on the basis that they are perceived as too antagonistic or too uncooperative by the majority, or due to being unwilling to participate in a network which also welcomes their political opponents. The effect of this is to render activity related to children's books which does not conform to the tacit norms of the *habitus* almost completely invisible from within its boundaries. Although these 'other' advocates are beyond the scope of this thesis, their existence is important and further research in this vein would be welcome.

Having laid out the contours and history of the core beliefs and traditions of thought which emerged from my encounters with ICL advocacy work in the UK today, the following chapters discuss the kinds of work in which advocates engage on the basis of those beliefs. Although the advocates interviewed for this research have been involved in a wide variety of projects and initiatives related to translation for children, this analysis focuses on the activities which emerged repeatedly as central to their advocacy and which are particularly linked to the core beliefs explored in the previous section. Chapter 3.2 discusses the Outside In World and World Kid Lit virtual collections and lists of 'children's books in English translation', as well as the physical collection which mirrors OIW's virtual database. These projects have developed in conversation with both transnational projects (such as, notably, the International Youth Library's collection of children's books from around the world) and with collections which have aimed to define and elevate 'British' children's literature, such as the Seven Stories National Centre for Children's Books. In order to provide context for the work of British ICL advocates, this chapter thus explores the histories of these other collecting and canon-building activities in some detail. Chapter 3.3 focuses on awards and prizes, addressing the position of translated children's books in the British award ecosystem,

and particularly the now-defunct Marsh Award for Children's Literature in Translation and the recent policy change which explicitly rendered translations eligible for the Carnegie Medal. This chapter also discusses how the historical use of literary awards to develop and reinforce the association between literary production and national identity has complicated their use by ICL advocates at the transnational level, including notably in the cases of IBBY's Hans Christian Andersen Award and its more recent competitor for the title of the 'Little Nobel', the Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award. Chapter 3.4 describes the 'creative translation in schools' workshops which a number of UK-based ICL advocacy groups have begun to offer in recent decades. These workshops are an example of a distinctly local response to the British cultural, linguistic and educational landscape, which nevertheless draws on values and frameworks with roots in the transnational *habitus.*

Chapter 3.2 – Building the canon, maintaining the *habitus*

Lists and Collections

Two UK-based organisations, Outside In World and World Kid Lit, currently maintain regularly updated, publicly available lists of children's and YA books available in English translation. OIW has been engaged in this project since 2005, while World Kid Lit began their annual lists in 2017. The Outside In World database is the centrepiece of the OIW website, and is searchable by country or continent of origin and intended target reader age range. It is a continuation of Hallford and Zaghini's work on their 'guide to children's literature in English translation', *Outside In: Children's Books in Translation* (Hallford and Zaghini 2005), and contains over 1600 titles at the time of writing (Hallford continues to add reviews on a regular basis). Many titles in the database are accompanied by short reviews, largely written by OIW co-founder Deborah Hallford (a small number of the reviews were written by interns who have worked with OIW for short periods of time). Titles for review and inclusion in the database are submitted to Hallford as physical copies by UK and US-based publishers who are aware of the project. These publishers typically began sending titles in translation to OIW after being contacted directly by Hallford in the early 2000s, when she and Zaghini were working on *Outside In*. The reviews published on the website are uniformly positive, containing a brief summary of the book's contents, notes on major themes or distinctive stylistic elements, descriptions of the illustration style where applicable, and often mention when the book features cultural elements or a setting which reflects its country of origin. They reflect the style of the book recommendations published by UK literacy non-profit

BookTrust, where Hallford, Zaghini and Strick all worked for many years before launching OIW.

The titles on the World Kid Lit's annual lists of children's books in English translation are sourced through information provided directly to WKL from publishers, translators, and other ICL advocates. Titles are listed on the WKL website by year of first English publication. Within each year, books are organised by English-language publisher and then by target age range. Each title is listed alongside the author, illustrator, translator, source language and source country. Although WKL does publish reviews and themed recommendation lists (e.g. 'Black History Month Global reads for 7-12 year olds', 'Books for 4-6 year olds on War, Refuge & Asylum', etc.), these are on separate pages of the website and not linked directly to the annual lists. Titles can be submitted for inclusion in the lists via a Google form on the website, although in practice they are mostly sourced through annual calls for submissions extended to WKL's large network of occasional contributors who write book reviews and blog posts for the website, including many translators and specialist publishers based out of the UK or the US (Ahmedzai Kemp 2022). While both OIW and WKL also publish more explicitly curated lists of 'recommended' children's literature in translation around various themes, the OIW database and WKL the annual lists are notable in that they claim to be interested in gathering and cataloguing as many examples as possible of contemporary English-language translations of children's books.

This chapter argues that the curation, publication, promotion and consumption of these lists is one of the processes through which the *habitus* is maintained and refined, and that indeed this is their primary function. Specifically, they reflect and reinforce a largely invisible curation process that is heavily shaped by the *habitus* core beliefs around the definition of a 'good' children's books and the ability of those books to 'build bridges' described in the previous chapter. Finally, they are shaped by the ambivalent and sometimes troubled relationship between ICL advocates and national identity. This chapter ends with a discussion of the physical collection of children's books in English translation which OIW has accumulated through the process of developing its virtual database of titles and reviews. While the virtual OIW and WKL lists minimise the importance of 'Britishness' in favour of an imagined borderless Anglophone community of readers, OIW has recently begun to frame its physical collection as an argument for a vision of the British children's canon which integrates translations. This theme is further explored in the following chapter on awards and prizing, another area of activity in which the relationship between translation and the national canon is continually negotiated.

The International Youth Library & the White Ravens

Establishing and maintaining collections, catalogues and lists of 'international children's literature' has long been a core feature of ICL advocacy work. The most prominent example of this is Jella Lepman's original flagship project: the International Youth Library or IYL (Internationale Jugendbibliothek) in Munich. Like Outside In World and World Kid Lit, the IYL's project of cataloguing 'international children's literature' operates on two levels: an explicitly evaluated selection of 'recommended' international children's books (in the case of the IYL this is the prestigious annual *White Ravens* catalogues) set against a broader collection which supposedly aims to represent 'world literature for children' in a general sense (as available in English translation, in the cases of OIW and WKL). The contents of these broader selections nevertheless reflect a mostly-unacknowledged set of criteria which arise from the core beliefs of the *habitus*. Before discussing the history of the IYL in more detail, it is worth acknowledging here that this analysis does not focus on the physical aspects of the IYL collection. While the physical collection has a history and life of its own, the impact of the IYL's symbolic position as 'the only institution in the world that systematically collects literature for children from around the world' (Tomlinson 2003: 68) extends far beyond the individuals who will ever access the hundreds of thousands of volumes housed in its historic building in Munich, and it is in this sense that it is most relevant to the work undertaken by OIW and WKL.

As discussed in the previous section, the work which eventually led to the creation of IBBY began with a travelling exhibition of 'the best children's books from various nations' (Lepman 1969: 33) which Lepman collected by donation from publishers across Europe. This initial collection was explicitly intended as part of the peace-building and re-education process for German youth, and donations were (at least in some cases) coordinated and overseen by officials from the donating countries. In the case of France, for example, Lepman reported that an unspecified 'ministry in charge of such affairs' responded positively to her soliciting letter by collecting books from French publishers which were then 'examined by specialists and sent on [to Germany]' (1969: 43). Lepman had specifically requested picture books 'or at least heavily illustrated ones, to help overcome the language barrier' as well as 'literature that just tells a good story' (1969: 36). The resulting exhibition featured books sent by twenty European nations in addition to some from Germany, with a purposeful and conspicuous gap representing Nazi production. Some felt that a sample of titles from this period should have been included 'in a display case marked "adults only"' so that 'the grown-ups present could have seen at a glance how far removed the Third Reich was from the path of common humanity' (54), but ultimately the exhibition featured only books

approved as positive examples of European children's literature by the series of gatekeepers involved, beginning with the publishers, passing through the hands of foreign ministries and ending with Lepman herself.

Thanks to a combination of continuing support from Lepman's military employers, funding provided by the Rockefeller Foundation in New York and cataloguing expertise contributed by the American Library Association (Lepman 1969: 104), this travelling exhibition eventually gave rise to the International Youth Library, which opened in Munich in September 1949. According to the IYL's website today, 'the central task of the library is to promote global children's and youth literature of high aesthetic and literary quality and of significance for cultural literacy' (Internationale Jugendbibliothek 2025). In 1981, Walter Scherf, Lepman's successor as Director of the IYL from 1957-1982, described it as driven by a vision of bringing 'children to deep understanding of what the nations have in common and of the common goals in our world' (Nist 1981: 33). In 2023, on the other hand, the IYL's director of travelling exhibitions emphasised the institution's ability to 'strengthen intercultural understanding by opening up a multi-faceted view of the world' (Weber and von Merveldt 2023: 83). This reflects the discursive evolution within the *habitus* from universalist internationalism to a diversity-focused globalism described in the previous chapter. Nevertheless, the underlying beliefs in the importance of 'quality' and the ability of children's books to simultaneously reflect and transcend national identity remain unchanged.

Tomlinson describes the IYL's collecting work as 'systematic', in keeping with the widely-accepted narrative that its collection offers a relatively comprehensive picture of 'high quality children's literature' from around the world (1994: 386). The 'system' in question, however, is based on regular incoming donations from 'publishing houses, institutions, organisations, literary agencies, authors, and illustrators from around the world' (Jugendbibliothek 2025). The library's 'specialists' assess these donations, setting aside 'new publications that […] strike them as noteworthy' based on 'their literary and pictorial qualities, the universal relevance of the topics they address, or their innovative approaches and design' for inclusion in the IYL's prestigious *White Ravens* catalogue of 'new and notable' children's books from around the world (Jugendbibliothek 2025). Of the donations which are not judged sufficiently noteworthy for White Ravens recognition, the IYL reports that 'all high quality books' are added to the institution's permanent collection (Jugendbibliothek 2025).

The juxtaposition of the explicitly selective 'White Ravens' collection with the 'general' IYL collection gives the impression that the latter is somehow neutral, merely a reflection of

an ‘international children’s literature’ which is implied to exist independently of the IYL. As discussed above, however, determining which ‘high quality books’ will be retained by the library is a highly subjective process, shaped ultimately by the beliefs and professional habits of the individuals who make that determination, as well as by the many factors which determine what books reach the IYL for evaluation in the first place. To give just one example, Chinese children’s literature scholar and ICL advocate Fengxia Tan, who spent three months as a fellow at the IYL in 2013, noted that ‘there are very few publishers in China’ who are familiar with the institution, and thus contemporary Chinese children’s publishing was, up to that point at least, relatively poorly represented in the collection. Thanks to Tan’s interventions, Chinese publisher Dong Fang Wa Wa (DFWW), an imprint of China’s largest publisher Phoenix, donated an initial selection of what they judged to be ‘some important Chinese native picture books’, including notable award-winners, and committed to continuing to send more in the future in the hopes that ‘children in other countries will come to love and enjoy Chinese picture books’ (Tan 2013). The IYL’s Chinese collection then, like the collections representing any other nation’s production, continues to be shaped by a combination of China’s historical relationship (or lack thereof) with the transnational ICL advocacy *habitus,* the contemporary personal and professional networks of Chinese children’s publishers, the conscious decisions taken by donors to select certain books to represent their country’s children’s literature to a prestigious European institution, and finally the IYL’s subjective assessment of which of these submitted books are ‘high quality’ enough to be retained.

Outside In World and World Kit Lit

A close link can be observed in the ways that OIW and WKL put together their general catalogues and specific recommendations of ‘children’s books in English translation’. Like the IYL, OIW and WKL rely primarily on incoming submissions, usually from publishers or translators who are themselves associated with the ICL advocacy *habitus* and who, to some degree, understand these organisations as offering the possibility of bringing their books to the attention of other like-minded advocates. There is a significant degree of conscious and subconscious pre-selection at play, then, in which books reach the OIW and WKL gatekeepers for potential inclusion in their catalogues. One result of this is the fact that, despite the popularity of manga in the UK and the fact that much of it is both translated into English and marketed to a children and teen audience, neither the OIW collection nor the WKL list tend to feature manga titles. There are none in the OIW database as of 2025, and the handful which have been included in the World Kid Lit lists are clear exceptions that prove the rule. The single manga title featured on the 2023 WKL list is *Insomniacs After*

School, Vol 1. Makoto Ojiro, transl. Andria Cheng, Viz Media 2023), a contemporary Japanese reimagining of British children's classic *The Secret Garden* (Burnett, 1911). On the 2022 list, the only manga is *Shuna's Journey,* a watercolour-illustrated volume by internationally-renowned filmmaker Hayao Miyazaki, originally published in Japan in 1983. In 2021, two manga-style titles appear (read from right to left, featuring distinctive manga-style illustrations and published by specialist publishing house TOKYOPOP): *Alter Ego* by Ana C. Sanchez and *Bibi & Miyu, #2* by Olive Vieweg. These titles were originally written in Spanish and German, respectively, rather than Japanese, and translated (and presumably submitted for inclusion in the WKL list) by Nanette McGuinness, a prolific, award-winning translator of books and graphic novels for children and adults who is highly involved in the English-language literary translation community (as evidenced by her regular posts on the Emerging Translators Network forum and a 'Meet the translator' interview published on the WKL blog in 2021). *Alter Ego* is also published by LGBTQ+ YA imprint LOVE X LOVE and features positive representation of queer young people, in alignment with WKL's values of diversity, inclusion and representation. It is also notable that WKL features many non-manga graphic novels on their annual lists, translated from a variety of languages, as well as many translations of children's books from Japanese in non-manga formats. Although World Kid lit does not take an explicit position on whether Manga is 'good' literature, these inclusions and exclusions are part of the same controversies around the 'literary quality' of graphic formats and evolving consensus on when and how specific social values should be portrayed in children's literature that have been occurring among ICL advocates since the middle of the 20th century. Although the IYL has retained some Japanese manga in its general collection, the *White Ravens* selections have a similar bias. To take several recent years as an example, in the 2021, 2022, and 2023 *White Ravens* catalogues*,* none of the Japanese-language books selected are Manga. In 2021, however, a French book entitled *L'art du Manga* ('The Art of Manga') (Palette, 2021) was included in the selection. The blurb for this book notes that 'France is the country that reads the most manga outside of Japan' and that this book explains the history and special appeal of manga as well as addressing 'commonly expressed prejudices' about the genre. The 2022 catalogue lists two English-original titles (*Tsunami Girl* by Julian Sedgwick, illus. Chie Kutsuwada, and *Himawari House* by Harmony Becker) which combine 'manga style' elements with plots that partially revolve around encounters between teens from Anglophone and Japanese cultures. In these three selections, as in the manga titles which have made their way onto the WKL lists, the genre is only considered 'high quality' within the *habitus* when mediated through encounters with Western literary cultures.

Finally, a distinctive feature of the OIW and WKL selections is that they accept titles in English translation regardless of their country of publication. Although both organisations are to a degree UK-based (in terms of the physical location of their founders and most of the people in charge of their day-to-day operations, their funding sources and the registration of their legal entities), their lists include books published in other Anglophone countries. Neither OIW nor WKL clearly indicates which books are available in the US, the UK, both, or neither, nor does either list offer links to the publisher website, retailers or libraries where readers could access the books. One unintentional effect of this is to obscure substantial differences between the UK children's publishing industry and those of other Anglophone countries, an issue explored in more detail in the chapter in the case studies of Latin American children's books in the UK below. This reflects the porosity of publishing markets across the Anglosphere (see Buchler and Trentacosti, 2015 on the challenge of determining 'place of publication' for books listed in the British National Bibliography (13)). It is also partially a result of limited time and resources. Both OIW and WKL are volunteer-run and operate on a shoestring budget, and are managing volumes of information far beyond any scale envisioned when the projects began. Kemp and Hallford both mentioned when asked that they had considered the possibility of adding links to retailers where the books could be purchased, but had decided against doing so due to logistical challenges. On a deeper level, however, the view that 'children's books in English translation' is a meaningful and coherent category reflects the fact that these lists primarily function to maintain a shared understanding, among ICL advocates, of the 'state' of children's literature in English translation, and thus the relationship of readers of English-language children's books to the rest of the transnational children's book field. In keeping with the *habitus* tradition of 'bridge building' discourse, these books are framed as representing some degree of access to their countries, regions and languages of origin (all clearly listed), rather than the tastes and biases of the mediating individuals and institutions who have made them available in English. The decision to see these books as belonging more to the children's literatures of their source languages than to that of their target audience reinforces the dominant narrative that translations are marginal and exceptional, rather than integral, to English-language children's book cultures. Ultimately, these lists are mostly of interest to those who have a level of pre-existing knowledge and interest which is mostly found among existing ICL advocates. As I have observed when sharing these resources with those outside the field, they are not necessarily easily used by parents or teachers looking to bring more translated books in their home or classroom. Some mix in-print and out-of-print books indiscriminately, and they tend not to differentiate clearly between what is available in the US, the UK, or

elsewhere in the world. WKL resources often link directly to publisher, author or illustrator websites, rather than retailers, and in some cases are simply PDFs featuring cover images without any further information about how to seek out copies of the books being recommended. As such, they function more to help those already involved in international children's literature advocacy to consolidate their shared understanding of the field than to help children's literature in translation reach new audiences or to substantially change the perception of translation among those not connected to the ICL advocacy *habitus* who work with English-language children's books.

Physical collections and the (inter)national British children's book archive

Alongside the development of the database, the review copies Hallford has received and retained over the past 20 years have also grown to constitute a significant physical collection of children's books in English translation. This collection also includes around 200 older titles, mostly published between the 1960s and the 1990s, which were donated to OIW by the National Centre for Research in Children's Literature (NCRCL) at the University of Roehampton in 2010 when that centre was in the process of reducing its scale of operations in response to funding cuts. For many years, Hallford stored the growing OIW collection in her home. In 2019, concerned about the longevity and sustainability of the intermittently-funded, volunteer-run OIW operation, Hallford and her colleagues began looking for an institutional home for these books. In Autumn 2021, the OIW collection was officially made available to the public at the University of Portsmouth library. Since the process of rehoming the collection began and especially since its acquisition by Portsmouth, the physical collection, which began as essentially a side effect of Hallford's reviewing project, has become more central to OIW's understanding of the value of their work and thus been the subject of increasing attention from its leadership. As described briefly in Part Two, Outside In World approached various institutions when seeking a new, permanent home for their collection in 2019. In the course of this process, which was led by Hallford and OIW trustee Patricia Billings, the advocates found themselves reckoning with what exactly it was that they had to offer, and who it might interest. In this process, they confronted a number of issues which have frequently troubled collectors of children's books.

Kenneth Kidd, in his auto-ethnographic description of his journey through children's literature collections in the US, notes the intensely personal, nostalgic and emotional appeal of the children's literature archive in general. He observes that 'for better and for worse, [it] seems to represent hope that adults can recover the texts of childhood experience, thereby preserving and understanding childhood itself' (2011: 2). This perception that children's

books are the 'most *special* sort of special collection' (Kidd 2011: 3) is a double-edged sword. It inspires a passionate enthusiasm that has carried various projects to fruition, and yet it also causes some collectors and archivists to develop a 'book-love bordering on the spiritual and/or fetishistic' (Kidd 2011: 2) that can actually hinder attempts to create an accessible, sustainable long-term home for their beloved collections. One particularly divisive issue among collectors of children's books is who those collections are for: children or adults? Lepman, as evidenced by her appreciation for the evidence of enjoyment left by young German readers handling their favourite picture books, and others like her who fall on the 'children' side of the equation generally include parents, teachers and librarians in their ideal target audience; the idea is that children's books should be used and loved, rather than 'locked away' for study. Others feel that children's literature is not taken 'seriously' enough, and insist that their collections should be used only for scholarly research by academics (Smith 1998). As one critic observed upon admiring the Renier collection of children's books and ephemera at the V&A, children do tend to be an archivist's nightmare, as they 'pull to pieces' their most beloved items (Chester 1986: 29). Even if the public is not physically allowed to handle the materials, curators and librarians aiming to make a children's literature archive available to an audience of children and parents will not necessarily create collections that are easily used by 'serious' academics. On the other hand, limiting access to those with scholarly credentials who are willing to brave the archival reading room risks alienating individuals and institutions who are interested in children's books for their potential to improve literacy and promote reading for pleasure. Many institutions thus treat this as a zero-sum game, with only two options: either a collection is for children and families (as at the Roald Dahl Museum, for example) or it is for scholarly study (as at the Bodleian). The University of Portsmouth, as discussed further below, has attempted to bridge this gap with the OIW collection, with varying degrees of success.

Hallford and Billings hoped, first and foremost, that the collection would find a home where it would be treated as a scholarly resource. Although they were not opposed to the idea of the collection being read and enjoyed by young people and families, they understood it as an extension and expression of the expertise in the English-language children's translation publishing landscape which they and their colleagues had developed over decades of book reviews and other projects, such as their 'Reading Round the World' events or the disability and accessibility-focused research work conducted during 'Reading the Way'. They did not want to donate the books to a non-specialist library or school which might make use of the individual titles, but might disperse them and ultimately erase the connection with the projects which led to the collection's existence. In addition to concerns

about the integrity of the collection, they also had hopes of finding an institution which could be a genuine partner for OIW, potentially sharing the cost and logistical burden of maintaining the website and database and creating a sustainable path forwards for their advocacy work. Given these considerations, one of the institutions Hallford and Billings approached during the early phases of their search was the Seven Stories National Centre for Children's Literature. The idea of translation being included in the 'national' story of British children's publishing strongly appealed to the OIW team, as did the fact that the centre is accessible to both family audiences and academics, thanks to being physically split between the family-friendly 'Seven Stories' building and the collection itself, located a short distance away in an archival setting, complete with reading rooms. The centre actively engages with children's books as an educational resource, providing 'an extensive learning programme' and working directly with the majority of schools in its local area, as well as recognising the long-standing link between children's literature and visual art through its support for 'the teaching of illustration at Further Education and Higher Education level' (Lawrance 2012: 57). OIW saw this connection with education as offering potential opportunities for productive collaborations, in line with some of their previous projects, that would extend beyond the preservation of the physical collections. Finally, the Centre's close partnership with Newcastle University, where the Children's Literature Unit has developed with the support of Arts Council England in parallel with the Seven Stories project, also appealed (Newcastle University, 2022).

Seven Stories is neither the first nor the only institution to claim the title of 'national home for British children's literature' (Hamill 2007: 37). It is, however, one of the most recent and arguably most successful of the many attempts over the past half-century to establish such an institution. Beginning in the 1970s and 1980s, various academics and book-industry professionals expressed concern that the British archive of children's literature was under-developed, especially given that children's books were (and continue to be) some of the UK's most popular cultural exports (Chester 1986: 30). Many feared that 'important chunks of [British] children's literary heritage were disappearing abroad', a 'haemorrhaging of illustrations and manuscripts' to American libraries resulting in 'the majestic strength of English children's literature' being 'better represented in collections in the United States than here' (Times 1986) (Hamill 2007: 37-38) (Midgley 2001). In 1986, Tessa Chester, curator of the Renier Collection at the Victoria & Albert Museum in London, wrote: 'There has long been a need for a serious study centre […] for children's literature […] such a centre is now being created at Bethnal Green' (Chester 1986: 30). That same year, the Bodleian Library at Oxford launched a public appeal to raise the £500,000 required to purchase Iona and Peter

Opie's collection of over 20,000 children's books and related items, which the Opies had once hoped 'might form a Museum of Childhood' (Times 1986). Elizabeth Hamill dates her own inspiration for founding Seven Stories to the same period in the 'late 1980s', saying that the project was 'prompted by the near loss of the world famous Opie Collection to America' and the feeling that the heritage of British children's literature was 'disappearing abroad' due to the 'lack of a safe haven' dedicated to preserving this cultural legacy (Hamill 2007: 38). The founders of Seven Stories sought to tell the story of a British art form. They explicitly drew a parallel with The National Gallery, which bills itself as an institution telling 'the story of European art, masterpiece by masterpiece', stating that their goal is to develop a 'nationally important collection' of materials created by 'writers and illustrators who are either British or resident in Britain' (Hamill 2007: 37). By demonstrating that the production of children's books rivals (or even surpasses, thanks to the addition of extensive illustration) that of literature for adults in its sophistication and complexity, Seven Stories makes the case that children's books are as much a part of Britain's proud literary tradition as texts written for adults, and worthy of commensurate intellectual respect and financial investment. Many of the difficult questions faced in the process of establishing and maintaining these archives of 'British' children's literature, particularly those related to defining the boundaries of a 'national' literature, the challenges of poorly-adapted cataloguing systems, scarce financial and staffing resources and the difficulty of balancing the legacy of collectors with the need to integrate a collection into the priorities of its new home institution, also arose and continue to arise for Outside In World.

When OIW reached out to Seven Stories, it was that institution's focus on 'British' children's literature that proved to be the first stumbling block. They were quickly informed that the collection did not fall within the remit of the 'National Centre for Children's Literature', given the distinctly international nature of the authors and illustrators represented within it. Although it is clear that, strictly speaking, the OIW collection falls outside of the definition of 'British' children's literature which Seven Stories has adopted, some at OIW privately took issue with this response. The feeling among these advocates was that the OIW collection did somehow represent an important feature of the children's book publishing landscape in 21st century Britain, even as it also claimed to represent 'world literature for children', and to some degree a transnational Anglophone field of literary translation for children. Many of the publishing houses which had consistently contributed their translations to the collection are or have been based in the UK, such as (in no particular order) Firefly Press, Tiny Owl, Book Island, Darf, The Emma Press, and Milet, to name a few. The work of prominent British children's translators past and present, such as Anthea Bell, Patricia Crampton, Daniel Hahn

and Sarah Ardizzone, is also well represented. Ultimately, however, the collection is not organised or presented in such a way that the information it contains about translation for children in the UK can easily be separated from the work of publishers and translators based in the rest of the English-speaking world which it also contains. Although the collection did eventually find a home at an English institution, OIW ultimately had to make a different case for its scholarly relevance.

'OIW @ NFWB @ UoP'

After approaching a number of universities across the US and the UK, the decision of where to donate the collection came down to financial resources. Writing in support of the Bodleian's potential acquisition of Peter and Iona Opie's collection of materials related to folklore and children's games, a *Times* journalist noted that the Oxford library had to raise a mere £500,000 to purchase the collection, a bargain given that it was worth 'at least pounds one million [sic]' (Times 1986: 1). Presumably, that figure of one million pounds refers to the price of all the individual items within the collection, if sold on the open market. A collection, however, is not always worth the sum of its parts, as OIW discovered. On the one hand, it could be worth much more – the Reniers, whose extensive collection of printed ephemera, textbooks and book, now resides at the V&A, had a particular interest in items which bore heavy marks of use such as children's scribbles (Smith 1998: 2). These might be near worthless individually, but in the context of the collection became valuable for the information they offered about the social conditions in which they were produced and used. On the other hand, cataloguing, storing, preserving, displaying and offering access to a book collection is an enormously resource-intensive operation. The more extensive (and disorganised) the collection, the more money, time and expertise is required to make it useful and accessible, to scholars and/or the general public. A 'donated' collection can easily become more of a burden than a gift to the receiving institution. Thanks to the support and interest of Sophie Heywood (see Part Two), the University of Reading, which holds extensive children's literature collections and was home to the first MA in Children's Literature in the UK, was a strong contender. Reading, however, required that Heywood and OIW raise funds for the cost of cataloguing the collection. The University of Portsmouth, where the Faculty of Creative and Cultural Industries and specifically the Illustration department had taken an interest in the collection for its eclectic representation of illustration styles from around the world, was willing to cover the costs of cataloguing and thus became custodians of the collection in 2021. Portsmouth also offered the unusual advantage of having a university library which is open to the public, meaning that the collection could be made available to

children and parents as well as academics. This appealed to OIW, who were keen for the books to be used as widely as possible.

When Portsmouth submitted their bid to acquire the OIW collection, the goal was for the latter to serve as a 'seed' for a larger 'Near and Far World Books' collection ('NFWB'). This was envisioned as a collection of 'bilingual, translated and non-English language children's books' (University of Portsmouth 2022) which would offer a global perspective on children's publishing and be available for use in teaching and research within the university, as well as to the broader Portsmouth community. Although OIW was enthusiastic about their collection being part of this initiative, which aligned with their values and priorities, they soon became concerned that the specific nature of OIW's work, a focus on contemporary children's books from around the world *in English translation,* was not understood by certain stakeholders at Portsmouth, and was thus not being made clear in signage, press releases, pamphlets and other publicity material created by the university. Issues initially arose around the question of cataloguing. The University of Portsmouth library, like many others around the world, uses Dewey Decimal Classification. Developed in the United States in the 19th century for use in public and university libraries and thus reflecting the priorities and biases of North American higher education from over a century ago (Kua 2004: 257), this system is notably ill-suited for cataloguing a collection of children's books from around the world. Books are categorised by subject matter, then by language (or language of origin), then alphabetically by author last name. There is no provision for categorisation by country or region of origin, or by format or target age range. This same issue vexed Jella Lepman, who complained that Dewey 'had not foreseen the International Youth Library with its books in many languages' and that the challenging of cataloguing that multilingual collection drove her 'almost to the point of crying out for a sedative' (1969: 103). At UoP, the cataloguing of the OIW collection was completed by generalist cataloguers without input from OIW, or indeed from the UoP librarians who were eventually responsible for helping visitors navigate the collection. The result is that YA novels sit on the shelf alongside picture books deemed 'fiction', while 'graphic novels', 'folklore' and 'non-fiction' (including, for example, picture books featuring counting or alphabets) are elsewhere, and bilingual books or books in their original language, regardless of target age range or subject matter, are in yet a third location. Further complicating the issue, when it initially opened there was very little signage indicating the sub-sections of the collection, and what signage did exist announced the 'Near and Far Worlds Book Collection', despite the fact that the bilingual and non-English-language books bearing the shelfmark 'NFWB' (rather than the translated books from Outside In World, labelled 'OIW') formed a relatively small portion of the overall

collection. Some attempts to make the collection more usable and legible to visitors have since been made, including the addition of section dividers and an explanatory flier with a link to the OIW database.

Beyond the somewhat predictable practical issues presented by the need to fit the collection into a Dewey Decimal catalogue, compromises around the presentation of OIW books in the UoP library represented an existential challenge for Outside In World. Questions again arose around the intended target audience of the collection. To OIW, it was obvious that 'children's literature in English translation' would be of interest to scholars of translation studies. Librarians and academics in the translation department at Portsmouth, however, expressed the view that without at least a partial collection of source texts with which to compare the translations, there was little scope to incorporate the OIW collection into their curriculum. Having successfully attained institutional support to preserve and continue expanding their collection, OIW feared that they had, at least partially, sacrificed an understanding of the motivations and logic behind their decades of advocacy for its visibility. What seemed like an obviously important and coherent mission to international children's literature advocates proved surprisingly difficult to explain and justify, even to specialists working in closely related fields. The project of actively growing a larger 'NFWB' collection has since been abandoned due to staffing and funding changes at Portsmouth, although the library continues to receive and catalogue new additions to the OIW collection as they are provided by Hallford, and retains a small selection of bilingual and non-English-language books under the NFWB shelfmark. Nevertheless, thanks largely to the ongoing interest and support of Portsmouth Faculty Librarian for the Creative & Cultural Industries Greta Friggens, the collection has not been allowed to languish on the shelves. Friggens, whose background is in art, illustration and design rather than children's literature or translation, has enthusiastically taken on many elements of the ICL advocacy *habitus*. In addition to the community read-aloud sessions for refugee and asylum-seeker families and the trainee teacher workshops run by me described in Part Two**,** she has facilitated the organisation of various other events focused on the collection. Students from a local primary school were brought in to research countries of their choice for a school 'Diversity Day'. School, university and community librarians from the local area and around the country have been invited to visit the collection and draw inspiration from it for their own programming, and a series of open days including story time for children using books from the collection were held in 2024.

Conclusion

The hundreds of thousands of volumes housed in the IYL's Schloss Blutenburg in Munich, the *White Ravens* catalogues, the 1,600+ volumes which make up the OIW collection at the University of Portsmouth, OIW's database, and WKL's lists and reviews of children's literature in English translation are all elements of the 'international children's literature' archive, in the sense of 'a broader institution/discourse for the preservation and elevation' of international children's literature which 'promises coherence and totality [and] reinforces the idea of a literary heritage' (Kidd 2011: 2). Taking their stated scope and missions at face value, these collections may appear neither particularly coherent nor particularly totalising. The inclusion or exclusion of any title in these archives can seem haphazard or serendipitous. Even identifying whether all of the books in the OIW collection can indeed be categorised as 'children's literature in English translation' is not a simple task. One of the sample texts highlighted by the University of Portsmouth for South Asian History month, *The Mahabharatha: A Child's View* by Samita Arni (published in India by Tara Press, 2013), illustrates this point. This is an English-language re-telling of an ancient Sanskrit epic poem which contains important Hindu scriptures. Setting aside questions of relative literary and artistic quality, it is as much a 'book for children in English translation' as a VeggieTales book[3], which is to say, it might be one depending on how the gatekeeper making that decision defines 'book', 'for children', and 'translation'. This, ultimately, is key to understanding these collections as a coherent and comprehensive reflection of the *habitus* which produced them. The OIW database and the WKL lists do not contain all books in English translation for children published since they were created, or even only a selection of such books. OIW's collection does, however, contain full collections of the translations published by several small, independent publishing houses, some of which have since ceased operations (one example is Tiny Owl, a UK-based independent publisher with a particular interest in producing English translations of children's books from Iran, launched in 2015 and shuttered in 2025 (Brown 2025)). It also features an unusually strong selection of disability-inclusive and accessible children's books, reflecting the strong connections between disability-related activism and ICL advocacy which have developed in the 21st century (see, for example, OIW co-founder Alexandra Strick's disability-focused 'Inclusive Minds' organisation, founded in 2013, and the IBBY selection of Outstanding Books for Young People with Disabilities, produced biennially since 1997) (IBBY 2023). The emphasis on beautifully or unusually illustrated texts which caught the attention of Portsmouth's

[3] VeggieTales is a multi-million dollar American children's media franchise launched in the 1990s which features retellings of stories from the Bible, all told using characters who are CGI anthropomorphic vegetables (Yahoo Makers 2014).

Illustration department reflects the appreciation of diverse visual cultures and sophisticated interplay between text and image which has been part of the ICL advocacy habitus since at least the 1940s, when Jella Lepman requested picture books for her travelling exhibition in Germany. The function of these archives is ultimately to make manifest the vision of 'international children's literature' held by ICL advocates. That vision spreads and is reinforced through the continued use of and interaction with the collections by a variety of target audiences. Some of these users refine and expand the collections, like the scholar from China who brought her expertise and professional network to the IYL as a visiting fellow. Thus the *habitus* evolves over time, with the collections acting as both a record of its history and a focal point for interventions that shape its future.

Chapter 3.3 – Awards

Introduction

The collections and digital archives discussed above are driven by visions of gathering and making available some imagined or implied comprehensive corpus of 'international children's literature' (or 'children's literature in English translation', or 'world literature for children in English', as the case may be), and the organisations which maintain them tend to minimise the subjective and critical elements of the processes that determine which books are to be included in a respective corpus. These projects operate alongside and in concert with prizes and awards, through which institutions more explicitly evaluate books and their creators. The more explicit processes of evaluation, judgement and selection involved in these 'consecrating' projects work alongside and in concert with the tacit gatekeeping that produces collections such as those gathered by OIW, WKL and the IYL to establish and maintain a shared understanding of the boundaries of the *habitus.* The role of prizing in the literary field has been the subject of various studies, including notably James F. English's *The Economy of Prestige* (2005), which details the rise of modern arts prizing and particularly the role of such prizes in determining the accumulation and circulation of the fungible cultural prestige which Bourdieu calls *symbolic capital*. In the context of children's literature, Kenneth Kidd has addressed the role of children's literature prizes in the US (see Kidd 2007), while Lucy Pearson has written extensively on children's literature prizes in Britain (see Pearson 2019; Pearson, Sands-O'Connor and Subramanian 2019). Delia Guijarro Arribas, also makes an argument for the central role of prizes in the development of the transnational children's literature field (2022: 3).

Among UK ICL advocates, prizing is seen as an opportunity to shape both how the world reads Britain, and how British children read the world. Firstly, the process of nominating British authors, illustrators and translators for international prizes, and particularly IBBY UK's nominations for the Hans Christian Anderson Award (HCA) and the IBBY Honour Lists, is a way for British ICL advocates to assert the version of British children's publishing which they would like to see honoured on the international stage. Historically, this has been seen as less important by ICL advocates from the UK than by some of those from countries which publish in more globally peripheral languages, given the very high level of international exposure from which English-language children's books already benefit. Rather than receiving symbolic capital from awards like the HCA and its contemporary competitor the Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award (ALMA), the existing global reputation enjoyed by British authors and illustrators has instead been used to bolster the reputation of the awards themselves. Some UK advocates have now begun to see these international platforms as an opportunity to present a more multilingual vision of 'British culture' to the world. Specifically, IBBY UK has recently and for the first time included Welsh-language books in its selections for the IBBY Honour List, a publication which features examples of recent children's writing, illustration and translation from each National Section. Secondly, within the national context, advocates in the UK see local awards for English translations published in Britain as a potentially powerful tool for elevating the profile of translations within the British children's book field. In particular, the UK-based Marsh Award for Children's Literature in Translation (presented biennially from 1997 to 2017) and the 2015 change to eligibility criteria for the Carnegie Medal to explicitly include books in translation loom large in contemporary UK ICL advocacy discourse. This chapter begins with an overview of the role prizes have played in the development of the ICL advocacy *habitus* at the international level, and how British advocates have historically interacted with those prizes. It focuses particularly on the Hans Christian Andersen Award (HCA) and the HCA's 21st century counterpart (and, perhaps, competitor), the Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award (ALMA) (Guijarro Arribas 2022: 10). The section concludes with a closer look at how the Marsh Award and the Carnegie medal have been used by contemporary ICL advocates in the UK to challenge the dominance of English-language production and argue for translation as an integral element of British children's publishing.

The 'Little Nobel Prize' and the 'Other Little Nobel Prize'

Reflecting on the early years of the HCA, José Miguel de Azaola, a founding member of IBBY and HCA jury president from 1962-1970, wrote that the development of IBBY as a

whole and that of the award were ‘intimately linked’ from the beginning (Binder 1973: 87). In the same 1953 issue of *The Junior Bookshelf* where Lepman announced ‘The Work and Tasks of the International Board on Books for Young People’, the editors noted, in a small section entitled ‘Prizes for Books for Children’, that ‘The International Board at Zurich [IBBY] resolved to institute an international prize—a medal—for outstandingly good children’s books, the prize to be known as “The Hans Christian Andersen Medal”’ (‘Junior Bookshelf’ 1953: 273). Lepman was always concerned that IBBY should be more than a discussion forum, giving ‘practical effect’ to its members’ shared beliefs (1953: 278). That the creation of a prize would be at the heart of these practical efforts is not surprising. In the early 1950s the 20th century ‘age of awards’ was in full swing, having begun in earnest with the launch of the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1901 (English 2005: 28). Children’s books were no exception to this trend: the Newbery Medal, the first major literary award specifically for children’s books, was created in 1921 by the American Library Association (Kidd 2007: 166). This was followed shortly thereafter by the launch of the Caldecott Medal for excellence in children’s book illustration by the ALA in 1938 (Kidd 2007: 167). The British Library Association launched its own counterpart, the Carnegie Medal, in 1936, with a parallel illustration award (originally called the Kate Greenaway Medal, now the Carnegie Medal for Illustration) recognising its first laureate in 1956 (Carnegies 2025b). The awarding phenomenon was not limited to the Anglosphere: Azaola helped create the Premio Lazarillo for Spanish children’s fiction in the 1950s, which likewise has separate categories for excellence in text and in illustration (Salstad 1999: 220). These awards all had the dual aim of improving ‘both the standard and the profile of writing for children’ (Pearson 2019: 3), while also seeking to integrate children’s literature into the ‘national literary heritage’ of their respective host nations (Pearson, Sands-O'Connor, and Subramanian 2019: 90). For IBBY’s founding members, then, the creation of an international prize was an obvious practical step towards establishing an international canon of children’s literature which could address their shared concerns about the moral education of future generations while elevating the profile of children’s literature to that of a serious artistic and cultural endeavour, rather than merely a set of ‘utilitarian’ educational tools (Kidd 2007: 167).

The HCA was originally presented to a recently-published book determined to be notably ‘good’ by the jury, but by the 1960s switched to recognising an author (and, from 1966, an illustrator) for their entire oeuvre (Guijarro Arribas 2022: 7). With this change it came to more closely resemble a ‘Nobel Prize for children’s literature’, earning it the nickname of the ‘Little Nobel Prize’ (Guijarro Arribas 2022: 7). As with the actual Nobel Prize for Literature, determining the role the HCA has played in shaping international children’s

literature advocacy since its introduction is far from straightforward. Certainly, it has not been (and was never intended to be) a counter-hegemonic force. Laureates have been overwhelmingly European, and the US is home to more winners than any other single country (Guijarro Arribas 2022: 8). Neither, however, is it necessarily a representative sample of the most 'successful' or most widely respected children's writers and illustrators of the 20th and 21st centuries. Since its inception, even the award's most ardent advocates have acknowledged certain intractable tensions within the nomination and selection processes. Only countries with National Sections in good standing can nominate an author and illustrator for consideration, and the Jury is likewise made up of representatives of national sections with paid-up IBBY memberships, selected from a pool of nominees by the IBBY Executive Committee. In addition to the substantial cost of IBBY membership, the nomination process itself is time-consuming, and IBBY National Sections vary widely in terms of the resources and expertise they are willing or able to dedicate to it (Glistrup 2002: 16; Colwell 1958). Inevitably, the jury members are limited in their ability to directly assess the full range of nominees, relying heavily on (usually English-language) sample translations, reviews and other secondary material submitted as part of a dossier by the nominating sections, the scope and quality of which can vary widely (Glistrup 2002: 16).

The nomination process is structured such that each country can submit a single representative in each of the two categories, and yet expressions of 'national and patriotic feelings' are officially discouraged (Glistrup 2002: 16). The fiction of the HCA's unbiased, transnational objectivity is central to the symbolic capital it conveys, and thus anyone competing for that capital, whether directly as a nominee or indirectly as a member of a nominating national section, is invested in maintaining that fiction. Complain too vocally about biases and barriers and you risk poisoning the well by introducing doubt about the award's value, or simply ruining your own nation's chances at consecration by future juries. British children's librarian Eileen Colwell's report on her experience participating in a very early HCA jury captures an ambivalence towards the award which is widespread among ICL advocates to this day, and especially among those who have first-hand experience with the nomination and selection processes. Colwell wrote that 'it gave general pleasure' to IBBY World Congress attendees that Astrid Lindgren should receive the second-ever Hans Christian Andersen Award, and yet maintained that 'although the result of the award may be acceptable, it is not arrived at by any real comparison between all entries'. She wondered about the qualifications of the nominating members in 'Turkey, Yugoslavia or Finland, for instance' and pointed out that the Jury members were 'expected to vote on books they were unable to read and about which they knew little' (1958: 102-03). In response to these

concerns, published in *The Junior Bookshelf* in 1958, the editors of the journal added a note arguing that 'the [HCA] prize is only a focal point for arousing interest – the value of the whole movement is in the impetus given to the improvement in standards of children's literature throughout the world' (104). Since its origins, the HCA has continued to act as a 'focal point' for ICL advocates, establishing a cyclical process of institutional consecration and a high-profile arena in which cooperative efforts to raise the profile of children's literature to the mutual benefit of the many players involved exist in productive tension with internal competitions for symbolic capital between national sections. The fact that neither Colwell nor the *Junior Bookshelf* editors seemed at all motivated in their enthusiasm for IBBY by the prospect of British authors and illustrators winning the HCA is telling. In Colwell's 1958 article, she fails to even mention that the first winner of the HCA, in 1956, was English children's author Eleanor Farjeon. The next win for a UK nominee would not come until Anthony Browne won the illustration award in 2000, followed closely by UK author Aidan Chambers and illustrator Quentin Blake taking both categories in 2002. At the time of writing, author David Almond, the 2010 winner in the writing category, is the most recent UK laureate (IBBY 2025b). Then as now, however, the top tier of British children's authors and illustrators did not need to rely on institutions like IBBY to reach a global audience.

The Hans Christian Andersen Award was the first international award for children's literature, but it is no longer the only one. In 2002, the Swedish Arts Council inaugurated the Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award (ALMA), an annual honour recognising 'a person or organisation for their outstanding contribution to children's and young adult literature' (ALMA, no date). The ALMA is in many ways a successor to the HCA, and clearly could not have existed without the groundwork laid by the latter. Both the close connections and the distinct differences between the two awards are illustrative of evolutions within the ICL advocacy *habitus* since the turn of the 21st century. First, the connections: the ALMA clearly reflects the beliefs and values of the ICL advocacy *habitus* as described thus far in this chapter. Its website and promotional materials emphasise the ability of children's books to 'build bridges between people, across generations and cultures'. Through the award, the Swedish government seeks to 'promote every child's right to great stories' through 'more translations', which it hopes will lead to 'more children having access to high-quality literature' (ALMA, no date). Even the way the two awards went about establishing their prestige and legitimacy reflect a clear back-and-forth exchange of symbolic capital. One important way that a new award can 'demonstrate that it has [symbolic] capital to confer' is to select early winners whose existing reputation and prestige reflect the values and scale of achievement the award hopes to recognise (Pearson, Sands-O'Connor, and Subramanian 2019: 94). Astrid

Lindgren herself, already an international icon of children's literature in the 1950s, was one of these 'uncontestable' early winners for the HCA in 1958. Half a century later, four of the first six winners of the award named after Lindgren had previously won the HCA, and the two exceptions (Japanese illustrator Ryôji Arai and English author Philip Pullman) had been HCA finalists. That the ALMA jury chose Pullman in 2005 as their first foray beyond existing HCA winners is another example, like Eleanor Farjeon's inaugural HCA win, of the degree to which British children's authors often already benefit from the kind of global name-recognition and respect which these awards aim to confer.

It is hard not to see the ALMA as, to some degree, a competitor for the distinction of 'most prestigious international children's literature prize', a position which the Hans Christian Andersen Award both created and held uncontested for the first forty-odd years of its existence. The HCA has long embraced the 'little Nobel' nickname, with its flattering comparison to the extremely prestigious award for lifetime achievement in literature. The ALMA, however, like the actual Nobel, is sponsored by the Swedish government. Also like the actual Nobel, it is very well-funded. The capital conferred by the HCA is entirely symbolic, with no prize money available. Not so the ALMA: the winner receives five million Swedish kronor, worth around half a million US dollars. When it comes to the nomination and selection process, the ALMA approach allows its jury to take advantage of the global network of IBBY-affiliated ICL advocates that feeds into the HCA, without being beholden to some of the more controversial and restrictive elements of IBBY's internal system. In theory, any 'international, national or regional' organisation or institution that can demonstrate 'extensive and in-depth knowledge of children's and young adult literature' can apply, at no cost, to become a nominating body for the ALMA. ALMA laureates and jury members are also able to submit nominations. In practice, as of 2025 over 80 IBBY sections were listed as approved nominating bodies. These include a number of 'sub-sections' representing specific linguistic communities, such as the Flemish and Francophone sections in Belgium, or the Basque, Catalan, Galician and Castilian sections in Spain, which are not eligible to submit separate nominations for the HCA under current IBBY policy. In addition to allowing an unlimited number of organisations to nominate from within a given country, the ALMA also allows all bodies to submit both domestic and international nominees, further reducing the perception that this contest pits nations against each other, an issue which has at times dogged the HCA. Finally, the twelve members of the ALMA jury are appointed unilaterally by the Swedish Arts Council and represent a distinctly Swedish version of children's literature expertise. Although this certainly raises questions around the diversity of perspectives and experiences present, it avoids the contentious political scenarios which have at times caused

serious problems for the HCA jury, which is made up of representatives of the same sections which act as nominating bodies for that award.

Britain's 'national' awards for 'international' kid lit: The Marsh Award and a Welsh Carnegie winner

Writing about the Newbery Medal, Kidd speculates that its creators 'were no doubt also inspired by the early twentieth-century culture of artistic as well as athletic competition, in which nationalist energies commingled and sometimes collided with an internationalist pride in human achievement.' (2007: 171). At the international level represented by the HCA and the ALMA, this entanglement of 'nationalist energies' and 'internationalist pride' is abundantly evident. As the difference between the ALMA and the HCA's approaches to the representation of regional or minority linguistic communities demonstrates, even the line between the 'national' and the 'international' fields is not always clear-cut. As discussed throughout this thesis, contemporary UK advocates tend to be less concerned about promoting Britain on the international stage, and more concerned with raising the profile of translations within the British national field. In this project, they are just one group among many who have treated children's literature awards as an opportunity to shape the public narrative about British national identity.

Kidd observes that in its early decades, the US American Newbery Medal overwhelmingly awarded books by US authors 'set in other countries and/or indigenous North American cultures'. He points out that despite some reviewers griping that authors should 'turn homeward', in fact 'by depicting other cultures as exotic, primitive and "historical"', these books offer an 'other' against which 20th-century 'WASP American society' could define itself (2007: 176). The opposite is true of the Carnegie medal, Britain's answer to the Newbery. As Pearson describes, in its early decades the Carnegie sought both to 'promote British children's fiction' as well as to 'construct a sense of an enduring national identity' (2019: 224). Where the Newbery looked outward, the Carnegie looked inward, largely awarding books about British characters living in Britain, and particularly texts which depicted children connecting with an idealised version of the English countryside (2019: 214). The 'sense of Britishness' which the Carnegie has both reflected and co-constructed since its inception in the 1930s is overwhelmingly white and from England. As English points out, arts and culture awards are subject to a 'logic of proliferation', whereby the existence of one award in a given category begets the creation of others (2005: 50). In the case of the Carnegie, a number of the UK children's literature awards that have arisen in its wake have been more or less explicitly intended to question and expand 'Britishness' beyond the white,

male, middle-class, English experience to which the Carnegie has often defaulted. These include notably the Other Award, created by Rosemary Stones and Andrew Mann in 1975 in the hopes of acting as 'an irritant and counter to the Carnegie, the Kate Greenaway, and the Guardian awards' by recognising books which 'reflected British society more fully' while challenging racism, sexism, and more broadly 'the inevitability of superior/inferior social categories' (Stones in Pearson, Sands-O'Connor, and Subramanian 2019: 102-03). Although this short-lived award was somewhat successful in pushing other consecrating institutions to look 'beyond the boundaries of English books for British children', this often took the form of expanding 'Britishness' to include books by and about current and former residents of the Commonwealth and their descendants (Pearson, Sands-O'Connor, and Subramanian 2019: 104). The *Guardian* children's award echoed Hazard in its praise for 1983 winner *The Village by the Sea* by Anita Desai, set in India, referring hopefully to 'an international world of childhood, with no boundaries' (Guardian Children's award in Pearson, Sands-O'Connor, and Subramanian 2019: 104). Despite its Indian author, setting and characters, however, Desai's work was originally published in English by London-based publisher Heinemann, and thus was already adapted to the sensibilities of metropolitan gatekeepers. As in other areas of the broader campaigns for diverse, inclusive children's books discussed in the 'Good Books' section above of which the Other Award was a part, the question of promoting or highlighting translations into English, or indeed works not originally published in London or New York, regardless of their setting or author's origin, was entirely absent from debates around awards for children's literature through most of the 20th century.

In the US, the ALA's Batchelder Award for 'books originally published in a foreign language in a foreign country, and subsequently published in the United States', has been specifically recognising children's books in English translation since 1968, including a number by famed British translators such as Anthea Bell and Patricia Crampton (Nist 1979: 368). It is not obvious why the UK lagged so far behind its transatlantic counterparts in establishing an equivalent award. One explanation might lie in the historically close links between the American Library Association and IBBY, with Batchelder herself having been a close colleague and supporter of Jella Lepman's. The first book to earn its publisher the Batchelder was James Kirkup's translation of *The Little Man* by Erich Kästner (1966), an author who was famously a close friend of Lepman's and in 1960 became the first person to be awarded the Hans Christian Andersen award for an entire oeuvre, rather than an individual work (Guijarro Arribas 2022: 7). Although certain individuals in Britain (such as Patricia Crampton) were very active and well-known ICL advocates during the mid-20th century, groups and institutions such as British IBBY were smaller, less connected to major

awarding institutions and less-well-funded than their US counterparts. The significant overlap between British and US children's publishing fields may also have contributed to a perception, among the small group of advocates paying attention, that the Batchelder reflected English-language children's publishing sensibilities generally, rather than US ones specifically. With all this in mind, despite being administered by the ALA and specifically recognising English-language translations published in the US, the Batchelder is more similar in terms of its frame of reference and impact to transnational awards such as the HCA and the ALMA than to awards strongly associated with the development of the US or UK children's canon specifically, such as the Newbury and the Carnegie.

It was not until 1997, with the advent of the Marsh Award for Children's Literature in Translation, that English-language translations of children's books published in Britain got an award of their own. The Marsh Award was the brainchild of Dr Kimberley Reynolds, co-founder of the National Centre for Research in Children's Literature at the University of Roehampton and one of the advocates who revived IBBY UK in the 1990s. Reynolds became involved in the creation of the award through the V&A Museum of Childhood, where she was a member of the Board. Brian Marsh, philanthropist and founder of the Marsh Charitable Trust, had approached Anthony Burton, director of the museum at the time, to discuss Marsh's wife's interest in sponsoring some sort of children's literature award. Burton consulted Reynolds, her suggestion of a translation award was warmly received, and the award was presented biennially from 1997 to 2017. Reynolds and her fellow ICL advocates at the NCRCL had hoped that creating an award would 'encourage publishers to translate more books' (Reynolds 2023) through promising increased visibility and, it was hoped, even increased sales. Today, she reflects that although certain publishers (Walker Books, in particular) were enthusiastic, it ultimately was a case of 'preaching to the converted'. The Marsh Award was received enthusiastically by existing ICL advocates, but did not result in any notable change to the position of translations within the British children's publishing field.

Unfortunately, as Abbie Ventura suggests in an analysis of the negligible impact the Batchelder has had on translation for children in the US (2016), the hopeful creators of awards intended to raise the profile of niche cultural outputs fail to recognise that such an award can only confer a level of symbolic capital commensurate with the symbolic capital held by the awarding body in the relevant field. The Marsh Charitable Trust Award scheme began in 1987, and today sponsors over 100 different awards across a wide variety of sectors (Marsh Christian Trust 2025b). These include the Marsh Palaeoart Award for 'excellent art inspired by fossils from the British Isles', the Marsh Volunteer Award for

Engaging the Public in Historic Vessels, and the (separate) Marsh Awards for Ornithology, Local Ornithology, Innovative Ornithology, and Young Ornithologist of the Year (Marsh Christian Trust 2025a). For ICL advocates in Britain, the Marsh Award was a proud achievement, taken very seriously and widely mourned since it ceased operation in 2017. For those not already convinced of the importance of translated children's books, on the other hand, the 'Marsh Award for Children's Literature in Translation' was just one of hundreds of extremely specific awards supported by the trust, the outcome of which received limited attention outside of specialised media and was not necessarily of more general interest than that of Young Ornithologist of the Year. As Pearson et. al. speculate with regards to The Other Award, there is reason to believe that highly specialised children's literature awards like the Marsh may even offer a kind of pressure valve for diversity critiques, without offering any real prospect of access to mainstream accolades (Pearson, Sands-O'Connor, and Subramanian 2019: 98).

For those who were paying attention to it, what picture did the Marsh paint of translation for children in the UK? Ultimately, it very much reflected the character of the dominant British tradition of translation for children. Four of the first six awards went to Anthea Bell and Patricia Crampton, two of the most prolific and highest profile English-language children's translators of the 20th century, whose work on the *Asterix* and *Miffy* series, respectively and among many others, are beloved by generations of English-reading children. Six of the ten total awards went to translations of German or French source texts, reflecting the close connections between English, French and German children's literature and the resulting long-standing dominance of French and German among source languages for English translations for children, while just two of the ten winners went to translations from non-European languages (Betsy Rosenberg's translation of *Duel* by David Grossman, from Hebrew, in 2001, and Helen Wang's translation of *Bronze and Sunflower* by Cao Wenxuan, from Mandarin, in 2017). Even the latter, which at first glance appears to be an outlier given its Asian origin, is almost as predictable a choice as anything by Bell or Crampton in previous years. *Bronze and Sunflower* was nominated and shortlisted for a number of awards from US institutions such as the New York Times, *Kirkus* and the ALA, and Wang herself is a very active and well-networked among ICL advocates in the UK, especially through involvement with World Kid Lit. The juries were made up of ICL advocates from the heart of British children's literature advocacy: the panel who selected Patricia Crampton's translation of *The Final Journey* by Gudrun Pausewang as the second Marsh winner was made up of Anthea Bell herself, alongside Seven Stories co-founder Elizabeth Hammill and legendary BookTrust leader and founder of BookStart, Wendy

Cooling (Bell 1999). The Marsh, perhaps inevitably, recognised and catalogued the existing limited scope of 'literary' translation for children in British publishing. It is difficult, however, to see it as a serious attempt to make an argument for either the diversification of that niche, or for that niche to be considered part of the mainstream tradition of British children's letters.

The Marsh award ended quietly in 2017, an event which was somewhat overshadowed by the announcement around the same time that the Carnegie Medal was changing its eligibility criteria to explicitly permit translations to compete for the Carnegie in both the writing and illustration categories. Translator and very active ICL advocate Daniel Hahn reflected that although 'it didn't have to be a choice' between the Marsh and the Carnegie, in the end he was happier to see translated children's books competing for a mainstream award than for them to be confined to the limited scope of the Marsh (Hahn 2023). The clarification of the eligibility of translations was widely celebrated among British ICL advocates, who hoped this was a sign that the importance of translation to British children's publishing was finally going to be recognised. The change in rules did lead to a series of translations being longlisted and shortlisted, and eventually a 2023 win for *The Blue Book of Nebo* (*Llyfr Glas Nebo*), self-translated from her original Welsh by author Manon Steffan Ros. Despite Hahn's excitement at the idea of translated books competing on a level playing field with English-language originals, and various headlines highlighting *Nebo* as 'the first time a translated book has won [the Carnegie] in its 87-year history' (Creamer 2023), Ros's win was more a continuation of the Carnegie's long history of wrestling with the boundaries of 'Britishness' than an indication of a meaningful shift in the attitude towards 'foreign' children's books.

Pearson points out that the Carnegie has repeatedly adjusted its eligibility criteria, including several times in its first decade of existence. When it was first created it claimed to recognise 'the best book for children in the British Empire'. In 1941 this scope was dramatically reduced to only 'books published in England'. In 1944 another adjustment specified that the award was to go to children's books 'by a British subject domiciled in the United Kingdom (Great Britain and Northern Ireland), published in Great Britain' (Pearson 2019: 4). In 1969 the requirement for the author to be a 'British subject' was dropped, and 'any book written in English and published first or concurrently anywhere in the United Kingdom' was deemed eligible ('Carnegie Medal' 2005: 149). Since 2015, the criteria have specified that titles must have been first published 'in the UK or Ireland' and must be 'written in the English language' 'either as an original work in English or a first English translation of a foreign-language work' (Carnegies 2025a). The Carnegie Working Party considered this to

be a ‘clarification’ of the existing eligibility of translations, which was intended to ‘strengthen the reputation for our two Medals as recognising the most outstanding writing and illustration for children and young people in the world’ (Hope 2022). Taken together, these adjustments clearly reflect the Carnegie’s ongoing negotiation with boundaries of ‘Britishness’. Even when changes to the criteria seem intended to reduce this emphasis on national identity, the actual winners that have resulted from these changes tell a different story. The 1944 rule changes, for example, enabled the jury to select Eric Linklater’s *The Wind on the Moon* for the 1944 medal. Linklater himself was a Welsh-born Scottish nationalist, but *The Wind on the Moon* is a wartime fantasy set in an imaginary English town, presenting no threat to the Carnegie’s Anglo-centric vision of Britain (Pearson, Sands-O'Connor, and Subramanian 2019: 95). The first non-British author to benefit from the 1969 change in scope was Australian Ivan Southall (Macleod 2011: 31). Southall was a star of the emerging Australian children’s publishing scene, which at the time was actively working to assert its independence from the dominant British and American centres of English-language children’s books (Macleod 2011: 29). Honouring Southall with a Carnegie was, to some degree, a way of asserting that the ‘best’ of Australian cultural production still owed its quality to its British heritage.

A similar process was at work in the selection of *The Blue Book of Nebo* as the first translated Carnegie winner. First, a closer look at the most recent update to the eligibility criteria: although the nationality of the author remains unspecified and the location of first publication has been expanded to include the Republic of Ireland as well as the United Kingdom, the contemporary Carnegie remains essentially an award recognising the ‘best’ of *British* children’s publishing, as distinct from English-language children’s publishing. As of 2025, no book from an Irish publisher has ever won the award. That the Carnegie would claim that adding translations will support its reputation for ‘recognising the most outstanding writing and illustration for children and young people *in the world’* (emphasis mine) (Hope 2022) betrays an underlying belief in the superiority of British publishing, if not necessarily British authors, including in its ability to select the ‘best’ of world literature for children to publish in English translation. The updated regulations further specify that ‘original work[s] in English’ and translations of ‘foreign language’ works are eligible for consideration, making no provision for the existence of indigenous languages such as Welsh and Irish, which are neither English nor ‘foreign’ to the UK and Ireland. Ironically, *Nebo*’s win reinforces this one-to-one equivalence between English language and the Carnegie’s vision of Britishness. In 2021 Ros was described as ‘arguably the most successful novelist writing in Welsh at the moment’, having ‘won everything there is to win’ in the Welsh literature field, often on

multiple occasions (Ros 2021). It was only through translation into English, however, that Ros could come to be considered a great *British* children's writer worthy of inclusion in the Carnegie canon. Ros has also described making significant changes to the English-language version of *Nebo*, explaining and mediating references to the Welsh language and culture and having her bilingual characters grapple actively with why the book they are 'writing' is in English rather than Welsh (Ros 2021). The plot, which revolves around a young boy and his family surviving off the land in a post-apocalyptic North Wales, also harkens back to the 'camping and tramping' countryside fiction which connected (English) land and British identity in so many early Carnegie winners (Pearson 2019: 5). The first and to date only translation to win the Carnegie, then, is a work whose author and characters offer English readers a window into and way of connecting with Welshness, without threatening the integrity or dominance of monolingual Anglophone nationhood. It is worth noting that the Carnegie's recognition of *Nebo* directly inspired IBBY UK to nominate a Welsh-language original and a translation into Welsh to the next edition of the biennial IBBY Honour List (forthcoming in 2026), in addition to their usual English-language nominations in the writing, translation and illustration categories. Previously, the group of IBBY UK members who selected books to be put forward for the honour list had 'assumed that people just chose one language for their country to put forward' (Dix 2023), reflecting the default dominance of the English language and the tendency to equate and collapse cultural, linguistic and national identity, even among committed ICL advocates.

Chapter 3.4 – Translation in Schools

Introduction

The creation and promotion of collections, research centres, lists and prizes related to international children's literature are all essentially adult-focused activities. Through these kinds of projects, ICL advocates define and negotiate the boundaries of their field of interest and build national, international and transnational networks of like-minded individuals and organisations. These activities exist alongside child-focused interventions, which involve direct interactions between advocates and young readers. Child-focused interventions necessarily vary widely across the international *habitus,* reflecting the diverse social and educational environment in which advocates operate. Broadly, they can be understood as attempts by advocates to address the perceived barriers preventing children in a given setting from engaging in the kinds of imagined ideal interactions with books which would allow them to access the full, transformative, bridge-building potential of reading. In

environments where access to books in general is perceived to be the biggest barrier to these ideal child-book interactions, interventions may take the form of mobile libraries which bring children's books to economically deprived and/or isolated communities, or projects which involve establishing and maintaining permanent children's libraries and reading spaces in those areas. Where educational inequality and low rates of adult literacy are seen as major issues, advocates may design projects to keep young people in school or to offer supplementary literacy education. As this research reflects, there is also an imperative within the *habitus* to balance the 'windows and mirrors' elements of the children's books available in a given market (Bishop 1990).

In the UK context, this leads to the focus described throughout this thesis on promoting inbound translations rather than promoting British writing on the international stage. The cause of promoting translated and international children's literature has also become closely associated in contemporary Britain with campaigns to promote a positive perception of multilingualism and language-learning among the British public. As Beauvais points out, the dominant narratives within the UK regarding formal language-learning, individual multilingualism and the idea of a multilingual Britain (whether in terms of Indigenous local languages and/or in terms of languages whose presence is a result of recent migration) are shaped by many of the same factors which maintain the persistently marginal status of translation within the literary field (Beauvais 2018: 13). Promoting multilingualism and language learning are also causes which attract a certain amount of interest and support from institutions such as schools, universities and policymakers. Given the scarcity and highly competitive nature of institutional funding for arts and literature in the UK, designing projects which associate translation for children with more broadly-appealing goals, such as achieving the social integration of diverse communities and improving academic achievement, is a practical choice. This chapter thus describes how child-facing ICL advocacy has developed in the UK in recent decades in response to these factors. Specifically, it discusses the rise in popularity of 'creative translation' workshops in the context of 'superdiverse' multilingual communities and a perceived threat to language education at the school and university levels. This includes a variety of closely-related school-based literary translation initiatives produced in England (and, more recently, Wales) by the Stephen Spender Trust, the Queen's Translation Exchange, Shadow Heroes, the Children's Bookshow, Outside In World and World Kid Lit since the early 2010s. This particular style of intervention, I argue, reflects the specific professional, cultural and educational context in which UK-based ICL advocates find themselves today. This is evident in the reflections of the small group of individuals who created and continue to drive the

expansion of this ‘creative translation in schools’ programming. The story of translation and translators in British schools also exemplifies how other professional and personal *habituses* can interact with the ICL advocacy *habitus* to shape youth-focused interventions. The conclusion returns to the ‘Stories on the Move’ pilot project described in the introduction to this chapter, in order to reflect on how my own research and advocacy continues to shape and be shaped by the ICL advocacy *habitus*.

The Stephen Spender Trust: Bringing ‘creative translation’ to British schools

Among the interviews conducted for this thesis, nearly all of them mention, at least briefly, the work of the Stephen Spender Trust. In 2004, the Stephen Spender Trust (SST) launched the Stephen Spender Prize for poetry in translation. SST was founded in 1997, in memory of British poet, critic and translator Stephen Spender. Prior to the launch of the prize, the Trust had been primarily occupied with managing the donation and cataloguing of Spender’s papers, which are held at the Bodleian in Oxford. In its first decade, SST also gave out a number of grants to support translation-related projects for adults and young people, including notably a very early collaboration between The Children’s Bookshow and the organisation that would become Outside In World (Stephen Spender Trust 2005). Despite these early grants (worth around £42,000 total between 1997 and 2005, when the last grants were reported) and its name, the Trust does not have an endowment or core funding. The SST Prize originally launched with publicity support from *The Times* and financial support from Arts Council England, and since then has received funding from a range of public and private arts and literature funding bodies. In its first year it was open to British residents under 30, with separate categories for under- and over-18s. In its second year the upper age limit was eliminated, the ‘Over 18’ category was restyled as the ‘Open’ category, and an additional category for entrants 14 and under was created. Despite having been open to school-aged participants since the beginning, the prize did not initially have anything to do with children’s literature per se. The judges were luminaries of British poetry & translation studies, but not by any means known for having an interest in children’s books. Their taste tended strongly towards the Classical and classic, with prize winners in 2004 and 2005 having translated poems by Catullus, Virgil, Ovid, Hugo, Neruda, and Rilke, with Anglo-Saxon, Old French, Medieval French and Old Norse represented among the source languages for winners and commended entries. Professor Susan Bassnett, who was one of the judges in the early years of the prize, commented that this likely reflected ‘the quality of teaching in classical languages’, by which she meant that translation and grammar were still

taught in British Latin classrooms, while modern languages emphasised 'oral skills' (Stephen Spender Trust 2005). SST was not unaware of the prize's potential to encourage the teaching of literary translation in modern language classrooms at the GCSE and A levels. In 2006, they announced their intention to produce 'a translation handbook for teachers' written by eminent translation theorist and SST prize judge Bassnett and her fellow judge, *Modern Poetry in Translation* co-founder and long-time editor Daniel Weissbort (Stephen Spender Trust 2006). This handbook was intended to be distributed to 'every school and sixth-form college in the country' in 2007. If this handbook was ever produced, its distribution was not greeted with much fanfare. It was never listed on the SST website as promised, was not mentioned in the 2007 SST Prize booklet, and none of the ICL advocates interviewed for this thesis, most of whom were active during this period, recalled such a publication.

In 2010, the Trust launched a much more ambitious programme of translation workshops in primary schools across London and the South East. Called 'Translation Nation', this was the first in a series of projects that would eventually lead SST to become a leader in school-based literary translation programming and a pillar of ICL advocacy in the UK today. One key player who catalysed this transformation is translator Sarah Ardizzone[4]. In 2010, Ardizzone was a rising star of British children's literary translation, having fallen into translation in the early 2000s while working a day job in the publicity department of a major London publishing house to fund a fledgling career making theatre. Her early translations included *The Rights of the Reader* by Daniel Pennac (Walker, 2006), an ode to children's right to read for pleasure that could easily be a manifesto for ICL advocates everywhere. Ardizzone won the Marsh Award in 2005 for her translation of Pennac's *Eye of the Wolf,* with another of her Pennac translations (*Kamo's Escape*) also shortlisted for the Marsh that year. When she won her second Marsh award for *Toby Alone* by Timothée de Fombelle (Walker, 2008) in 2009, she became the only translator other than Anthea Bell to take the Marsh more than once. Thanks to her theatre background, from the beginning Ardizzone was interested in coming out from behind the desk, producing 'events and performances' 'making noise' and 'getting people to see things' (Ardizzone 2023). She has mentioned being inspired by The Children's Bookshow, which treated children's authors and illustrators as serious performers and schoolchildren as serious audiences worthy of a good show, as well as drawing on years of experience teaching theatre workshops in schools (Ardizzone 2023). Having been a precariously-employed aspiring theatre-maker for years before she was a precariously-employed, award-winning translator, Ardizzone also turned out to be adept at spotting potential collaborators and unconventional outlets for her professional energies.

[4] Previously known as Sarah Adams.

These skills were on full display in the creation of Translation Nation, where Ardizzone bridged the gap between the traditional, elite-education-inflected, adult-focused rigour that shaped SST's translation advocacy at the time and the work of her co-curator Sam Holmes, who taught English as an Additional Language in London schools and specialised in researching the hybrid linguistic environments of 'superdiverse' 21st-century British schools (Ardizzone and Holmes 2019: 109). Since the launch of the prize in 2004, SST director Robina Pelham Burn and the various prize judges had observed that there seemed to be significant appetite for literary translation among young people in Britain, with the number of entries and the variety of languages represented growing year on year, and many entrants expressing 'enjoyment' and 'passion' for the process in the commentaries submitted alongside the translations (Stephen Spender Trust 2009). Equally, as evidenced by the feeling that schools would benefit from materials supporting the teaching of translation, Burn and her colleagues felt that this passionate, broad appetite for translation was at odds with curricula which confined translation to the odd Latin classroom and left it out of most students' education entirely. For Ardizzone, SST was an established institutional partner who lent legitimacy to funding applications which would support her (along with Holmes and several other translators) to undertake paid work over a multi-year period which was aligned with her growing interest in ICL advocacy and her existing skills as a workshop leader and youth worker. For SST, Ardizzone and Holmes brought the classroom experience and ability to attract external funding needed to energise their ambitions for school outreach.

Ardizzone and Holmes wrote about this project in a chapter of *The Routledge Handbook of Translation and Education* (2019). They described Translation Nation as an example of how 'creative translation activities' can support the valuing of linguistic skills in diverse classrooms, including those characterised as 'home' or 'community' languages in the UK (concepts which Ardizzone and Holmes approach critically) and those taught in British schools (109). These workshops involved three days of translator-led, teacher-supported workshops in primary and secondary classrooms, spread over two weeks. In advance of the first session, students were asked to 'gather stories in languages other than English', either from members of their own families or from the 'wider multilingual community' (116). During the first workshop, students were given a brief introduction to 'outstanding children's literature from around the world in English translation' and encouraged to reflect on the 'poor statistics' for translation into English compared with the 'healthy statistics' for translation out of English. Children were invited to consider the 'cultural sensitivities and language skill sets' that might be needed in the publishing industry to change this state of affairs, and how they themselves might already have those skill sets. In the words of Ardizzone and Holmes, 'a

quiet agenda of Translation Nation was about making a grassroots contribution to diversifying the UK's publishing industry' (118). Over the next two sessions pupils worked in small groups to produce English translations of the collected stories, which they then adapted into scripts and presented in short performances for teachers, family members and fellow students. The workshop leaders emphasised creativity and problem-solving in the translation process, encouraging students to 'pool' their linguistic knowledge and experiment with tone and register (117). Despite the central activity of Translation Nation focusing on performance and informal oral storytelling rather than published 'good' children's books, it was clearly shaped by Ardizzone's immersion in the ICL advocacy *habitus.* The Translation Nation facilitators open their reflections on the project by questioning 'reductive' approaches to multilingualism and multiculturalism, arguing that the identities and experiences of young people in 'superdiverse' British schools do not map conveniently onto a collection of discrete, standard 'home languages' or countries of origin (112). They fundamentally based their work on the belief that engaging young people with international and multilingual stories will 'build bridges' between communities and foster a positive attitude towards cultural diversity. The introductory sessions, during which the facilitators introduced the 'three percent' statistic and discussed 'outstanding children's literature from around the world', with explicit reference to the work of Outside In World (118), also clearly place the project within an ICL advocacy framework.

For those steeped in the ICL advocacy *habitus,* these may seem like banal observations, a matter of common sense context for any event involving young people and translation rather than a noteworthy feature of this specific project. In SST communications regarding the Prize before 2010, however, it is evident that, prior to Translation Nation, the organisers and judges were approaching their invitation to young people to translate from a completely different perspective. Although the judges often express being pleased by the wide range of source languages represented among the entries, there is no rhetoric about 'cross-cultural' 'bridge-building', or indeed any connection drawn between language, culture and identity (whether on the part of the author or the translator). When several judges express 'delight' at having Welsh among the winning source languages, for example, the persistent marginalisation of the non-English Indigenous languages of Great Britain and Ireland is described purely as 'one of the great injustices of the literary world', without being related to any broader concept of cultural or national injustice or conflict. Discussion of the value of encouraging a multilingual conception of British identity or the possibility of using poetry translation to encourage engagement with Welsh among young people, the likes of which one would expect from ICL advocates, is totally absent. In 2007, one SST prize judge

even went so far as to wonder whether 'natural bilingualism may be as much of a curse as a blessing for a translator,' due to causing 'linguistic and cultural inwardness' and 'unconscious linguistic interference', citing Wales as a case in point (Stephen Spender Trust 2007). A far cry indeed from the encouragement of 'superdiverse' 'polylingual languaging' by Ardizzone and Holmes just three years later (114). In the early years of the prize, SST was equally disengaged from any discussion of 'children's books' or 'children's literature'. The judges frequently acknowledged that their own (adult) estimation of the literary value of the source poems often coloured their judgement of the translations, and criticised the selection of 'simple exercise pieces' or 'rather banal poems' (Stephen Spender Trust 2007). In the under-14s category translations of poetry for children were sometimes praised, but the judges displayed none of the romantic belief in the supposed unique, timeless power of children's literature that characterises ICL advocacy.

The Stephen Spender Trust did not start out as an ICL advocacy organisation, but it soon became one. Following Translation Nation, SST obtained further funding from the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation (who have also supported various OIW projects) and the European Commission to develop their 'Translators in Schools' training programme between 2013 and 2018. This involved a three-stage training process, run annually, during which Ardizzone and Holmes supported a cohort of fellow translators to design and deliver translation-based workshops in schools based on the same philosophy and methods developed during Translation Nation (Stephen Spender Trust 2025). Robina Pelham Burn, SST director from 2001-2016, was enthusiastic about and supportive of these initiatives (Ardizzone 2023), and over the course of this period this ICL-advocacy-*habitus*-inflected work involving children and translation came to represent an increasingly important part of SST's overall activity. Archival projects, seminar series, readings and symposia related to Spender and his contemporaries take up less and less space in the annual summaries of the Trust's activities published with the SST Prize-winning translations, while Translation in Schools, Translation Nation, and related one-off events and collaborations with other organisations are described in increasing detail. When Charlotte Ryland took over the director position in 2018, her focus from the beginning was 'using the Trust to get young people translating [and] reading, sharing and discussing international and diverse texts' (Ryland 2023). Ryland came to literary translation from an academic background, having completed a PhD in Modern German Literature at UCL in 2007. In the decade or so between finishing her PhD and becoming SST director, she had become increasingly drawn to the community, activism and lively discourse happening 'around the edges' of translation. Alongside lecturing and a postdoctoral research position at Oxford, Ryland had also been

working as the editor of *New Books in German,* a publication which promotes the translation and international circulation of contemporary German-language writing. Through this, she discovered that literary translation advocacy offered an 'intellectually engaging' outlet for considering 'theories of translation and reading' that was far more supportive, community-focused and offered (to her mind) more immediate impact than the literature-focused research she was doing in her academic roles. Although these earlier experiences with translation advocacy were not necessarily centred on children or young people, Ryland describes having had a long-standing interest in education and particularly language-learning. As director of the Trust, she finally had the opportunity to bring her passion for translation and her interest in encouraging young people to learn languages together (Ryland 2023). In the 2018 SST Prize pamphlet in her first introductory note as director, Ryland declared her passion for the Trust's 'mission to promote international literature, intercultural understanding and the art of literary translation' (Stephen Spender Trust 2018). This marked a definitive shift in focus when compared to the mission listed on the Trust's website in previous years, which was 'to widen knowledge of 20th century English literature, with particular focus on Stephen Spender's circle of writers, and promote literary translation' (Stephen Spender Trust 2012).

Under Ryland's leadership, 'translation in education' programming became the central focus of the Trust's work. Alongside taking over the Director role at SST, in 2018 Ryland also founded the Queen's Translation Exchange (QTE), an 'outreach and research centre' which in practice functions as a 'sister organisation' to SST, offering complementary programming and access to slightly different institutional support and funding thanks to being more formally associated with the Queen's College and Oxford University (Ryland 2019). Ryland used the expertise developed by SST between 2010 and 2018 through the series of translation-in-schools programmes led by Ardizzone and Holmes to launch QTE's 'translation ambassadors' programme, through which Oxford students studying languages deliver similar translation workshops in primary and secondary schools. Since 2022, the ongoing delivery of these workshops has been delivered as a collaboration between SST and QTE. The Translation Exchange, for its part, hosts translators-in-residence, public readings and talks related to international literature. QTE also runs its own translation competition aimed at students: the Anthea Bell Prize for Young Translators, launched in 2020. While the Stephen Spender Prize welcomes translations of any poem from any other language into English, the Anthea Bell Prize judges translations into English of specific short set texts in six languages (French, German, Italian, Mandarin, Russian and Spanish). QTE also produces associated guidance and support materials for teachers, and intends the

Anthea Bell Prize to act as a structured and appealing way for teachers of languages to integrate translation into their curriculum. Meanwhile, since Ryland's arrival SST has similarly focused on creating wraparound programming to help teachers integrate the SST Prize for Poetry in Translation into curricula, alongside other, more targeted projects delivered in collaboration with external organisations. These projects often 'spotlight' a particular language or culture, and generally involve some version of the Trust's signature 'creative translation in schools' workshops. SST has increasingly integrated children's books into their workshops, such as in their 'Festival of World Literature' events across a number of London schools in 2022, or their 2024 Portuguese Spotlight 'young creative translators' programme in Norfolk schools, both of which involved supporting young people to produce their own English translations of selected picture books.

Ardizzone, Holmes and the Stephen Spender Trust team were not the only people running translation workshops in British schools during the 2010s. In 2015, Gitanjali Patel founded 'Shadow Heroes', which specialises in delivering what they call 'critical translation workshops'. Patel, who studied Spanish and Portuguese at Oxford and has an MA in Social Anthropology from SOAS, describes Shadow Heroes as having arisen out of reflections on the politics of language during her studies, her own personal relationship with languages, and 'how those intermingled with the process of translation itself' (Patel 2023). Through Shadow Heroes, Patel (and eventually a number of other translator colleagues) deliver workshops in schools which encourage students to understand translation as a 'critical process' through which they can interrogate questions of power, bias, and subjectivity. Shadow Heroes works primarily with non-European languages and often uses source texts beyond what is traditionally considered 'literature', such as webcomics, pop lyrics, protest art and anime. They do not, Patel made clear when interviewed on the subject, have a particular interest in or often work with children's books. Where the starting point for Stephen Spender Trust was an approach to poetry translation compatible with the traditional British academic elite, the starting point for Shadow Heroes was an interest in using translation to empower young people to challenge the biases and hierarchies perpetuated by that same elite power structure. Shadow Heroes is a tiny operation, run by Patel alone and with no ongoing institutional affiliation, while SST and its sister organisation the QTE benefit from the institutional clout and (in some cases) financial support of Oxford University. Given this, it is not surprising that Patel has described the two organisations as having 'very different philosophies' and approaches to translation in schools (Patel 2023). Nevertheless, Patel has worked closely with QTE to help train their 'translation ambassadors' and was a key participant in a 2019 forum hosted by QTE to discuss challenges, best practices and

potential developments in ‘Creative Translation in the Classroom’ programming in the UK (Higgins and Ryland 2019).

Other ICL advocates in the UK have taken note of these developments. When World Kid Lit founder Ruth Ahmedzai Kemp was considering how to turn WKL’s strong network and name recognition into something more financially sustainable and with a clearer impact on young people, Stephen Spender Trust and QTE were among her inspirations. Kemp has long collaborated with SST, as a creative translation ambassador herself and as a trainer for other translators and teachers interested in delivering SST-style translation in schools workshops. Kemp was also inspired by The Children’s Bookshow, which has had core funding as an Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation since 2011 and which Kemp felt was high-impact in terms of connecting children and young people with books from around the world through their author and illustrator school tours and related book-gifting programmes. These influences are evident in World Kid Lit’s ‘Reading Challenge Award’, launched in August 2025. The Reading Challenge Award encourages ‘young people to read for pleasure, to explore international perspectives and global citizenship and, through reading in translation, to see the value of a second language as a cultural and creative asset’ (World Kid Lit 2025a). Teachers are asked to run ‘a global reading challenge’ in their school or classroom, then submit a creative reflection by students on the contents of the challenge. The ‘most imaginative, innovative or inclusive presentation’ in each age category (0-6 years, 7-12 years, 13+) wins a bundle of ‘books from every continent’ donated by a range of sponsoring publishers. Both the contents of the ‘reading challenge’ and the format of the responses are intentionally left open to interpretation. In the detailed guidance, WKL suggests anything from a one-day challenge in which teachers ‘see how many countries you can visit by book’ on World Book Day to a seven-year challenge ‘following a class throughout primary school’ (World Kid Lit 2025c). Like The Children’s Bookshow programming and the international author, illustrator and translator school visits sponsored by Outside In World’s early ‘Reading Round the World’ events, WKL’s Reading Challenge Award focuses on reading and young people’s engagement with international culture, rather than on the process of translation. Like the Stephen Spender and Anthea Bell prizes, it uses the format of a teacher-led ‘competition’ designed to flexibly meet a wide range of curriculum goals to engage with young people. Notably, WKL have chosen to include not only books translated into English, but also ‘books first published in English outside of the UK and the USA,’ books by ‘authors from a different country than your own,’ books ‘set in a different country than your own, by authors with lived experience of that country and culture’ and ‘bilingual books’ (World Kid Lit 2025c) and to open the competition

to English-medium schools anywhere in the world. Their use of the phrase 'global citizenship' hints at an interest in aligning with the UN Sustainable Development Goals adopted in 2015, a 21st-century expression of the hopeful, internationalist priorities which have characterised the *habitus* since the 1940s (United Nations 2025).

The Personal and the practical: the making of a habitus

Between Shadow Heroes, SST and QTE, and World Kid Lit, and including the University of Reading CBCP's 'Stories on the Move' pilot and other OIW x CBCP collaborations, (discussed in more detail in the introduction and conclusion to Section Three), it is evident that regardless of the initial entry point or basis for interest in young people's engagement with translation and international children's literature, advocates in the UK currently focus on a fairly narrow range of child-facing activities, in addition to the adult-facing collecting, list-making and networking activities described earlier in this section. These child-facing interventions are usually school-based projects, with an emphasis on short workshops delivered by translators, contests or awards with associated activities to encourage year-round integration into curricula, and a tendency to emphasise the value of community or home languages among pupils as well as encouraging uptake of formal language study at GCSE, A-level and university. This is due to a variety of factors, but here I point to it as an example of how structural factors such as educational policy, funding systems and the various professional fields which advocates find themselves navigating can shape the advocacy *habitus.* A *habitus* is more than a shared set of beliefs. It is also a shared experience of professional life, an understanding of how to do one's job or jobs, how to successfully acquire and maintain institutional support, or how to survive without it.

Perhaps the single most common shared experience reported by my interviewees is that of professional precarity. Many interviewees described eclectic, patchwork careers characterised by the near-constant search for funding and institutional support, at both the individual and the organisational levels. Despite this precarity, however, advocates tended to persist because ICL-adjacent work offered a unique combination of flexibility, moral alignment, community, and intellectual stimulation which outweighed the downsides. In order to make this work, they must be strategic about aligning with institutions and designing projects which will appeal to potential funders, while also drawing on their own skill sets and networks. Widespread concerns about declining interest in and support for languages in British schools and universities, as well as the tension between a dominant monolingual anglophone culture and the reality of superdiverse, multilingual communities form the backdrop against which these interventions are designed. Underfunded universities seek to

demonstrate ‘impact’ and increase their applicant pools by engaging with schools, while schools seek to motivate learners and (they hope) therefore improve performance metrics such as test scores and rates of admission to higher education by engaging with university-backed initiatives like Stephen Spender Trust and QTE. The emphasis on both ‘reading for pleasure’ and ‘global citizenship’ in UK educational and arts & culture funding policy in recent decades (see Coleman, 2018) shapes the way these organisations design and pitch their programmes to both funders and potential partners. Given the small size of the ICL advocacy world, individual career trajectories can also have an outsized impact on the wider field. In the development and increasing popularity of the school-based creative translation activities above, for example, we can see the influence of Sarah Ardizzone’s background in the performing arts, Charlotte Ryland’s desire to build an intellectual community around literature in translation beyond the academy, Ruth Ahmedzai Kemp’s need to make a living without sacrificing her involvement in WKL, and Gitanjali Patel’s objection to the UK’s deeply-entrenched linguistic hierarchies.

The *habitus*: conclusion

Returning once again to the Global Studies Lounge at the University of Reading in 2024, the ICL advocacy *habitus* puts the design of the ‘Stories on the Move’ (SotM) pilot project in context. In designing the project, Heywood was certainly aware of the ‘translation in schools’ programming described above. SotM is another riff on the Translation Nation theme: a workshop-style programme bringing translators (and, in this case, other children’s book professionals) into classrooms in British schools and offering highly-scaffolded, collaborative, translation-based activities with a high emphasis on ‘creativity’ which aim to address gaps or weak points in the standard language education provision. Although SotM focuses on encouraging uptake of language subjects at A-level and university and does not explicitly address ‘home’ or ‘community’ languages, it draws on the same positive view of multilingualism and concern about declining support for and interest in language-learning in the UK which motivates advocates such as Ardizzone, Holmes, Ryland and Patel. This motivation is underpinned by the same visions of a peaceful, cosmopolitan internationalism based on a positive, inclusive sense of cultural pride and national identity that have inspired ICL advocates since Lepman and her colleagues in the post-War period.

These visions, of course, do not belong to ICL advocates alone. What makes Stories on the Move such a distinctive example of the ICL advocacy *habitus* in action is its use of a children’s book as the central tool in a project intended to bring about some small aspect of that better, more multilingual, literate, creative and understanding future. The particular book

around which this pilot version of the SotM project is designed, *L'Ennemi* by Davide Cali with illustrations by Serge Bloch (2007), reflects many of the themes that run throughout this chapter. Heywood reports first having encountered the book in 2023 on a display in a bookshop in Bologna, a city at the heart of European children's publishing culture, where it sat in a display alongside other children's books about war. In terms of institutional consecration and 'quality', Cali and Bloch have received many awards over the course of their careers. These include, most notably in this context, the Mildred L. Batchelder Honor (Bloch in 2002) and the Bologna Ragazzi award (Cali in 2006, Bloch in 2007), among numerous others (Debbie Bibo Agency 2025; Michele Mariaud Gallery 2025). Although not necessarily household names in Britain, both author and illustrator are prolific and well-recognised internationally, and their work has been available in many languages (or, in Bloch's case, alongside many languages), for several decades. *L'Ennemi* was first published in English in 2007 by Australian publisher Wilkins Farago, and later made available in a different English translation for the US market in 2009 by Random House/Schwartz & Wade Books. The book was selected by USBBY for their 2010 Honor List of Best International Books on the basis of the US English edition (Poe 2010: 42). Despite this fact, *L'Ennemi* has never been published in an edition aimed at the UK market. The choice of a book by well-consecrated, established and widely-translated European creators who are, nevertheless, not instantly recognisable to the average British schoolchild, aligns with the narrative that children in the UK are particularly deprived of access to the 'best' of children's literature around the world due to low levels of inbound translation. Choosing to use SotM as an opportunity to 'introduce' the young participants to a new-to-them example of prestigious contemporary children's literature from beyond the Anglosphere, rather than designing the project around a classic European text with a familiar story, or even translations into other languages of an iconic British children's book, is another sign of the guiding influence of the *habitus.* The fact that the book has been widely translated, and undergone a range of notable transformations in the process, also made it particularly suitable for workshops focused on introducing the process of literary translation and discussing what is at stake in the international exchange of children's books. Finally, it is also an example of the 'challenging picturebook' category, referring to texts which present potentially difficult themes in a format typically associated with younger readers. SoTM is also one expression of recent increased interest among scholars of international children's literature in this category (see, for example, a 2022 paper by Véliz and García-González on 'testing the limits and borders of reading mediation' using challenging picturebooks in a Chilean primary school setting, and

the work of the 'Challenging Picturebooks in Education' research group based at OsloMet in Norway (Ommundsen, Haaland, and Kümmerling-Meibauer 2021)).

Although Stories on the Move is in many ways a highly contemporary project, designed with the hopes of helping young people see the value of language skills in the rapidly evolving technological and educational landscape that characterises the 2020s, *L'Ennemi* is a book that, had it existed at the time, Jella Lepman herself might have chosen as the centrepiece of a workshop for German teens at the IYL in the 1950s. As this thesis has described, the influence of the post-WWII European political and cultural climate on the development of the international children's literature advocacy *habitus* is difficult to overstate. Early advocates were specifically hopeful that exchanging children's books across borders could help prevent the dehumanising hatred which enables the kind of senseless violence to which they had so recently borne witness. *L'Ennemi* tackles this head-on, explicitly depicting the process of two soldiers, alone in their foxholes, slowly realising that their 'enemy' might not be the monster they were led to believe. Although the message is not subtle, certain elements prevent it from coming across as, to borrow Crampton's word, 'crassly' or overtly ideological. The vaguely WWI look of the characters' uniforms gives the story a sense of documentary gravitas by grounding it in real-world violence. This is not Dr. Seuss's *The Butter Battle Book* (1984), for example, in which creatures called 'Yooks' and 'Zooks' play out a Cold War arms-race parable over a disagreement about how to butter toast. The characters in *L'Ennemi* carry real guns and bleed red, both of which are depicted with an emotional, if not visual, realism in Bloch's heavily-stylised illustrations. For its 21st-century European audiences, the quasi-WWI setting also has the double effect of feeling close and relevant in terms of geography and culture and yet distant and vague in terms of time and the reasons for the violence depicted. As in the ICL advocate's ideal 'good' children's book, *L'Ennemi* thus offers a story of universal suffering and the redemption of our common humanity without asking (or tempting) readers to adjudicate an ongoing conflict of any sort. Of course, that does not mean that contemporary conflicts are far from the minds of either facilitators or participants working through the Stories on the Movie activities. During the workshops described here, a Palestinian solidarity student protest camp was visible from the window of the Global Studies Lounge, and the university had implemented increased security protocols to discourage the protesters from occupying buildings on campus. The reflections of some workshop leaders on one young participant who pitched a marketing plan for a British version of *L'Ennemi* which would emphasise national pride, support for the troops and a generally jingoistic, pro-military stance mirrored were not dissimilar to Jella Lepman's disappointment, described in *A Bridge of Children's Books,* when a young

Bavarian boy told her he wanted to read exciting war stories despite having recently lived through the horrors of the Second World War. Although delivering an anti-war, pro-peace message is not one of the explicit aims of Stories on the Move, while it was for Lepman, this is one of the ways in which the history of ICL advocacy passed down through the *habitus* has nonetheless shaped the design and delivery of the project.

Finally, Stories on the Move offers a useful example of how the ICL advocacy *habitus* interacts with other *habituses.* As described in the literature review, translation studies scholars recognise that individuals often carry a plural *habitus,* influenced by the varied personal and professional circumstances in which they find themselves. ICL advocates are also translators ('literary' and otherwise), researchers, educators, librarians, political organisers, writers, and illustrators, in addition to their personal status as parents, immigrants or non-immigrants, monolingual or multilingual, etc. In the case of SotM, Heywood's *habitus* as a researcher in the humanities employed by a UK university shaped the project in concrete ways. In particular, the project's focus on connecting language study to real-world employability by putting teens in contact with publishing-industry professionals, as well its built-in collaboration between industry, academia and schools, all reflect the need for UK academics like Heywood to continually demonstrate the 'impact' of their research outside of the academy in order to be considered competitive for funding and employment. The content of the introductory session on 'pitching' from translator Claire Storey, whose work is discussed in more detail in the case studies chapter, was shaped by her *habitus* as a literary translator. Patricia Billings' professional experience as a political organiser, co-founder and editor of a publishing house with an emphasis on translations and bilingual books for children, and an author of children's books impacted the structure of the activities completed by the young participants, as well as the feedback they received from Billings and Storey during the 'industry panel' pitching session at the end of the day.

Crucially, across the design, delivery and feedback/assessment phases of SotM, these ICL advocates had the opportunity to learn from each other about the different facets of the *fields* in which they operate. Billings and Storey, for example, left with new information about the funding priorities within UK HEIs, and which aspects of their publishing, translation and advocacy expertise might be most appealing to academics for future collaborations. Heywood and I, on the other side, benefitted from a detailed explanation of a small publisher's perspective on translation pitches and the challenges and opportunities presented by acquiring picture books for translation into English. Furthermore, the presence of trainee language teachers and their course directors offered the other facilitators

important additional information about the constraints involved in collaborating with schools and designing programmes for young people. This is how a *habitus* is maintained, and how it evolves. Through the collaborative process of designing and delivering Stories on the Move, the existing common ground of the ICL advocacy *habitus* provided a shared starting point, while the negotiation of the various different perspectives resulting from the other *habituses* in the room resulted in the refinement and consolidation of the ICL *habitus* within each of the advocates who facilitated the project, which is then carried forward into their future engagements with international children's literature.

Part 4 – Case Studies of Latin American Kid Lit in the UK

Introduction

As demonstrated throughout this thesis, the dominant rhetoric around translation in British children's publishing, in both academic and non-academic circles, tends to repeat observations about market pressures and the global dominance of Anglophone literature, and to neglect serious analysis of what is occurring at the periphery of dominant trends. The focus on the perception of persistent obstacles to translation for children into English and the 'committed' motivations of those who do publish translations for children leaves little room for meaningful intervention. And yet, as laid out in previous sections, action is being taken. Advocates are constantly intervening, with greater or lesser degrees of success, to change the landscape of children's publishing in the UK in favour of translation, and diversity more generally. Assumptions about the impossibility of this (real, current, evolving) action have thus far pre-empted any rigorous examination of it. Furthermore, the constant reification of the discourse outlined above, which pervades the body of academic work to which advocates have recourse when attempting to understand their field or explain it to outsiders, has led to a widening gap between the field's metadiscourse and its everyday realities.

In an effort to respond to this gap, as well as to offer a series of practical examples of how the ICL advocacy *habitus* laid out in the previous chapters impacts contemporary British children's publishing, this chapter offers three case studies which centre on recent English translations of books for young audiences published in the UK. These cases arose organically from the research interviews conducted for this thesis. They were selected for their resonance with the themes that run throughout this thesis, due to having been mentioned on multiple occasions by different interviewees, and due to their relevance to individuals and organisations that are central to the arguments being developed here. One major aim of these case studies is to reconcile what ICL advocates say about their work with what is happening on the ground. This chapter also demonstrates how an investigative approach based on qualitative, ethnographic methods and informed by an awareness of the ICL advocacy *habitus* is specifically suited to demystifying the production of translations from 'peripheral' source countries or languages into English. This is in part a response to the overreliance on statistics to describe the state of the art described in the introduction to this thesis, as well as what I identify as a need to lay out how factors beyond the

widely-discussed editorial attitudes and market pressures influence children's translation publishing. One way of doing this is by understanding the full range of actors and institutions whose professional activity is shaped by the ICL advocacy *habitus* as potentially integral, rather than tangential, to the translation production process. This includes, notably, academic institutions, funding bodies, policymakers, professional associations and non-profit advocacy organisations in addition to translators, publishers and potential readers. Finally, the narrative style of these case studies makes it possible to offer expansive maps of the multiple and non-linear processes which often lie behind the arrival of a single published translation in English. This offers insight into aspects of the development of translation in British children's publishing which cannot necessarily be divined from analyses of bibliographic data such as publication date, source language or source country/region alone. Although the cases presented here are very focused in scope, specifically covering several notable English translations published since 2021 by UK-based publishers of Spanish-language books for young readers from Latin America, these methods could equally be adapted to investigate children's literature translation in other geographical contexts, time periods and language pairs.

It may seem counterproductive to disprove claims about the idiosyncratic, serendipitous and individual-driven nature of the children's literary translation field through a series of case studies about the success of specific interventions. Nevertheless, the stories contained in this chapter add up to more than the sum of their parts. On the one hand, they represent strategic, intentional and largely successful resistance to the status quo. These are the exceptions that illuminate the rules: books, translators and publishers successfully moving against the powerful core-periphery tide to bring the 'best' of Latin American writing for children and young people to audiences in the UK. On the other hand, they lay out the complex and often intractable nature of the obstacles that face international children's literature advocates who would like to see translations for children take up more space on British publisher lists, bookstore shelves and review column inches. Although each case could certainly be framed as the result of 'chance encounters and the determination of pioneering individuals' (Lathey 2017: 231), they in fact reflect extensive, purposeful and concerted projects which draw on the collective historical experience contained within the ICL advocacy *habitus.*

Chapter 4.1 – The Case Studies

A Tour of Latin American Kid Lit in (English) Translation

In 2024, major US-based literary translation advocacy organisation and online literary translation journal Words Without Borders (WWB) published 'A Tour of Latin American Kid Lit in 15 Translations' as their annual World Kid Lit Month feature piece. Words Without Borders holds a central position in the field of English-target literary translation, and their editorial decisions are good indicators of broader trends in the field. The fact of WKL and WWB choosing to highlight the region in their annual WKL month collaboration is in and of itself evidence for rising interest in Latin America in the English-speaking international children's literature advocacy field. Together, the fifteen titles reviewed are a snapshot of Latin American writing for children and young people in English translation today, offering useful context for the case studies developed below. Firstly, the vast majority of titles on the list have first been made available in English by US-based publishing houses. This reflects the geographical proximity of the United States to the region, and the resulting long histories of migration, cultural exchange, and political and military intervention between and across North, Central, and South America and the Caribbean. Although the detailed cases presented at the end of this chapter will focus on a rare handful of Latin American children's books which have been translated into English by UK-based publishing houses, a brief discussion of several of the US translations on the list, which more broadly reflect the perspectives and biases to which Latin American kid lit in translation is subject on the international stage, is in order.

One title on the list which merits a more extended discussion here is *What Makes Us Human* by Victor Santos (Eerdmans, 2024). The WWB review describes it as a 'gem of a book […] about language in its myriad forms' which 'sheds light on the importance of language, its dazzling diversity, and the vital connection between language and culture' (Donnelly 2024). *What Makes Us Human* is co-published by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), a transnational body with which IBBY and the IYL have been officially associated since the 1950s (Lepman 1969: 131). It was made available in various languages and in collaboration with dozens of publishers around the world, 'as part of its action plan for the International Decade of Indigenous Languages 2022-2032' (UNESCO 2023). This close link with UNESCO is the first hint that *What Makes Us Human* might be more than coincidentally appealing to the sensibilities of the ICL advocacy *habitus.* The connection is made more explicit in an article on the UNESCO

website describing the book project: it opens by drawing a direct parallel between the urge to produce educational, entertaining, 'quality' content for his own children that supposedly inspired *What Makes Us Human* author Victor Santos and the inspiration behind what the article describes as the ingenious, 'terrifying and delirious', yet morally instructive German children's classic *Der Struwwelpeter* (1844). The article then goes on to list the many accolades from major international children's literature consecrating bodies that *Human* has received since its original publication in 2023, including a listing in the IYL's 2023 *White Ravens* catalogue, recognition at the Bologna Children's Book Fair in 2023 and 2025, and inclusion in the 2025 USBBY list of 'Outstanding International Books' (UNESCO 2023; D. O. Santos 2025c).

The categorisation of *Human* as an 'international book' by the US branch of IBBY, as well as WWB's choice to include it as an example of 'Latin American Kid Lit' in English translation, are both less straightforward than they might first appear. Author Victor D. O. Santos describes himself as 'Brazilian-American', having lived in Europe and now settled in the US for several decades since leaving Brazil at the age of 25. Santos, who is bilingual, reports having drafted *Human* simultaneously in Brazilian Portuguese and English, as he does all his books, and is credited as both translator and author of the US English edition (D. O. Santos 2025a, 2025b). Illustrator Anna Forlati, who has collaborated with Santos on various occasions, is an Italian artist based in Italy. Inspired by Santos's background in linguistics and passion for languages, the contents of the book are global in scope, offering a general 'accessible introduction to how language connects people across the world' (Eerdmans Publishing Co. 2025b). Thanks to UNESCO's support and endorsement, the book was published in eleven countries and fifteen languages within twelve months of its first publication in August 2023, and as of September 2025 is under contract for publication in 40 languages. All of this is to say that *What Makes us Human* is as much from Iowa or Italy as it is from Brazil, and as much a product of the ICL advocacy *habitus* as it is of any specifically Latin American, Portuguese-language or Brazilian children's literary culture. Here, we have a text which sits at the crossroads of various philosophical and rhetorical tendencies within the ICL advocacy *habitus.* It purports to specifically further the cause of preserving and promoting Indigenous, minoritised and endangered languages, while enjoying the relatively direct access to the centres of power in the transnational children's book field that is often denied to cultural products produced originally in those languages and whose authors do not speak English. It is 'Brazilian' and 'Latin American' enough to appeal to Anglophone ICL advocates interested in 'diversifying' English-language children's publishing through importing books from 'underrepresented' regions, and yet reflects a UNESCO-endorsed,

somewhat utopian universalism which requires little mediation to be palatable to a wide segment of audiences in the US.

What Makes Us Human is not the only title on the Words Without Borders list that reflects a vision of Latin American 'kid lit' that is distinctly coloured by the preoccupations and assumptions of the ICL advocacy *habitus*. Three of the fifteen books on the list are semi-autobiographical narratives describing the obstacles to education and literacy faced by rural children in Latin America and around the world, and offering uplifting messages about the power of books and reading. All three were written by authors with deep, long-standing connections to the ICL advocacy *habitus,* and all three were translated into English by Lawrence Schimel and published in the US by Eerdman's in 2023. Irene Vasco, Colombian author of *The Young Teacher and the Great Serpent*, was awarded the 2024 IBBY-iRead 'Outstanding Reading Promoter Award' for a lifetime of work building libraries and establishing literacy programmes, particularly in remote parts of her native Colombia that have been heavily impacted by violent conflict (IBBY 2025a). *Colorful Mondays: A Bookmobile Spreads Hope in Honduras* was written by Nelson Rodríguez, a reading promoter and children's author who is also the director of the Honduran mobile library project featured in the book, which visits a 'poor community' which is 'awash in sadness and difficulties', bringing joy and colour in the form of 'puppet shows, crafts projects' and, of course, children's books (Donnelly 2024; Eerdmans Publishing Co 2025a). Claudio Aguilero, who recounts his childhood experience of long, sometimes perilous walks to school in rural Chile in *9 Kilometers,* is an award-winning journalist, writer and archivist with a central position in the Chilean children's literature field as chief archivist of graphics and illustration at the Chilean National Library (Ilus.Galería 2024).

Out of all the titles on the Words Without Borders lists, these three have together received a notably large number of commendations and awards from both international and US-based children's literature institutions such as the IYL, IBBY international, USBBY, The New York Public Library, The Latin American Studies Program Americas Award, the Children's Book Council, and the Center for the Study of Multicultural Children's Literature, among others. All of this potentially indicates that stories about Latin America depicting rural poverty, educational inequality, low literacy rates and the need for aid programmes, often written by those living outside the communities they describe, remain more likely to attract institutional approval and accolades than those which do not actively reinforce this particular image of the region. As with *What Makes Us Human,* these titles are also examples of works which can claim to offer a certain degree of 'representativeness' or 'authenticity' which meets

the criteria for ‘diverse’ or ‘Own Voices’ children’s literature thanks to the nationalities and lived experiences of the authors, and yet even before translation into English offers a vision of the communities it depicts which is filtered through a transnational gaze heavily shaped by the ICL advocacy *habitus.* Finally, including these three titles, six of the books on the WWB list were translated into English by Lawrence Schimel and two by British translator Claire Storey, with all other translators having just one credit. The circumstances and strategies which have led to the dominance of Schimel and Storey on this particular list are explored in detail in the case studies below. Given the fact that translators such as Schimel and Storey tend to act as scouts and consultants for publishers, actively shaping not only how translations are done but what texts get acquired for translation in the first place, the dominance of a small handful of individuals (a situation which is certainly not unique to this region or these language combinations) is worth noting.

Latin American Kid Lit in (British) English Translation

Another notable feature of the Words Without Borders list is the fact that three of the titles mentioned (*The Invisible Story, The Darkness of Colours* and *Never Tell Anyone Your Name*) were first made available in English by British publishers. The presence of even this relatively small number of such works is not a given. Until very recently, Latin American books for young readers were practically non-existent in the UK. One of the few exceptions is *Letters from Alain* by Enrique Pérez Díaz, translated from the Spanish by Simon Breden (Aurora Metro, 2008), which is the only example of a Latin American translation produced by a British publisher cited by Lathey in *Invisible Storytellers* (Lathey 2010: 203). *Letters from Alain* was shortlisted for the Marsh Award in 2009, alongside three other titles by publisher Aurora Metro. A closer examination reveals this as very much an exception that proves the rule. Author Enrique Pérez Díaz is a Cuban critic, researcher, publisher and promoter of children’s literature, with a long-standing, deep involvement in the world of international children’s literature advocacy. He is the former director of Gente Nueva children’s publishing house in Cuba and of the children’s literature theory and criticism publication *En julio como en enero,* created and produced with the support of the IBBY Cuban Committee (‘Enrique Perez Díaz’ 2014). Díaz has served as vice-president of IBBY Cuba section, as of 2025 is listed as the section’s *Bookbird Correspondent* (IBBY 2025c), and has co-organised national and regional IBBY Congresses in Cuba. In 2014, Díaz was the first Cuban member of the Hans Christian Andersen jury, and he is a recipient of an International Youth Library Fellowship, which allows scholars to spend a period of time researching children’s literature at the IYL in Munich. Of *Letters From Alain* specifically: the original Spanish-language text

(*Las cartas de Alain*, 2001) was published in Spain by Anaya Infantil y Juvenil in their 'Sopa de Libros' series, which features middle-reader texts addressing the social challenges of early adolescence, offered with accompanying educational reading guides (Grupo Anaya. S.A.U., 2025). The book also tells the kind of Latin American story which is most recognisable to English-language publishers: a tale of poverty and migration, told from the perspective of a Cuban boy whose best friend 'goes away with his family on a small boat, in search of a better life in America' (Aurora Metro Publications, no date). In *Letters,* then, we have a Latin American story written by an author who is deeply integrated into the international children's literature advocacy *habitus,* produced by a European publisher as an 'educational' text, telling a story that aligns comfortably with the US-centric narrative of Cuba as first and foremost a place that people want to escape.

The tendency of existing translation statistic studies to group books by source language rather than region or country (see for example Clarke 2021; Donahaye 2012) obscures the degree to which Latin American literature is absent from UK children's publishing. Spanish occupies a semi-peripheral position as a source language for books in translation published in the UK. The most popular modern foreign language subject at A level in the UK for several years running (Collen 2023: 2), Spanish does not suffer from a limited number of potential translators, nor from a lack of an existing canon in English translation (for adults). It is consistently in the top ten source languages for all literature published in English translation in the UK (Büchler and Trentacosti 2015: 4). In a 2021 survey of the publishing industries of Argentina, Colombia, Mexico and Peru, the British Council characterised Spanish-speaking Latin America as having an 'interconnected ecosystem' of 'well-developed' publishing industries, featuring 'very good and diverse catalogues [and] highly qualified professionals' (Adamo 2021: 2). Nevertheless, the overwhelming majority of books translated from Spanish to English by UK publishers, for children and adults, are of European origin. The Outside In World database, which since 2004 has catalogued over 2000 books for young people published in English translation across the Anglosphere, features forty titles from Spanish-speaking Latin America. Of these, just four were produced by UK-based publishers, none prior to 2023, and three are the same titles featured by WWB. The British-published titles featured on the WWB list exist in the context of a broader trend of growing interest in contemporary Latin American literature in British publishing.[5] In literary publishing for adults, signs of this include notably the expansion of Edinburgh-based specialists Charco Press and the Latin-America-heavy longlist for the

[5] Portuguese-language literature from Brazil is certainly a major part of this trend, but falls beyond the scope of this chapter.

2024 International Booker Prize (Creamer). Among British ICL advocates, as revealed in the research interviews on which the following case studies are based, some actors are beginning to regard the region as a largely untapped potential source of 'high-quality' books for children and young people which could help meet ongoing pressure to 'diversify' the industry.

The first case describes the relationship between translator Lawrence Schimel and The Emma Press (TEP), a Birmingham-based publisher of poetry, children's books and creative non-fiction. This case discusses a number of translations published by TEP, with a particular focus on *Balam and Lluvia's House* (originally published in Spanish as *Balam, Lluvia y la casa*, by Guatemalan author Julio Serrano Echeverría and Spanish illustrator Yolanda Mosquera, English translation by Lawrence Schimel). Although *Balam* was not featured on the WWB list, it offers insight into Schimel's influence on both Spanish-English literary translation for children specifically, and the British and US children's translation publishing fields more broadly. Several elements of TEP's journey from a publisher of exclusively English-original texts to an award-winning serial publisher of translations for children also complicate the narratives laid out in the existing literature around where decision-making or gatekeeping occurs with regards to which books for children are translated into English from other languages. By presenting a detailed look at the reported motivations and actions of a variety of actors involved in influencing the relationship of this single small press to translation over a period of many years, a more complete picture of the factors and networks that shape translation for children in British publishing today emerges.

The second case focuses on the English translation and publication of *The Invisible Story* (originally published in Spanish as *El cuento fantasma,* by Costa Rican author-illustrator duo Jaime Gamboa and Wen Hsu Chen, English translation by Daniel Hahn). The British publisher of this title, Lantana, is an independent, mission-led operation with an active focus on publishing books for children and young people that address gaps in diversity and representation in the wider UK market. *El cuento fantasma* was originally published by Guatemala-based Amanuense in 2013.[6] This work began its journey to English translation over a decade ago in 2014, in the context of 'Reading the Way', an Outside In World project focused on disability representation and accessibility in books for children and young people from around the world. The tale of how *El cuento fantasma* came to be available in the UK as *The Invisible Story*, and the paratextual transformations it has

[6] Amanuense is a publisher specialising in children's books founded in Guatemala in 2009. Since 2017 it has been based in Uruguay.

undergone in the process, raise questions about the impact and limitations of this kind of advocacy work and offers a window into the relationship between disability advocacy and translation advocacy, an under-studied element of the international children's literature advocacy *habitus*.

The third and final case centres on translator and book scout Claire Storey, who was the driving force behind the two YA books from British publishers featured on the WWB list, *The Darkness of Colours* (*La Oscuridad de los colores,* by Martín Blasco) (HopeRoad 2024) and *Never Tell Anyone Your Name* (*Nunca digas tu nombre* by Federico Ivanier) (HopeRoad 2023), as well as two further works of Latin American YA acquired by British publishers in recent years: *The Wild Ones* (*Salvajes*, by Antonio Ramos Revillas) (HopeRoad 2024) and *Sword of Fire* (*Martina Valiente,* by Federico Ivanier) (Puffin Books, 2025). Storey has played an integral role in raising the profile of Latin American YA in the UK, specifically thanks to the ongoing impact of an Arts Council England Developing Your Creative Practice grant for which she successfully applied in 2021**.** This project resulted in Storey translating the four YA and middle-reader books from Spanish-speaking Latin America listed above. For context, no such books were acquired by UK publishers between 2016 and 2021. This section explores the series of strategic interventions that allowed a relatively inexperienced translator to so significantly impact the field, as well as the structural factors that have paved the way for her success.

The Emma Press: How a small press learned to love translations

Founded in 2012 in Berkshire and now based in Birmingham, today The Emma Press (TEP) is a quintessential example of what O'Sullivan calls the 'altruistic publishers […] that try to redress, even if only on a tiny scale, the geopolitical imbalance in the publishing world […] fuelled by idealism, but nonetheless [wanting and needing] to make a commercial success of their enterprise' (26). Representing the extreme of the pole of small-scale literary production (Bourdieu 2008; Sapiro 2008), this is a tiny, mission-driven operation committed to producing high-quality literary products and with modest commercial ambitions. Its founder, Emma Dai'an Wright, started the press after leaving an uninspiring job at a large commercial publisher. In an interview with Claire Storey published by World Kid Lit, Wright described feeling that 'as a young British Asian woman' there was a lack of 'people like [her] running publishers and being gatekeepers'. After running TEP as a one-person operation for a number of years, in 2020 a grant from Arts Council England allowed Wright to expand the press by hiring a small team. By 2021, TEP was established as an active player in the specialised field of translated children's literature publishing. Wright had published children's

books in translation from the Netherlands, Latvia, Estonia, Indonesia and Spain. *Poems the Wind Blew In* by Karmelo C. Iribarren, translated by Lawrence Schimel and published by TEP in 2019, was the first children's book to be awarded a PEN Translates grant, and the first book in translation to be Highly Commended by the CLiPPA (Centre for Literacy in Primary Poetry Award) (Schimel). Wright is also well-connected to individuals and organisations concerned with promoting international children's literature in the UK and is a public spokesperson for the project of promoting international children's literature in English. She has been interviewed for blog posts published by IBBY UK and WKL, and was selected as a potential candidate to be interviewed in the context of this research after being independently mentioned by two first-round interview subjects, Deborah Hallford of OIW and Ruth Ahmedzai Kemp of WKL. Due to Wright being on maternity leave at the time, TEP publishing manager Georgia Wall responded to my enquiry and agreed to be interviewed for this project in December 2022.

TEP became the subject of a more focused case study in early 2023 after Wall and another interview subject, high-profile children's translator Lawrence Schimel, both mentioned the forthcoming publication by TEP of *Balam and Lluvia's House*, Schimel's English-language translation of *Balam, Lluvia y la casa,* by Guatemalan author Julio Serrano Echeverría, with illustrations by Yolanda Mosquera, originally published in Uruguay by Amanuense in 2018. Prior to its English translation, *Balam* had been consecrated by various well-respected bodies involved in the transnational field of children's publishing (including, among others, the Colombian section of IBBY, the Costa Rican Ministry of Public Education and the US-based Fundación Cuatrogatos). Equally important as its formal accolades, in terms of its appeal to TEP, was the way in which it balances elements specific to its culture of origin with universally-accessible themes. When explaining their excitement about *Balam,* both Wall and Schimel emphasised the author's Afro-Indigenous identity and the general lack of children's books from Latin America published in the UK. Wall led with the fact that it was one of the first Guatemalan children's books ever to be published in English. The translation 'covers multiple diversities that are necessary,' said Schimel in our interview, adding that 'this is a book by an Afro-Guatemalan poet, but it's a book about two siblings and their house […] so it's not a book about being Black and Guatemalan […] but that's equally important'. Its illustrated characters' features reflect the author's Afro-Indigenous heritage, and their world is full of tropical plants surrounded by brightly-coloured tiles and textiles. Balam and Lluvia's names (Balam means 'Jaguar' in multiple Mayan languages, while Lluvia means 'Rain' in Spanish) and a reference to mythical tooth-fairy mouse 'Ratón Pérez' all clearly indicate the book's foreign origin to English-language readers. The poems, on the

other hand, focus on experiences potentially familiar to children anywhere, from the joyful (playing in the garden, laughing with a gaggle of cousins) to the challenging (the death of a pet, an angry or absent parent). In Schimel's words, this adds to the book's appeal because 'it's necessary for the UK to have Latin American stories […] but it's also important for […] creators with different identities that are often suppressed in traditional publishing […] to just be able to write stories and for those stories to reach readers'. Wall mentioned *Balam* at the end of our interview because she was aware of the webinar series on children's books in English translation produced by the University of Reading Centre for Book Cultures and Publishing (CBCP) and OIW, and hoped that, through my connections to the CBCP and OIW, I could facilitate a webinar on *Balam* to coincide with its release in July 2023. As Wall was aware, Dr Sophie Heywood, my PhD supervisor, is a co-founder of the CBCP and the primary organiser of the webinar series, and I collaborated on various projects with OIW throughout my PhD research. Schimel, for his part, brought up *Balam* while describing the evolution of his years-long professional relationship with Wright, and particularly his role in encouraging her to publish translations for children. Below I consider this longer advocacy project, beginning with Schimel's intervention in 2015 and continuing through Wall's submission of *Balam* as a potential subject for a CBCP webinar in 2023.

Perhaps surprisingly, given the success of their translation programme and its importance in terms of their current list, between 2012 and 2018 The Emma Press did not publish a single translation. Why did Wright not include translations in her list from the beginning? Existing studies paint a fairly clear picture of why publishers at the commercial, large-scale pole of children's book production in Anglophone markets publish relatively few translations. Equally, O'Sullivan and others have described the disproportionate contributions of 'altruistic', idealistic small-scale publishers to English-language translation for children. TEP, however, did not initially fit neatly into either of these categories. It began as a small-scale publisher led by someone with the desire and inclination to publish translations, but not the professional networks or practical experience to feel confident doing so. The process that brought them to where they are today began in 2015, when Schimel first pitched *Poems the Wind Blew In* to Wright (Schimel). Iribarren's book was 'the first title in translation that TEP accepted,' according to Schimel, but with no country or language-specific support available for the Spanish book, and Wright's lack of experience with this type of project, there was not an immediate path forward. Despite having grown up speaking Hubei and English at home and having studied translation during her Classics degree, when Wright started TEP she had a limited understanding of translation from a publisher's perspective. In an interview in 2021, Wright was, in her own words, 'put off by all

the paperwork' (Wright 2021). The skills and knowledge she acquired while working at a major mainstream publishing house prior to founding TEP did not cover scouting and sourcing appropriate books from (heterogenous and fragmented) foreign markets, dealing with foreign publishers and rights contracts, recruiting and contracting with translators, or applying for the various sources of funding available to support translations. Little formal support or guidance existed at the time for British editors and publishers interested in gaining even a general understanding of the ins and outs of translation publishing. The only notable programmes of this kind, BookTrust's 'In Other Words' initiative and Daniel Hahn's Arts Council England-funded editor's trip to the Bologna Book Fair, took place between 2017-2019.

Schimel, who has decades of experience and wide professional networks as not only a translator and author, but also an editor and the publisher of a small poetry press, was particularly well-equipped to help Wright gain experience publishing translations to the point where publishing his English translation of *Poems the Wind Blew In* was feasible. He also had good reason to invest time and professional capital into what he well knew could be a years-long process with no guaranteed payoff, financial or otherwise. Given the very small number of children's books in translation published each year in the UK (and in English more broadly – Schimel frequently works with editors based in the US), and the fact that children's poetry is a niche within a niche, Schimel will have been aware that getting Iribarren's book published was not simply a matter of shopping around the pitch until he found an interested publisher. Instead, supporting TEP to add translations to their list would effectively create a new opening in the market, reducing competition for precious publisher attention. To make this happen, Schimel shifted roles from pitching translator to consultant-advocate. He listened to Wright's concerns and advised her to start by acquiring translation rights to a text that would be eligible for less-competitive funding provided by national cultural institutes abroad. Schimel reports introducing Wright to David Colmer, an award-winning Dutch-English translator with an interest in poetry and children's literature (Schimel). The *Nederlands letterenfonds* (the Dutch Foundation for Literature) offers grants covering up to seventy percent of translation costs for any Dutch literature in translation, as well as production costs for 'high-quality, full-colour children's books, graphic novels and poetry' (Dinmohamed). Colmer pitched Wright *Super Guppy* by Edward Van de Vendel, with illustrations by Fleur Van der Weel, which went on to be one of the first translations commissioned by TEP (Schimel).

Also at Schimel's urging, in 2018 Wright attended the London Book Fair (LBF) and took advantage of that year's British Council Market Focus on Baltic Countries to acquire the rights to a handful of children's books from Latvia and Estonia, all of which were eligible for funding from the cultural ministries of their respective countries of origin to support translation and publication. The next year, TEP increased their involvement in the Market Focus programme, not only translating and publishing several books by authors from Indonesia (the 2019 Market Focus country), but also chairing the Indonesia-focused event at the LBF Children's Hub and orchestrating an Indonesian-grant-funded UK tour for Rassi Narika, author of *When it Rains* (published in English by TEP in 2019). Having established this solid track record of successful funding applications and published translations, in late 2018 TEP successfully applied for an Arts Council England grant 'to help them grow as an inclusive publisher' (Wright). Translations were central to their application, which partially supported them during the period in which they published *Super Guppy, The Adventures of Na Willa, When it Rains,* and *Poems the Wind Blew In.* Around this same time, Schimel's translation of *Poems the Wind Blew In* for TEP became the first children's book to receive English PEN Translates funding, followed shortly thereafter by its nomination for the CLiPPA, a first for any translated work.

TEP's publication of *Balam and Lluvia's House* in 2023 was made possible, then, by this series of interventions reaching back to 2015. *Balam* is, in many ways, a perfect poster child for the contemporary project of international children's literature advocacy in the UK. It is a success story, and indeed one shaped by 'economic pressures […] and the determination of pioneering individuals' (Lathey 231). Along with *Poems the Wind Blew In,* it represented a new positionality in the children's literary translation field for TEP. As Wright reported in a 2021 interview, after years of chasing British Council Market Focuses and finding the rare book that suited her sensibilities from within the selection eligible for support from bodies concerned with the cultural promotion of their national literatures, she now had the experience and reputation to attract competitive funding such as that offered by Arts Council England and English PEN. In doing so, TEP could acquire the rights to a book that was even less likely than their Dutch, Baltic and Indonesian translations to ever reach UK audiences: *Balam and Lluvia's House,* a work of children's poetry from a country that at the time offered no specific funding for translations (Guatemala) and had not recently been the subject of a British Council Market Focus or any equivalent promotional programme.

Rather than the much-discussed lack of interest in or unwillingness to engage with translation, Wright's story demonstrates the impact of a persistent knowledge gap among

British publishers when it comes to translation. While translators and other translation advocates tend to be well-networked among themselves, publishers have very little exposure to information about the logistics of publishing translations. Before Schimel's intervention, Wright perceived even beginning to scout for books to translate as a time-consuming, complicated task that needed to be completed on top of an already-busy publication schedule. Beyond the linguistic and cultural mediation implied in the role of translator for which he is credited, Schimel acted as a scout, agent and consultant, strongly influencing the source languages and even the specific books TEP considered for publication. Likewise, the London Book Fair British Council Market Focus programme, by presenting a focused, curated selection of potential titles for translation as well as financial and logistical support for publishers, substantially guided TEP's decision-making around translations. The existing literature suggests that for English-language publishers, the additional costs involved in the process are perceived as a barrier to publishing translations (Goldsmith xii). This case reveals a more complicated financial reality, where translations can be understood to support a strategic approach to acquiring funding for small publishers like TEP who rely heavily on external grants to support their continued operations. Wright notes that in some cases TEP's translations have been eligible for funding not only to cover translation costs, but also production costs, substantially reducing the press's financial outlay and risk for those titles, even compared to non-translated works (Wall). TEP has also used translations as part of a strategy to successfully apply for non-translation-specific grants from the UK government via Arts Council England. The funding policies of domestic and international institutions which support both translations specifically and the cultural industries more generally, then, have a clear and direct impact on the international exchange of children's books through translation.

My own involvement and that of the University of Reading in the marketing of *Balam and Lluvia's House*, also point towards substantial entanglement between academia and publishing in shaping the international children's literature publishing field in the UK. The University of Reading CBCP webinar series on children's books in translation has combined the network and industry connections of nonprofit Outside In World with the institutional infrastructure available to the CBCP to produce a series of events which have become a hub for a wide variety of individuals interested in children's books in English translation in the UK. This forum enables a dynamic cross-sector exchange, where academic research interests are informed by encounters with current practice in children's translation publishing, while publishers, educators, and translators gain access to contemporary research in the field. TEP publishing manager Wall claims that *Balam and Lluvia's House* has 'been a success for

the press in terms of connections', notably thanks to the launch event webinar hosted by the CBCP and OIW. For TEP, Wall explains, the 'new audiences, […] connections, and external time investment and word-of-mouth recommendations' created through events like the webinar are 'invaluable' (Wall). The work has also been a success by other metrics: in 2024, *Balam* was shortlisted for the CLiPPA Poetry Award, The Week Junior Book Award for Poetry, and nominated for the Yoto Carnegie Medal for Illustration. How these audiences, connections and accolades shape future decisions around the publication and marketing of translations for children, by TEP and others in the field, is a question that merits further investigation. Similar research would do well to consider the impact of the symbolic capital that may be conferred by academic attention to certain aspects of children's literature in translation when drawing conclusions around the factors that influence this field.

Lantana and *The Invisible Story*: Accessibility in translation

For *The Invisible Story*, it was not its country or language of origin but rather its treatment of disability that initially brought it to the attention of British publisher Lantana. Alice Curry, founder and CEO of Lantana, was one of the publishers invited to participate in the focus groups for 'Reading the Way': Inclusive Books from Around the World, a project undertaken by OIW in 2014-2015. The project focused on identifying, assessing and promoting the translation of 'titles that stand out specifically in terms of being "accessible" to all children, including disabled children and/or "inclusive", i.e. including disability or disabled characters within the story' (OIW Reading the Way executive summary). OIW sourced sixty books that met this brief from fifteen countries (primarily picture books aimed at ages 5-11), through consulting individuals in their network and major ICL consecrating institutions (IBBY, the IYL, the European Picture Book Collection, etc.) as well as experts in disability advocacy and special education. These books were then subject to assessment through in-person and virtual focus groups including 'disability experts and organisations, teachers, librarians, publishers, parents and young people' (OIW Reading the Way executive summary). In order to facilitate these focus groups, OIW commissioned full-length English translations of thirty-two titles, and English-language explanatory support text for a further twenty-seven. The project outcomes included a number of case studies of individual books, as well as suggested best practices across various sub-categories of accessibility and inclusivity. *El Cuento Fantasma*[7] was highlighted in a Reading the Way case study as being notably both accessible and inclusive (OIW Case Study 5.3). Featuring striking illustrations, it is written

[7] Referred to in Reading the Way by the more literal English working title *The Ghost Story*, ultimately published by Lantana as *The Invisible Story.*

from the perspective of a book languishing on a library shelf, believing itself to be invisible and blank, until a girl arrives who reveals the stories written in braille on its pages. In addition to the Reading the Way report published by OIW on their website, it was also featured in a 2015 Guardian article highlighting books from the project.

At the time of the project, Curry had recently founded Lantana with the explicit goal of publishing 'inclusive books by authors from under-represented groups and from around the world' (Lantana). Lantana's initial focus was 'racial and ethnic diversity' (Curry), specifically addressing the very low percentage of children's books published in the UK featuring characters of colour (Lantana), primarily through publishing books written in English from Commonwealth countries. Translation was not necessarily a focus, as Curry describes 'struggling to find [racial and ethnic diversity] […] across books [in other languages] that we were seeing in book fairs, particularly across Europe'. In her words, 'it wasn't so much a sense that we weren't open to translating earlier,' but rather that 'we weren't reading books that we felt were going to work with our list'. Curry was intrigued by *El Cuento Fantasma* during Reading the Way, but had some reservations about its viability in the UK market. Specifically, she worried, even as an activist publisher, that at the time 'books reflective of disability […] were very much seen as a niche, […] as marginal and they would only really appeal to a certain section of the market'. Her hesitancy was compounded by a concern that, in order to do the book justice and fully serve that niche, Lantana would want to make it available in an edition featuring braille. The significant additional expense involved in producing a version of the book accessible to visually impaired readers meant that 'the conversation wasn't straightforward, like "yes, this is a great book, it's very easy to publish"' (Curry). In 2022, in the wake of what Curry identifies as shifts in the publishing zeitgeist driven in part by the Centre for Literacy in Primary Education's annual Reflecting Realities reports on ethnic diversity in children's publishing, beginning in 2018, she began to reconsider whether *El Cuento Fantasma* might be a viable project for Lantana. Her feeling was that 'there's much more of a sense [than previously] that inclusive books and books reflecting diverse voices are mainstream or should be mainstream' and that maybe the market was ready for this book that 'was doing something […] ahead of its time' (Curry).

El Cuento Fantasma was published in Daniel Hahn's English translation as *The Invisible Story* in April 2024. Ultimately, Lantana addressed the issue of accessibility by providing copies of the book to the Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB), which provides braille or audio versions of books on demand to visually impaired readers in the UK. Although no major changes were made to the contents of the book in the English

translation, Lantana altered certain paratextual elements to foreground the themes of accessibility and inclusivity. In the Spanish original, for example, there is no explicit indication on the book's exterior that it features a blind or visually impaired character or that it discusses braille. The blurb on the back reads: 'El cuento fantasma vivía oculto en una esquina oscura de la biblioteca, lejos de donde brillan los relatos famosos. Hasta que un día apareció una lectora diferente.' ('The ghost story lived hidden in an obscure corner of the library, far from where the famous stories shone. Until, one day, a different reader appeared.') The blurb on Lantana's English edition, in contrast, reads: 'The invisible story lies hidden in the darkest corner of the library and has never been read. When a blind reader runs her fingertips over its white pages, it is astonished by what she finds…'. Alongside the blurb, the back cover includes a note reading: 'With special thanks to Outside In World and the Reading the Way Project for discovering this book' and 'This book is available in accessible formats from RNIB Bookshare'. Finally, Lantana added an explanatory note at the end of the book giving a brief description and history of the braille writing system. The English version is thus clearly signposted to potential audiences as being about accessibility, blindness and braille, whereas in the Spanish original the little girl who discovers the 'invisible' story is never referred to as blind (her disability, if she has one, is not mentioned or specified), and the fact that the book in the story is in braille is presented as a surprise twist. The Spanish-language edition also features the logos of the Fundación Cuatrogatos and the Bibiana International House of Art for Children, from whom *El Cuento Fantasma* received awards. Neither of these organisations or awards are specifically concerned with accessibility and/or inclusivity.

The Invisible Story has had a largely positive reception in the UK, having been featured notably on BookTrust's 'Books We Love in April 2024' list upon its release, as well as the charity's 'Finding Inclusive Books' and 'Visual Impairment in Books' lists. The WWB 'Tour of Latin American Kid Lit' article claims that 'this story about being differently abled is as original as it is uplifting' (Donnelly 2024). In contrast, the book received a negative response from influential US-based book industry publication *Kirkus Reviews*, which listed it under the broad category of 'Children's Concepts' (a catch-all label for books that introduce concepts from race and disability to holidays, seasons and the alphabet). In a February 2024 review, *Kirkus* described the book as 'a well-meaning and eye-catching work that nevertheless misses the mark', complaining that the book-protagonist is 'segregated from the other titles, which feels incongruent with the morals of inclusion and acceptance' and that 'the girl's "crystal" voice and "bright as a butterfly laugh" […] may also evoke the trope of portraying disabled people as angelic'. Finally, although they praise the 'informative

backmatter', the reviewer also takes issue with the fact that braille is referred to as a language (rather than a writing system) in the main text (Kirkus, 2024). In October 2024 *The Invisible Story* was also the subject of a webinar presented by the University of Reading CBCP and OIW, in which the author, illustrator and English translator spoke in conversation with Alex Strick, OIW co-founder and disability advocate, and a young braille reader from New College Worcester, an independent secondary school for blind and partially-sighted students. Author Jaime Gamboa described the alienating experience of moving from his home in the rural Guanacaste province of Costa Rica to the capitol of San Jose for high school. For Gamboa, the rejection and discrimination he experienced in his teens led him to create *The Invisible Story,* which seeks to uplift and appreciate marginalised and othered voices. Illustrator Wen Hsu Chen discussed the challenge of creating a visual representation of the 'invisible', revealing how she drew inspiration from her architectural training as well as her Taiwanese heritage to create the book's structural, vibrant paper-cut illustrations. The New College Worcester student highlighted the importance of print braille books as a vector for visually impaired people's entertainment and intellectual freedom, arguing that technologies like audiobooks and screen readers should be considered complementary rather than as replacements for braille. She expressed that the awareness-raising component of *The Invisible Story* was important and worthwhile, particularly for sighted children who may have little to no understanding of braille and its importance (Centre for Book Cultures and Publishing 2024).

Claire Storey: YA and Pitching Success

Unlike *The Invisible Story,* which has largely been treated in Britain as primarily about disability and accessibility and only incidentally as from Latin America, *The Darkness of Colours* (HopeRoad 2024) and *Never Tell Anyone Your Name* (HopeRoad 2023) were part of a project by translator Claire Storey specifically aimed at bringing Spanish-language YA from Latin America to the UK. A native English speaker born and raised in the UK, Claire Storey spent a gap year learning Spanish in Mexico after her A-levels and then studied German, Spanish and French at university. It was while working on her MA in Translation in 2018 that Storey encountered children's books in translation. She received positive feedback on her translation of a rhyming picture book, an assignment she had enjoyed, and decided to ask the lecturer (translator Ben Dawlatly) who had assigned it for advice on how to 'get more into this side of things' (Storey). Dawlatly responded by offering Storey the chance to co-translate a picture book (*Today You Can't Play* by Pilar Serrano and Canizales, NubeOcho 2019), introducing her to the publisher and guiding her through the process. Shortly thereafter

Storey attended the British Centre for Literary Translation (BCLT) summer school, where she encountered World Kid Lit. In a characteristically proactive move, Storey decided to read 30 translated children's books in 30 days with her children for 'WKL month' in September, posting about the project on her own blog. This led to her being invited to join WKL as a volunteer co-editor. In her words: '[WKL founder] Ruth [Ahmedzai Kemp] invited me to write a couple of reviews, which then turned into them saying would you like to join us as a co-editor […] I think what started off was me going "I'd like to know more about this," and […] "I'd like this to then springboard into my translation career"' (Storey).

Storey's work as a co-editor for WKL fast-tracked her into the centre of the British international children's literature advocacy field. She describes becoming more aware of all the '[children's] books out there that we just don't hear about because [British schools] don't teach those languages,' and realising that despite working from 'two European languages' herself, she recognised a compelling need to advocate for 'those stories coming in from Asia [and] Africa' (Storey). Thanks to WKL's central position, Storey was also able to develop personal connections, a level of name-recognition, and trust with the best-connected and most influential individuals in the field, such as WKL founder Ruth Ahmedzai Kemp and translators Lawrence Schimel and Daniel Hahn. By 2020, Storey had managed to become 'quite well established within the translation community' despite having translated very few books for children herself—though not for lack of trying (Storey). She was aware, by that point, that there was no direct or reliable path for converting social and professional capital in the field of translation and international children's literature advocacy into book translation contracts with publishers. This is the demand bottleneck which spells the end of the road for many aspiring literary translators in the UK today: after investing time and money in an MA in Translation, summer schools and hundreds of hours over several years in volunteering for WKL, she faced the possibility of years pitching speculative sample translations produced at her own expense, with no guarantee that this would lead to any translation work at all, let alone an amount that would constitute a viable source of even part-time income. Storey applied for an Arts Council England Developing Your Creative Practice (ACE DYCP) grant, then, primarily with the aim of (literally) buying herself a period of time in which to put the full force of her recently acquired knowledge of the industry into getting work as a children's literary translator.

The grant, confirmed in April 2021 and intended to cover part-time work from June 2021 to July 2022, was worth £8,891 and covered the costs of scouting and producing sample translations of Spanish-language YA books from Latin America, then pitching these projects

to publishers at the London Book Fair. Storey selected Latin America as the focus of her scouting because it offered the possibility of using her existing skill set (the Spanish language and some familiarity with the region due to her time in Mexico) to work on a project aligned with her values and those of the *habitus* (in this case, manifested as bringing more non-European literature to children and young people in the UK). Further narrowing her focus to YA[8] books was a risk, although one that ultimately paid off. These longer works often face more barriers to translation, from a publisher's perspective, than illustration-heavy, text-light books for younger children, due to the higher translation cost (Curry). From an advocacy perspective, then, Storey selected a potentially high impact focus for the grant. If, as ultimately happened, she were to be successful in pitching Latin American YA to UK publishers, the result would be not only 'high-quality' individual books but the contemporary literature of an entire region gaining access to the UK YA market for the first time. From a personal career perspective, the strategy was similarly high-risk, high-reward: Storey bet on creating a new niche in the UK market for which she could become an established expert and go-to translator, rather than competing with, for example, well-established translators like Lawrence Schimel and Daniel Hahn, discussed in the cases above, who already specialised in Spanish-language picture books.

Although in her initial grant application she had planned to select and pitch two books, Storey ultimately presented four titles to publishers at the London Book Fair and the Bologna Children's Book Fair. She observed that mentioning the ACE funding seemed to open doors, giving the project an air of legitimacy and catching publishers' attention. In addition to longer 'pitch packets' including sample translations, sales figures in the original language and a detailed synopsis for each ACE-funded title, ready to be sent to any publisher who expressed interest, Storey created a double-sided flyer listing the ACE-sponsored Latin American YA titles on one side and three European YA novels for potential translation on the other. This document reflects her evolving understanding of the pitching process as being 'less about pitching the book, […] more about pitching yourself and pitching your skills' (Storey). Those skills refer not only to linguistic competence and the craft of translation, but equally to her understanding of the source and target markets. Beyond pitching the specific books and herself as a translator, this document, and Storey's approach more generally, involves pitching publishers on the plausibility and appeal of

[8] Target-age categories, including 'Young Adult', often differ between markets. In Latin America, for example, 'YA' books tend to be much shorter than English-reading audiences are accustomed to (around 20,000 words vs. 40,000+). Issues around 'age-appropriate' content and language can also arise. Storey specialises, then, in books that would be classed as middle-reader, teen or YA in the UK (Storey 2023)

translating YA literature. The flyer (from its systematic, clear presentation of the suggested titles, to the way it evokes the authority of institutions in the UK and beyond, to its mention of funding opportunities) is clearly designed with a strong, nuanced understanding of the barriers facing non-English-language YA books when it comes to acquisition by UK publishers. It features the ACE logo prominently, as well as logos of three professional associations of which Storey is a member (the ITI, CIOL and Society of Authors), and a QR code linking to a page on her website describing the ACE-funded project in more detail. In the limited space available to describe each book, the flyer focuses on awards and honours. These honours, for publishers who are to any degree familiar with the international children's literature field, flag that Storey's recommendations have been approved by major institutions such as IBBY (Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award, Hans Christian Andersen Award, the Banco del Libro, the Argentinian Children's and Youth Literature Association), the IYL (White Ravens), and the US-based Fundación Cuatrogatos. She also notes that the two German books featured in her 'bonus' selection of non-ACE-project pitches are from the New Books in German lists and thus eligible for guaranteed translation at the time of pitching.

Of the seven books on Storey's original flyer, four have since been acquired for translation by UK publishers, including three from the ACE-funded Latin America list. Publisher relationships developed thanks to the project have also led to Storey translating one further Latin American middle-reader book not included in her original shortlist of pitches, and one more German-language title. *Nunca Digas Tu Nombre* (Federico Ivanier, Uruguay), *La Oscuridad de los Colores* (Martin Blasco, Argentina) and *Salvajes* (Antonio Ramos Revillas, Mexico) were all acquired by publisher and editor Rosemarie Hudson of HopeRoad after meeting with Storey at LBF 2022. HopeRoad is a small, UK-based press that describes itself as focused on 'the best writing from and about Africa, Asia and the Caribbean' (both in translation and not) with a particular interest in 'themes of identity, cultural stereotyping, disability and injustices' (HopeRoad, no date).

In a webinar discussing her collaboration with Storey, Hudson notes that HopeRoad, founded in 2010, only started publishing YA around 2019, because she saw 'a need for all this Young Adult writing to be translated' (Hudson). There is a stark contrast between the support available for publishers interested in Storey's German titles (guaranteed translation funding by the Goethe Institute for five years from the time of selection) and the complex funding landscape facing Hudson in her efforts to publish these Latin American titles. *Nunca Digas Tu Nombre,* published in English as *Never Tell Anyone Your Name* in October 2023, secured funding relatively quickly from the Uruguayan government for translation and even

for the author to speak at events in the UK. *La Oscuridad de los Colores,* on the other hand, did not receive any external support, with its application to the Argentinian cultural ministry stymied by political and economic turmoil in the country, although HopeRoad did ultimately go ahead with the project (Storey's translation was published as *The Darkness of Colours* in July 2024). For Antonio Ramos Revillas' *Salvajes,* Storey reported that she signed the translation contract 'knowing that if we don't get funding […] the project won't go ahead' (Storey). Although Mexico does offer support for translation, due to a technicality around government funding received by the original publisher, *Salvajes* was ultimately not eligible. In order to apply for the more-competitive PEN Translates award, Hudson had to take the risk of acquiring translation rights and signing a contract with Storey, as PEN requires publishers to have a contract before applying for translation funding. Revillas' novel was published by HopeRoad in October 2024 as *The Wild Ones,* having been granted PEN funding in July 2024 (Storey 2024).

In terms of the impact Storey's ACE-funded scouting and pitching campaign has had on the status of Latin American YA in the UK, perhaps the most surprising milestone is the acquisition and translation into English of Federico Ivanier's fantasy-adventure *Martina Valiente* (originally published in Uruguay in 2004), by Puffin for inclusion in their Puffin Books list (formerly Puffin Modern Classics). Storey had become aware of *Martina* while researching for her ACE project but chose not to include it in her main pitch packet as she felt it was aimed at a slightly younger middle-reader audience rather than being YA, as well as being less recent than her other selections. It was only after meeting with publisher reps at LBF who expressed an interest in middle-reader fiction that she considered it might appeal to certain publishers. Puffin in particular explained that they were actively looking to add middle-reader fiction published before 2000 outside Europe and the US to their Puffin Books list. Given that her scouting had thus far focused on more contemporary texts for older readers, Storey initially offered to put together a blog post on WKL to help the Puffin editors reach a broader network of translators who might have more suitable suggestions. Pitching *Martina* was a long shot—published in 2004 and only ever available in Uruguay, it didn't make the cutoff of being pre-2000, and was not widely known outside its relatively small country of origin. Storey began a long back-and-forth process during which the editors at Puffin commissioned an additional sample and requested detailed information about *Martina*'s status as a 'modern classic' in Uruguay. Storey found herself 'translating' not only sections of the text, but also details about the book's success, including making comparisons between the population of Uruguay and that of the UK to give context for sales figures, and explaining that the book's limited distribution in the original Spanish was more a

reflection of the logistics of the Spanish-language fiction market than of *Martina*'s quality or potential broad appeal. She also emphasised author Federico Ivanier's ability and willingness to support marketing efforts for a potential translation, as evidenced by his engagement with HopeRoad's marketing of *Never Tell Anyone Your Name.* Ultimately Puffin did acquire *Martina,* including rights for all languages and territories other than Uruguay. Storey's English translation was published as *Sword of Fire* in May 2025 (Storey).

Unlike TEP, Lantana and HopeRoad, all of which are small, independent and solidly located at the literary pole of the children's publishing field and within the sphere of international children's literature advocacy, Puffin is a quintessential example of a mainstream commercial children's publisher in the UK. This children's imprint of Penguin Books has played a key role in shaping the British children's publishing field, particularly under the leadership of legendary editor Kaye Webb during the post-WWII 'second golden age' of children's literature (Wright 2012: 19). Now an imprint of 'Big Five' publisher Penguin Random House, owned by German media conglomerate Bertelsmann, Puffin continues to be known for its 'success in popularising and canonizing literature for children, […] especially fantasy' (O'Sullivan 2017: 213). Puffin's decision to acquire, translate and publish *Martina* represents an unprecedented level of access to the mainstream British market (and potentially other markets around the world, through the re-sale of rights for other territories) for a YA book from Latin America.

Chapter 4.2: Case study conclusions

Weak connections, strong appeal: the paradox of the diversity imperative

What conclusions can be drawn from these stories of a handful of Spanish-language Latin American books for young people that have piqued the interest of British publishers and critics in recent years? Firstly, institutional links between British and Latin American children's publishing have long been and remain relatively weak. Latin American publishers generally do not seem to have a substantial presence at the Bologna Book Fair, a crucial point of entry to British children's publishing, even from the perspective of publishers like Alice Curry who are actively seeking out books from beyond Europe (Curry). British agents and scouts specialising in the region are similarly few and far between (Hurst), and the publishers interviewed for this project did not express an awareness of or interest in seeking out potential titles for translation themselves by attending events in the region such as the Guadalajara International Book Fair. Paradoxically, it is the persistent weakness of publishing connections between Britain and Latin America, in combination with these unrelenting commercial and policy pressures for British publishers to increase the diversity of

their children's lists, that has created a moment of opportunity for books like those described in this paper.

In his critique of multicultural reading programmes in contemporary Britain, John R. Coleman calls on Anamik Saha's analysis of the racial rationalisation of the British publishing field since the 1980s, arguing that decades of commercial pressure, combined with targeted changes to the national curriculum in the 1990s and diversity-focused arts funding policies in the 2000s and 2010s has created a British children's publishing field which is superficially more interested in ethnic diversity than in previous decades, but not one that is fundamentally more committed to addressing the underlying causes of 'social disparity rising from broader economic and political transformations' (Coleman 9). This shift has been primarily focused on increasing the representation of Black and Asian characters and authors. This is reflected in Lantana Press's original focus on books from the Commonwealth (rather than translations) and publisher Kelly Hurst of Puffin's comments that today, 'modern classics' from across the English-speaking world tend to be available in the UK and familiar to some portion of the UK market (Hurst). For British publishers of children's books, Latin America represents an almost entirely untapped source of titles which potentially stand out, not only from the overwhelmingly white Anglophone majority, but also from a field in which 'diverse' is often used as a synonym for 'featuring Black or Asian British characters'. As Hurst expressed when interviewed about her collaboration with Claire Storey, thanks to the extremely low levels of representation for Latin American children's books in the UK, she can be confident that with their translation of *Martina Valiente,* Puffin is bringing something 'new' to their readers. For Lantana, the combination of non-European origin, a multi-ethnic author-illustrator team and a focus on disability and accessibility were key factors in the ultimate decision to acquire *The Invisible Story* for English translation in 2024. Likewise, The Emma Press has leveraged the 'diversifying' credentials of the translations on their list to support successful funding applications to Arts Council England, as well as in the marketing of the translated titles themselves.

In all of these cases, the intervention of ICL advocates with a special interest in encouraging translation, such as Lawrence Schimel, Claire Storey and the Outside In World team, is critical to bridging the gap between the Latin American and British children's book fields. This is one essential function of the ICL advocacy *habitus.* It helps maintain an unspoken shared understanding between translators, advocacy organisations and publishers about both the positive potential of translation and what kinds of books are 'worth' translating, both in terms of the perceived 'quality' and interest of their content and in terms

of characteristics such as language and/or country of origin or the author/illustrator's ethnic, cultural or religious background. This shared understanding does not necessarily rely on publishers being very familiar with or specifically interested in translation, as the cases discussed here demonstrate. For small, activist publishers such as Lantana, TEP and HopeRoad, the shared core beliefs of the *habitus* opened the door to successful campaigns by Schimel, Storey and OIW which overcame the various much-discussed structural forces which disincentivise literary translation into English. The case of Storey's successful pitch of Ivanier's 'Uruguayan modern classic' *Martina Valiente* to Puffin stands out as a useful counterexample. Here, we have a case where Puffin as an institution, as well as many (although not all) of the individuals working within it, were operating from the Anglo-centric perspective which is typically assumed to dominate within the large-scale pole of literary production in English-language markets. Where editors at Lantana, TEP and HopeRoad all had somewhat limited understandings of the practicalities involved in integrating translations into their list, even prior to the interventions described in this chapter they reported sharing a general sense that, ideally, they would like to publish more in translation, and had some existing awareness of ICL advocacy organisations such as OIW, WKL, or IBBY. Their behaviour can be understood to be, to a significant degree, conditioned by their own connections to the ICL advocacy *habitus.*

In contrast, as reported independently by both Hurst and Storey, Puffin's search for titles it could market as modern children's classics was entirely a response to the UK market imperatives to diversify children's publishing output described by Coleman, without an institutional commitment to the broader underlying project of ICL advocacy (2018). We can understand Puffin (and its parent publishers Penguin Random House), as an institution, as being subject to ICL advocacy, rather than a driver of it. This is not to say that individuals within the company are unenthusiastic about diversity-related initiatives, nor to ignore PRH's various charitable initiatives and donations, many of which explicitly aim to support ethnic, regional and gender diversity in terms of both their authors and their employees. As Hurst described it, however, these initiatives are undertaken in response to perceived changing pressures in the British publishing field rather than as part of the publisher's core mission. Case in point, seeking out translations for the Puffin modern classics list was a task assigned to an 'extra' team member who joined Puffin in 2021 thanks to PRH's Next Editors programme, and it was through that team member's efforts that Claire Storey was asked to publicise the call via World Kid Lit, when eventually led to Puffin's purchase of rights to *Martina Valiente.* 'Next Editors' was an 18-month long 'positive action traineeship' which aimed to introduce 'BAME' professionals from other industries to publishing (Penguin

Random House 2021). After the programme ended, Hurst reports that translation scouting within her team slowed significantly, as it did not fall within the priority scope of work for the core staff at Puffin. What bandwidth they do have is now focused mostly on finding African and Asian 'modern classics' to add to their list (Hurst 2024), indicating that the acquisition of *Martina Valiente* has not necessarily led Puffin, at least, to a more general or sustained interest in Latin American literature for young readers.

The money question

These case studies also challenge the received wisdom that translations are more expensive to publish than English-language originals, and that children's translation advocacy is essentially an altruistic undertaking. In the case of The Emma Press, Wright notes that in some cases translations have been eligible for funding not only to cover translation costs, but also production costs, substantially reducing TEP's financial outlay and risk for those titles, even compared to non-translated works (Wall 2024). As mentioned above, TEP has also used translations as part of a strategy to successfully apply for non-translation-specific grants from Arts Council England to support their general operations. Curry of Lantana says that she considers publishing translated picture books to be, if anything, often less expensive than commissioning English originals with original illustrations, given the low translation costs associated with texts of just a few hundred words and the availability of funding (Curry, 2024). Even Hurst of Puffin expressed that *Martina Valiente* was acquired on the basis that it was expected to be profitable, both because it was thought to have a commercial appeal in the English translation, and because Puffin has acquired world rights with the exception of the original Uruguayan Spanish. The publisher calculates that the sale of translation rights to other territories, including possibly the use of Storey's English text as the source for other translations, will most likely offset the additional cost associated with the translation (Hurst, 2024).

Due, perhaps, to widespread precarity among literary translators, small publishing houses and non-profit ICL advocacy work in the UK, and the very small sums of money and number of publications involved when compared to other sectors of children's publishing, the influence of economic imperatives on British literary translation for children is often reduced to a simple limiting factor, when the reality is more complicated. Even setting aside the question of highly commercial, translation-led categories such as manga (Tivnan 2022), translators, publishers and even advocates operating in the context of non-profit organisations have their decision-making shaped by various financial considerations. Consider, for example, TEP's years-long project of actively selecting only books for

translation that would be eligible for targeted funding from British or international institutions, at the encouragement and to the eventual benefit of experienced translator and advocate Schimel. Claire Storey's choice to focus on pitching books whose sample was funded by her Arts Council England Developing Your Creative Practice grant and titles with guaranteed funding from New Books in German is another example of the ways in which funding availability shapes which books even get to the point of crossing the desks of British commissioning editors. More recently, Storey has focused on scouting and pitching potential translations from Catalan, a language which is far less competitive in terms of the number of translators working into English (when compared to Spanish or German, her other working languages), and which benefits from extensive support for translation and international promotion from the Institut Ramon Llull (Institut Ramon Llull 2025). Storey reports having actively considered these factors when considering whether to put in the effort to acquire the language, a reflection of the kind of practical and strategic approach to career-building which translators working at the 'literary' pole of translation into English often exhibit but with which they are rarely credited. Even for groups like Outside In World, which are not directly involved in the expenses or potential financial gain associated with the publishing process, the funding landscape is a fundamental consideration. According to Hallford, for example, the difficulty of accessing ongoing, core operational funding for a very small non-profit with no major institutional affiliations has influenced the structure of OIW's work from the beginning. The long-term work of collecting and reviewing children's books in English translation was limited in scope to what Hallford and occasional interns could manage on an unpaid basis, while the organisation's other work (such as Reading the Way, which eventually led Lantana to acquire and translate *El cuento fantasma*) was structured as a series of discrete, short-term projects based on budgets and priorities which appealed to funders. Even the interest of actors including Wall, Curry, Storey and Schimel for participating in the CBCP x OIW webinar series is based in part on their perception that this will offer some meaningful degree of free publicity to targeted and relevant audiences.

The Habitus

Ultimately, these cases offer examples of how studying the publication and distribution of children's literature in translation in the UK with the ICL advocacy *habitus* in mind can support an integrated understanding of the many and various factors that influence this process. This is the case even for translations where actors outside the *habitus* are involved, such as some of the editors at Puffin with whom Storey worked on her translation of *Martina Valiente.* They shift the understanding of the gatekeeping and selection process away from a focus on editorial taste and towards a holistic view which acknowledges, for example, the

powerful influence of local and transnational consecrating institutions, the structuring effect of major book fairs, the influence of translator priorities, and, of course, the availability of and requirements associated with funding to cover not only translation costs, but also costs associated with production and marketing. They illuminate how the legacy of ICL advocates past continues to shape ICL advocacy today, even when contemporary advocates may not be consciously aware of that history. Finally, they recognise both the potential and the limitations of purposeful and strategic interventions by ICL advocates, even when the impact of those interventions is very narrow in scope.

Part 5 – Conclusions, next steps, further research

This project began with a curiosity about the Outside In World collection of children's books in English translation, and a desire to better understand the state of children's books in English translation in the UK today more generally. This desire was driven in equal parts by my own personal intellectual curiosity about the subject and by demand from advocates for research which would somehow support and enable the work of organisations like Outside In World, World Kid Lit, and others who believe in the importance and value of expanded access to and awareness of children's literature in English translation. Despite the existence of a small but active field of researchers working on children's literature translation studies around the world, there is a feeling among international children's literature advocates in the UK that they work in a very under-researched area. This is particularly true when it comes to information about the specific case of British children's publishing. Whether for the purposes of funding applications, public communications, or internal discussions around strategy and project design, advocates often find themselves cobbling together an understanding of and narrative about the landscape in which they work from some combination of studies of US American or broadly 'Anglophone' children's publishing, literary translation for adults, and 'multicultural' children's literature in the UK which may or may not be 'international' or 'translated'. The advocates at Outside In World who were involved in the inception of this research, as well as many others who learned about the project through the research interview process, hoped that the results might at least begin to remedy this state of affairs. One of the aims of this conclusion, then, will be to offer suggestions as to how the results of this study might productively support and inform the future of the advocacy work which it describes. The conclusion begins with an overview of the results of this research. It then continues with a discussion of the implications of these results for the advocates in question. Finally, I offer suggestions of potential avenues for related future research.

Results

Children's books in English translation: a marginal but persistent counter-current and a permanent feature of British children's publishing

This research confirms the widely-repeated claim that, compared to English-original children's books, children's books in translation in the UK are extremely marginal. They

consistently represent a very small minority of the children's books published in English in the UK, and are indeed often left out of discourse which addresses other axes of marginalisation in children's publishing, such as race, class or disability. This project also concludes, however, that children's literature from beyond the Anglosphere has consistently played *some* role in the British children's book field since books specifically for children began to be produced in this country. It also contends that translations for children are not at risk of disappearing entirely from the UK children's publishing landscape, regardless of the often embattled and precarious experiences of translation advocates. This is evident in the historical overview laid out in Part Two, as well as the analysis of the *habitus* in Part Three. As these sections describe, children's books from beyond the borders of the UK, and specifically children's books in English translation, have been a continuous feature of the British children's book landscape since at least the 18th century. Equally, advocacy related to promoting these books became a consistent feature of the children's book field in the UK in the 20th century, with new organisations and individuals consistently stepping in to take up the cause as projects end and previous generations step back. Although the specifics of their aims and methods vary, these advocates are broadly united by their belief that 'children's literature in English translation' can be a powerful tool of resistance to the perceived insularity and Anglocentrism of mainstream British children's publishing.

Introducing the 'International Children's Literature Advocacy *habitus*'

This thesis particularly focuses on developing an understanding of this tradition of advocacy, both in terms of its origins and development and in terms of how it has impacted and continues to impact translation for children in Britain, and thus the British children's publishing field at large. Broadly, its conclusions fall into two categories. Firstly, this thesis introduces the concept of the 'international children's literature advocacy *habitus*' and demonstrates how it can explain certain patterns and features of the British children's literature field. This concept contextualises the work of groups such as OIW and WKL as belonging to a transnational philosophical and discursive tradition which reaches back to the post-WWII period and has significantly impacted the development of the children's book field around the world. The thesis describes the origins, development and defining features of the *habitus*, and suggests how this heuristic can explain patterns in the discourse and activity which surrounds children's literature in English translation in the UK today. Secondly, using a combination of the *habitus* heuristic and the collection of case studies discussed in Part Four, this research offers a novel explanation of the actors, factors and decision-making processes that shape which children's books are translated into English by UK publishers.

While existing discourse tends to treat these translations as a collection of singular anomalies which have overcome well-recognised barriers to translation against all odds, this research concludes that they are the product of systemic and structural factors which are well understood and actively navigated by international children's literature advocates.

Defining and applying the ICL advocacy *habitus*

The heuristic of the international children's literature advocacy *habitus* arose out of my interest in establishing a framework which offered the possibility of a coherent narrative about the connected group of individuals and organisations whose work is at the heart of this project. Based on my own experience being part of and working with this group for many years, as well as the conclusions of the early phases of this research, I began this project with a strong understanding of the people who I have now begun to refer to as 'ICL advocates' as being connected in some way which transcends the boundaries of their various professions. In attempting to define and understand this group, however, I ran into a number of stumbling points. Their work bridges and blends pedagogical and artistic or literary considerations related to children's books, along with a desire to promote multilingualism and address broader social concerns such as the representation of marginalised identities in children's media, educational inequality and contested visions of British national identity. It blurs the lines between commercial, artistic, altruistic and political work. The individuals and organisations discussed here publish and translate, engage in criticism, prizing, list-making and recommending, put on conferences, participate in panels, publish blogs full of translator and publisher interviews and profiles, maintain physical collections and virtual archives and run workshops and activities aimed at educators, librarians, publishers, translators, and sometimes even young readers directly. Some focus specifically on promoting 'children's literature in English translation', while others are interested more generally in 'international' or 'world' children's literature, with an emphasis on translation, and still others focus more on possibilities of literary translation as an educational tool, or on promoting language study in UK schools and universities and a multilingual vision of 'Britishness'. Their networks are fundamentally transnational, and they are particularly well-connected to the rest of the Anglosphere, while simultaneously being deeply concerned with national identity and impacted by the UK national context.

Perhaps most challengingly, the conceptual object which emerged from my early analysis refused to conform to the categories and boundaries which its advocates themselves identified. I was studying translation in British children's publishing, but several of the British publishers of translations for children contacted and in some cases interviewed

for this project were clearly not part of this larger network. They were unfamiliar with its most prominent individuals and organisations, and used very different language to describe their interest in and motivations for publishing translations. Furthermore, central actors WKL and OIW do not differentiate between translations published in Britain and those published in the US, New Zealand, or elsewhere in the Anglosphere. I was studying the promotion of translation for children in English, and yet much of IBBY UK's work has historically been outward-facing, focusing on what British 'children's book people' could do for children in the rest of the world. I was studying the role translation plays in contemporary diversity discourse in British children's publishing, but translation is almost entirely absent from the majority of that discourse. The international children's literature *habitus* is a heuristic which aims to resolve these apparent contradictions by identifying and describing the connective tissue which binds this world together, while differentiating it from adjacent activity which is superficially similar but arises from mostly separate professional networks and historical circumstances.

The characteristics of international children's literature advocacy *Habitus*

My conclusions regarding the history, characteristics and role within the broader children's book field of the international children's literature *habitus* in the UK are laid out in detail in Part Three of this thesis. This begins with the core beliefs which unite those whose professional activity is shaped by this *habitus* ('advocates'). These beliefs include a shared understanding of what constitutes a 'good' children's book, which has evolved over time and across geography but always includes some combination of literary and artistic sophistication, positive moral character and an absence of overtly ideological content. Within this framework, debating, negotiating and enforcing the specifics of what counts as a 'good' children's book, and which 'bad' children's books must be avoided, is a central preoccupation of advocates and shapes many of the activities which characterise the *habitus.* Expressions of concern about 'bad' books were expressed openly by earlier generations of advocates, while today these are mostly tacit or implied. The second core belief around which the *habitus* is built is that the exchange of children's books between languages, countries and cultures can and should 'build bridges' of understanding and contribute to a more peaceful and equal future world. Finally, this 'bridge building' quality is understood by advocates to extend to the resolution of specific, intractable-seeming political or sectarian conflicts. As a result of this emphasis on bridge building and conflict resolution, advocates value and purposefully engage in activities which produce encounters between

communities in conflict, while excluding actors who are unwilling or unable to engage 'civilly' across the divide.

Throughout Part Three, I regularly refer to the transnational history of the *habitus.* The activities of UK advocates today, I argue, are heavily shaped by the influence of the work and writings of Jella Lepman and the rest of the international cohort of children's book professionals who were involved in the establishment of IBBY and the IYL in the 1950s and 60s. This is true regardless of the degree to which today's advocates are consciously aware of their work, which has not been the subject of a comprehensive scholarly or popular history beyond a handful of relatively brief publications and digital resources produced by the organisations in question themselves. This is one of the central functions of the *habitus* heuristic in general: it offers a way of contextualising habits and beliefs which may be felt, by individuals, to be a matter of 'common sense' or personal disposition, but which are in fact shared among a community and can also be understood as specific, contingent interpretations of and reactions to a particular collection of historical events and traditions of thought. This research has led me to conclude that, although ICL advocacy can be meaningfully studied within a specific national context, as I have done here, it is not possible to fully understand the activities of ICL advocates in a given country or language without also having a strong understanding of the transnational context in which their work exists.

The ICL *habitus* in the UK today

The results of this research indicate that one of the primary functions of the international children's literature organisations which are at the centre of this project, such as OIW, WKL, and IBBY UK, is to maintain and extend a shared understanding of 'high quality' 'international', 'world', or 'translated' children's literature as a tool for social change, and specifically for creating a more peaceful and understanding society through shaping the hearts and minds of young readers. Advocates provide physical and virtual gathering spaces, establish lists and collections which function as an informal canon, and produce resources aimed at educators and children's book professionals which use a shared language emphasising diversity, understanding, cultural exchange and creativity. Through their activities they act as focal points for professionals from various professional *fields* (particularly librarians, teachers, academics, translators and publishers) who, through their involvement in these organisations, maintain their connection with the international children's literature *habitus.* This work also has a 'glocal' quality (O'Sullivan 2011: 189), enabling a continuous dialectical conversation between the transnational ICL advocacy *habitus* and the specific constraints and demands of the UK and broader Anglophone contexts.

I also conclude that the definition and boundaries of British national identity is a major preoccupation of ICL advocates in the UK today, and that many of their activities explicitly or implicitly wrestle with this topic. Historically and around the world, the ICL advocacy *habitus* is characterised by a tension between a universalist humanism which rejects patriotism and nationalism of any kind, and a desire to encourage among children a sense of pride in and positive identification with their own cultural roots. It is also deeply predicated on the organising principle of the nation state as a primary unit of identity, as demonstrated by IBBY's structure, to name just one example. Among contemporary UK advocates, this operates on two major levels. There is the belief that the low rate of translation into English represents a dangerous insularity and chauvinism, which advocates see as being related to the cultural and political forces which led to what they view as the divisive and negative impulses behind the Brexit referendum and an increasingly anti-immigration political environment. In this sense, promoting increased access to translated and imported children's books is a way of encouraging children in the UK to see themselves first and foremost as citizens of Europe or the world, rather than first and foremost as 'British'. On the other hand, ICL advocates are also motivated by a desire to promote an expansive sense of 'Britishness' which is not synonymous with white Englishness. To this end, their work often aligns with the work of those who are focused on supporting and uplifting marginalised and minoritised communities in Britain, including notably speakers of languages other than English. In combination with the motivations described in the previous paragraph, this use of children's books as a way of mediating the relationship between British young people and the rest of the world is a major recurring theme in all of the activities which characterise ICL advocacy in the UK today.

The final chapter of Part Three describes in some detail the 'creative translation in schools' workshops which have become a mainstay of international children's literature advocacy in the UK since the 2010s. This style of intervention, I argue, has developed and gained relative popularity as a result of the encounter between the transnational characteristics of the *habitus* and the specific educational, linguistic, and political context of contemporary Britain. Specifically, it aims to align 'quality', 'diverse' international children's literature and an appreciation for literary translation with improved academic outcomes and positive attitudes towards the variety of languages and cultures present in many British classrooms, which are perceived by advocates as causes that are likely to attract funding and institutional collaborators. This chapter also describes how this style of intervention facilitates collaborations between academic researchers, non-profit advocacy organisations, individual translators and publishers of translations. These collaborations are often

experienced as mutually beneficial, and are a way of combatting the widespread precarity experienced by advocates who are employed in a variety of different professional contexts by combining the financial, infrastructural and expertise-based resources available to advocates based within or connected to different types of institutions (including notably universities, large non-profits, small non-profits, publishing houses, and schools).

Structural factors and distributed gatekeeping: replacing serendipity with a systemic approach to understanding which books get translated and why

One of the major contentions of this thesis is that the role of individual taste and serendipitous encounters in shaping which children's books are published in English translation in the UK has historically been overstated. While structural barriers to literary translation for children into English have been widely discussed, the structural factors which shape the translations which do occur have not been systematically described. This is despite the fact that the latter are well understood and navigated by advocates across various associated professional *fields,* and particularly by literary translators who specialise in children's books. Through interviews with publishers and translators in which we discussed in detail the process through which books came to be selected for translation and publication, patterns in the factors which impacted this process emerged. To address these chronologically, in terms of the publication process, the first point where external factors come into play is that of publisher awareness. For a translation to be published, a publisher or commissioning editor must first of all become aware that the original title exists and that (at least) UK English rights are available. The next point is evaluation of suitability. Once a publisher is made aware of the existence of a potential book for translation, an evaluation process takes place through which it is determined whether the project is, setting aside issues of feasibility, of interest. Factors such as the quality and contents of translator pitch packets, readers reports, sample translations, any illustrations, and the publisher's ability to read the text in the original language all factor in at this point, as do factors which overlap with the evaluation of non-translated manuscripts such as awards and other marks of consecration acquired by the original text, author availability and marketability, comparisons with the rest of the publisher's list and competitors' lists, etc. Next, once a book has been deemed theoretically suitable for translation, the feasibility of the project must be assessed. This involves, notably, balancing additional expenses associated with acquiring rights and paying for the translation with the availability of specific funding to support both production and promotion. The following paragraphs discuss the actors and factors which come into

play at each of these inflection points (awareness, evaluation of interest, feasibility) in more detail. They also suggest that the order of operations presented above does not always apply, with the bulk of the suitability and feasibility evaluation processes sometimes occurring before UK publishers even become aware of potential titles for translation.

For UK publishers, the first point of access to foreign markets is book fairs, with the Bologna Children's Book Fair, the Frankfurt Book Fair, and the London Book Fair being particularly important. One consequence of this is that books from countries whose publishing sectors are regularly well-represented at these events are more likely to come to the attention of British publishers. For example, as noted in the case studies described in Part Four, due to distance, the cost of attendance and the existence of alternative events more specifically targeted at the Spanish language publishing market, Latin American publishers are often poorly represented at these events. Another consequence is the fact that interventions which take advantage of the centrality of these book fairs to promote the translation of books from particular countries or regions can be very effective. The influence of the British Council's Market focus programming at the London Book Fair, for example, are also detailed in Part Four. For publishers and editors who have some existing interest in actively seeking out potential titles for translation, the consecrating activity of advocacy groups can also play a major role in directly shaping which books they consider. Titles which are selected for inclusion in the IYL's White Ravens list or the IBBY Honour Lists are broadly at an advantage in terms of coming to the attention British publishers. On a more local scale, projects like OIW's 'Reading the Way' which scout, evaluate, and recommend titles for potential translation based on a specific perceived gap in English-language original books for children (in this case, accessible and disability-inclusive books) can also have an impact, as is evident in the case of *The Invisible Story.*

Although it is not unusual for publishers to become aware of texts through translator pitches, structural factors also impact which translators are able to pitch successfully, and which books they choose to present to publishers. For example, book fairs also offer an opportunity for translators to pitch texts directly to publishers who may be more receptive to pitches received in this context, as exemplified by Claire Storey's remarkable success connecting with potential publishers of Latin American YA and middle reader fiction in English translation at the London and Bologna Book Fairs. The presence of translators with an interest in a particular region or language who also have the professional networks and skills to navigate pitching at book fairs is thus potentially a major factor in which books come to the attention of British publishers. Although existing studies tend to assume that

responsibility for evaluating a book's suitability and desirability for translation and publication in English falls primarily on the target-language publisher, this research concludes that this evaluation often involves a much longer, multi-step filtering process which only involves the publisher in its final stages. As demonstrated in the descriptions of Storey and Schimel's successful pitching projects, translators often strategically assess the potential appeal of titles before bringing them to the attention of publishers. This may involve prioritising titles included on lists produced by international, regional, or local consecrating bodies. It is notable, for example, that all three of the titles which HopeRoad acquired on the basis of pitches from Storey, as well as *Balam, Lluvia y la casa* (successfully pitched by Schimel to The Emma Press) and *El cuento fantasma* (selected by Lantana on the basis of OIW's endorsement), had been endorsed by the US-based Fundación Cuatrogatos, which produces an annual list of 20 'Premio Fundación Cuatrogatos' winners, 12 finalists, and a further 100 'recommended' Spanish-language children's fiction titles published in Latin America or the US in the previous year. This is just one example of the major influence that international children's literature advocacy organisations such as Fundación Cuatrogatos can exert over the translation publication process, without necessarily having direct links to UK publishers.

Where the impact of financial considerations on literary translation into English is discussed in the existing literature, the focus is most typically on the idea that paying for a translation represents an often-prohibitive 'additional' up-front cost for the publisher, when compared to commissioning an English-original text. While this research confirms that financial considerations have a major impact on the translation of children's books into English, it concludes that this impact is more distributed, more complex and perhaps less universally prohibitive than is typically assumed. Firstly, eligibility for targeted funding is a major factor in determining which books are considered feasible translation projects. It is common for gatekeepers, including both translators who are scouting and pitching and publishers who are actively and directly seeking out potential titles for translation, to focus their efforts on titles which are eligible for specific, targeted funding to support various aspects of the costs associated with publishing them in translation. Translators working in languages which are used in a number of different countries (such as French or Spanish) may prioritise books published in countries which offer such funding, or even (as is the case in Claire Storey's decision to begin translating from Catalan), specifically acquire working languages which are better-funded. The case of The Emma Press and their funding-first selection criteria for translations, developed with the encouragement of experienced translator and publisher Lawrence Schimel and resulting in a list which heavily features

Latvian, Estonian and Indonesian children's books, is another striking example. Some publishers, such as Curry at Lantana, even report preferring to publish translations over English originals, in cases where those translations are eligible for funding to cover additional costs such as producing high-quality illustrated editions or author publicity tours. It is also widely understood by advocates that picture books are easier to pitch as potential English translations than more text-heavy middle reader or YA books, due in part to the lower cost of translation involved. Beyond the influence of targeted funding for translations, this research features a number of examples of other translation-specific financial considerations which challenge the narrative that publishing literary translations for children is an essentially 'altruistic' exercise. Puffin's decision to acquire world rights for *Martina Valiente* in the hope of recouping some translation costs by selling those rights onwards, including potentially through relay translations based on Storey's English text, is one example. The Emma Press's choice to leverage academic interest in their work through a launch event for *Balam and Lluvia's House* produced in collaboration with the University of Reading Centre for Book Cultures and Publishing is another. Ultimately, although the specifics will vary from case to case, it is clear that financial factors have a major impact on not only whether books are translated into English, but also on which children's books become available in English translation.

Implications for advocates

When I asked my interviewees for their thoughts on the past and future of translation for children in Britain, I encountered a mix of pride, determination, and pessimism. Many felt that there had been a surge of momentum around international children's literature advocacy in the 1990s and early 2000s, which was now fading away. Although they did not have access to comprehensive information on this point, they generally had the impression that fewer translations were being published now than in previous decades. Some thought that things were 'better' in the US, while others despaired at the state of translation in the English-language publishing world in general. There was often a slight sense of frustration that the amount of thought and effort that went into any given intervention didn't seem to have much correlation with how effective that intervention had been in 'moving the needle', by which they meant increasing the number or percentage of translations for children published in English. On a personal level, many of my interviewees reported nearing the end of their rope in terms of their ability to dedicate their time and energy to the largely-unpaid work of international children's literature advocacy. On the other hand, there was also a shared sense of increased urgency around that work. Wars in Ukraine and Gaza, virulent

anti-immigrant rhetoric in the political mainstream, and threats to language programmes in British schools and universities all loom large in the minds of my interviewees, who remain hopeful, like so many others before them, that the international exchange of children's books could yet help to usher in a more understanding, less divided future world. This project has given me the opportunity to think carefully about the work to which these individuals have dedicated so much of their lives, as well as a broader perspective on that work to which few others have had access. Here, I offer my personal conclusions as to how these advocates might engage in more targeted, effective, and sustainable advocacy work in coming decades.

Redefining success

So many discussions among ICL advocates in Britain and the US take as their point of departure the idea that one of their ultimate goals, and a measure of their success, is increasing the percentage of children's books published in English which are translations. I would argue that this is a misguided aim, and one that leads inevitably to frustration and disappointment. The reasons behind the low percentages to which advocates point are structural, systemic, and operate at a level far beyond the boardrooms of even the largest publishing conglomerates. They result from a combination of the sophisticated, highly-developed and long-standing nature of the closely-linked British and US American children's publishing industries and the global dominance of English-language media, which in turn reflects geopolitical realities which, while not fixed in stone, are unlikely to reverse in a matter of years or even decades. Producing a notable increase in the percentage of literary translations in English is not only a Sisyphean task, but also, I argue, one predicated on a misunderstanding of the special role that translation plays in British children's publishing. In Britain, translations have the power to operate as a counter-hegemonic force precisely because of their marginal, minority nature. Those who advocate for translations would benefit from embracing their status as always already marked by 'commitment' to their cause, and this requires letting go of the desire to help translation become an unremarkable part of the mainstream. Focusing on the volume of translations can also draw attention away from other indications that ICL advocacy is making an impact. The explicit eligibility of translations for both the Carnegie and the recently-announced Children's Booker Prize (nominations open in 2026) are both strong signs that translations have come to be taken more seriously among the gatekeepers of elite British children's literature ('Booker Prize' 2025).

Targeted interventions, strategic partnerships

Although I conclude that ICL advocates can do little to change the structural landscapes of the fields in which they operate, they can become expert at navigating those landscapes. There are examples of this expertise at work throughout this thesis. The stories of strategic, successful pitching campaigns by Lawrence Schimel and Claire Storey in Part Four are two such examples. The ongoing expansion of and innovation within creative translation workshop programming led by Stephen Spender Trust over the past decade, described in Part Three, is another. Outside In World have found some measure of sustainability and an expanded audience through their pivot towards university partnerships, while World Kid Lit is following in the footsteps of The Children's Bookshow by creating programmes focused on 'reading for pleasure' that offer mutual benefit to both publishers and school partners. All of these interventions feature clearly-defined target audiences beyond the *habitus*, and involve partnerships between ICL advocacy experts and other organisations or institutions with access to and experience working with that target audience. They have all also been designed from the ground up with a keen understanding of the funding landscape in which they will operate, and a strategic and flexible approach to accessing funding and other resources necessary for sustainable success. In the case of interventions targeting publishers, they focus on overcoming practical barriers related to the suitability and viability of translation projects, rather than on convincing editors that they 'should' translate more. For projects targeting young audiences, advocates drew on a strong understanding of the pressures and motivating factors which shape administrative and educational decisions around language and literature subjects in British schools and universities today. Where academics are the focus, advocates learned to work within the complex HEI funding landscape and co-designed mutually beneficial programming with trusted research partners.

There is a place, of course, for activities such as collecting, listing, reviewing and prizing which, as I argue in Part Three, primarily function to maintain, expand and reinforce international children's literature advocates' own shared understanding of their field of interest. What I will suggest here is that advocates would often benefit from a clearer understanding of who they are trying to reach and what they are trying to achieve with a given international children's literature intervention. Resources produced for 'everyone' are sometimes usable by no one, leaving their creators preaching to the choir. Relatedly, I hope that by introducing the *habitus* and laying out the contours of its history, this research will encourage advocates to engage more critically with rhetoric and institutions whose ubiquity and influence is too often taken for granted. The IYL and IBBY have been enormously influential in the 20th century history of international children's literature advocacy, but they

are complicated institutions and do not represent the only or necessarily the best way of approaching the questions of, for example, what makes a 'good' children's book, or how literary translation for children can combat division and inequality. By clearly articulating strategies, principles and theories of change which build on and yet are not afraid to challenge the power structures of the transnational children's literature field, advocates can attain a clearer vision of why and how to advocate for the international exchange of children's books in the 21st century.

AI: the elephant in the room

In 2025, the spectre of AI looms over any discussion of the present and future of the creative and cultural industries. Translators have been dealing with the idea that their profession is imminently going to be made obsolete by software for longer than many of the other creatives who are now grappling with the seismic changes that have occurred in the years since generative AI became widely available. Machine translation technologies of varying quality and capabilities have been widely accessible since the 1990s, and arguing for the benefits of entrusting translation tasks to humans rather than software is something translators, particularly in the literary field, have been doing for many decades. Nevertheless, these conversations have taken on a different tone in the 2020s. Now, it is not only translators, but authors and illustrators (among many others) who feel that they are competing with software that can quickly and inexpensively produce something which, at first glance at least, passes for a reasonable facsimile of their own creative output.

I suggest that this is one area where the counter-hegemonic potential of international children's literature advocacy might come into its own. The *habitus* offers a variety of strong bases from which to make sophisticated arguments for the value of a mindful approach to cultural production and exchange which centres human creativity, connection and engagement. The creative translation pedagogies developed by Stephen Spender Trust and Shadow Heroes, in particular, are well-placed to guide young people to engage critically and meaningfully with these technologies. Ultimately, the ICL advocacy *habitus* outlined in this thesis owes much of its character to the responses of previous generations to massive structural shifts in the global media landscape following the Second World War. Advocates should embrace this long tradition of wrestling meaningfully with the tension between embracing innovation and preserving valuable creative heritages as they consider the role translation and children's books will play in a world shaped by the ubiquity of AI technologies.

Multilingual Britain: making the case

One particularly encouraging trend among ICL advocates in Britain today is a growing awareness of potential synergies with the vibrant world of contemporary Welsh-language children's literature. Inspired by *The Blue Book of Nebo*'s Carnegie win, IBBY UK is, for the first time in their history, including Welsh-language books in their nominations to the 2026 IBBY Honour List. From 2025-2028, Stephen Spender Trust and the Queen's Translation Exchange are partnering on a major project to integrate literary translation into International Languages teaching in both English-medium and Welsh-medium schools across Wales. The Queen's Translation Exchange has also begun to offer a French-Welsh strand of the Anthea Bell Prize, and is hoping to offer more source languages for the Welsh-language version of the prize in coming years. Historically, ICL advocacy in Britain has been very England-centric. These collaborations are an effective and high-impact way for advocates to promote a multilingual vision of British identity, both at home and abroad.

As Ardizzone and Holmes have pointed out in their reflections on the early 'Translation Nation' workshops, the theoretical appeal of using translation to support positive attitudes towards 'home' or 'community' languages in English classrooms has met with mixed success in practice. Although individual interventions (including, by all accounts, Translation Nation) have been received positively, there remains a stark disconnect between the source languages represented in published translations and the languages present in 'superdiverse' British classrooms. Likewise, frameworks for ICL interventions which essentialise the link between language and culture, assume clear divisions between languages, and prefer outputs in standard, prestige varieties of English are often poorly suited to the complex linguistic experience of so-called 'English as an Additional Language' (EAL) students. Shadow Heroes, under the leadership of Gitanjali Patel, has done particularly innovative work to address these issues. In addition to continuing to expand the reach of that work, future advocates would benefit from collaborating more closely and extensively with those who have lived experience and expertise in the challenges faced by the communities they seek to uplift.

Implications for future research

From a scholarly perspective, the *habitus* is useful in that it allows for more focused investigation of the under-researched sociology of translation for children which is not arbitrarily bound by national, linguistic or professional categories, and yet is able to integrate the real impact that those categories have on the global exchange of children's literature. There are a number of areas on which this thesis touches, which would benefit from more

focused further investigation. Given the focus of this project on the contemporary world of international children's literature advocacy, the history developed in Part Two could be developed substantially. A more detailed study of the evolving relationship between translation for children and political discourse in Britain since the 19th century would be particularly interesting, as would a critical history of political discourses within IBBY at the international level. The complexities of power and influence among international children's literature advocates within 'the Anglosphere', and particularly the similarities, differences, overlaps and schisms between British and US American advocates during the 20th century, are also a worthwhile object of study in their own right. The recent work of ICL advocates in the US on projects such as the Global Literature in Libraries and Global Youth Literature Collection initiatives are closely related to the themes explored in this thesis, and are ripe for further investigation ('Global Youth Lit' 2025, 'GLLI' 2025). Case studies investigating the influence and development of the international children's literature advocacy *habitus* in other national, regional and/or linguistic contexts, beyond Britain and English-language children's publishing, would also be welcome. Finally, I hope that this project demonstrates the potential of studying the production and promotion of children's literature, in translation and otherwise, from a perspective that integrates actors beyond the traditional publishing ecosystem. The unique role that non-profit organisations such as, for example, BookTrust or the National Literacy Trust have on the children's book landscape in the UK is only beginning to be considered by scholars of children's literature. This is an exciting area which I hope will be the subject of more studies in the future.

Appendix 1: Research Interviews

The research interviews conducted for this thesis are listed below, in alphabetical order by interviewee surname. For each interview I have included the interviewee's name, the interview date, whether the interview was conducted in-person or online via video call, and a brief note identifying some of the interviewee's most relevant roles and/or professional associations. Most of these individuals have been or are currently involved in children's literature and/or translation advocacy in a wide variety of ways, and these brief descriptions are not intended as comprehensive biographies or lists of their professional achievements.

Where multiple interviews were conducted with a single subject, the dates and modes of both interviews are listed under the interviewees name. For more details on the interview format and process, please see Chapter 1.4. For the privacy of my interviewees and in accordance with the ethical approval received for this project and the consent forms signed in advance of each interview, I have not included full-text transcripts of these interviews in this thesis, and will not be publishing such transcripts. My interviewees have consented to the inclusion of information and quotations provided in these interviews only within the context of this research, and not to the general circulation of the unedited contents of these conversations.

Where quotations from the interviews listed below are included in the body of the text, I have cited the relevant interviewee surname and the interview year. Where a specific interviewee source is not indicated or I make general reference to the data collected during these interviews, it is in some cases because either I or the interviewees determined that the information in question should be presented anonymously. Where emails or other personal communications are referenced, from my interviewees or other individuals, those are listed in the Works Cited section. Finally, where an interviewee is also the author of publicly availably works which I have referenced (blog posts, website content, published interviews not conducted by me), these are also included in the Works Cited.

Interview details

Name: Sarah Ardizzone

Date: 15 September 2023

Format: Online

Role and affiliation: British translator of children's books, co-creator of the Translation Nation creative translation workshop programme in association with the Stephen Spender Trust.

Name: Alice Curry
Date: 23 May 2024
Format: Online
Role and affiliation: Founder & CEO, Lantana Press.

Name: Patricia Billings
Date: 29 November 2022
Format: Online
Role and affiliation: Co-founder of Milet Publishing, children's author, Outside In World board member.

Name: Lucy Brownridge
Date: 02 December 2023
Format: Online
Role and affiliation: Editorial Director of Quarto's illustrated children's non-fiction imprint, Wide Eyed Editions.

Name: Pam Dix
Date: 27 October 2023
Format: Online
Role and affiliation: Chair of IBBY UK.

Name: Daniel Hahn
Date: 11 July 2023
Format: In person
Role and affiliation: British translator, writer and editor.

Name: Deborah Hallford
Date: 21 November 2022
Format: Online
Role and affiliation: Co-founder and Manager of Outside In World, former Head of Publications at BookTrust.

Name: Kelly Hurst

Date: 23 September 2024

Format: Online

Role and affiliation: Editorial Director, Penguin Random House Children's (Puffin).

Name: Ruth Ahmedzai Kemp

Date: 29 November 2022

Format: Online

Date: 24 May 2024

Format: Online

Role and affiliation: Translator and Managing Director of World Kid Lit.

Name: Ann Lazim

Date: 24 January 2023

Format: In person

Role and affiliation: Co-founder of the most recent iteration of IBBY UK, former Library and Literacy Development Manager at the Centre for Literacy in Primary Education.

Name: Gitanjali Patel

Date: 14 February 2023

Format: Online

Role and affiliation: Co-founder of Shadow Heroes, translation studies scholar.

Name: Kimberley Reynolds

Date: 30 November 2023

Format: Online

Role and affiliation: Scholar of children's literature studies. Co-founder of the MA in Children's Literature and the National Centre for Research in Children's Literature at Roehampton University, co-founder of the Marsh Award for Children's Literature in Translation.

Name: Charlotte Ryland

Date: 26 March 2023

Format: Online

Role and affiliation: Director, Stephen Spender Trust, Founding Director, The Queen's College Translation Exchange.

Name: Lawrence Schimel
Date: 30 January 2023
Format: Online
Role and affiliation: US American, Spain-based children's translator, author and editor working across Spanish and English.

Name: Claire Storey
Date: 30 January 2023
Format: Online
Date: 02 August 2024
Format: Online
Role and affiliation: British translator and international book scout specialising in YA fiction, frequent World Kid Lit contributor.

Name: Alexandra Strick
Date: 05 July 2023
Format: Online
Role and affiliation: Co-founder of Outside In World and Inclusive Minds, and former head of Children's Literature at BookTrust.

Name: Georgia Wall
Date: 25 March 2023
Format: Online
Role and affiliation: Publishing manager, The Emma Press.

Name: Sian Williams
Date: 02 November 2023
Format: In person
Role and affiliation: Translator and co-founder of The Children's Bookshow.

Name: Edgardo Zaghini
Date: 26 January 2023

Format: Online

Role and affiliation: Co-founder of Outside In World, children's librarian, former BookTrust Children's Literature Officer.

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