From: Peggy Barber, Director
Public Information Office

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Atheneum Publishers of New York is the winner of the tenth annual Mildred L. Batchelder Award for the 1975 publication of The Leopard by Cecil Bødker, translated from the Danish by Gunnar Poulsen. The award is given annually by the Children's Services Division (CSD) of the American Library Association to an American publisher for the children's book considered to be the most outstanding of those originally published in a foreign language in a foreign country and subsequently published in English in the United States. The announcement was made Saturday (April 2) by Barbara Moody, Chairperson of CSD's Award Selection Committee during ceremonies at the Skokie Illinois Public Library.

Jean Karl, Vice President and Director of Atheneum's Children's Book Department acknowledged the honor on behalf of the publisher and the translators. Mildred L. Batchelder, for whom the award is named, also spoke at the ceremony, discussing the quality of translation in the books nominated in the decade since the award's inception in 1968. Peggy Sullivan, CSD President, conducted the announcement program.

Originally written for Ethiopian children, The Leopard was first published in East Africa in 1970 as The Leoparden by the Danish publishing house Branner and Korch.

Author Bødker is known to European readers for her many distinguished - more -
1. Mildred L. Batchelder Award

Children's books, notably the "Silas" books for children ages 10 to 12--Silas Fanger et Firspand; Silas og Ben-Godkik, and Silas og den Sorte Hoppe, awarded the Børnebogspris in 1968. In April 1967, Ms. Bodker received the Hans Christian Andersen Award, given biennially since 1956 by the International Board on Books for Young People to one author and one illustrator in recognition of his or her entire body of work.

The author has lived most of her life in and near Fredericia, Jutland, Denmark. To gather background for The Leopard, she and her husband lived for several months in Alamgena, about 200 miles south of Addis Ababa. There they knew the Widow Debiteh of the story, and later, after the widow's death, adopted two of her nine children. The mother of four daughters, Ms. Bødker writes adult as well as children's books. She is also a silversmith.

The Leopard provides a panoramic picture of Ethiopia, recounting the adventures of Tibeso, a mountain herdsboy, as he hunts down the killer of his calf--a killer who is revealed as a leopard among men. Through Tibeso's eyes and emotions, the reader experiences Ethiopia as home, village, marketplace, and people. Strong in creating a sense of place, atmosphere and custom, the writing brings to American children a hero whose land is unfamiliar but whose courage is universal.

Three translators contributed to the final United States edition of The Leopard: Gunnar Poulsen, a Dane working in Ethiopia, first persuaded Ms. Bødker to write the book and was the principal translator; Solomon Deressa, an English-speaking Ethiopian, assisted his friend Poulsen; and Virginia Allen Jensen, Ms. Bødker's American agent in Denmark, polished the translation for Atheneum.

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Announcement programs were also presented on International Children's Book Day, April 2, at three other institutions representing a variety of locations and library services: by Joan Stidham Nist, Department of Educational Media, School of Education, Auburn (Alabama) University; by Virginia Moore Kruse, Cooperative Children's Book Center, Madison, Wisconsin; and by Lois E. Phillips, Los Angeles County Public Library, Los Angeles, California. For the third year, the Children's Book Council of New York City was a sponsor with CSD of this effort to encourage wider understanding and appreciation of other cultures as depicted in translated books for children.

The 1977 committee members were Barbara S. Moody, chairperson; Donald A. Colberg, Gladys Deever, Barbara E. Dill, Elizabeth R. Goebel, and Betsy Hearne, consultant.