

## CULTURE

# Once upon a time a small boy named Patufet...

*Thanks to En Patufet many people learned Catalan*

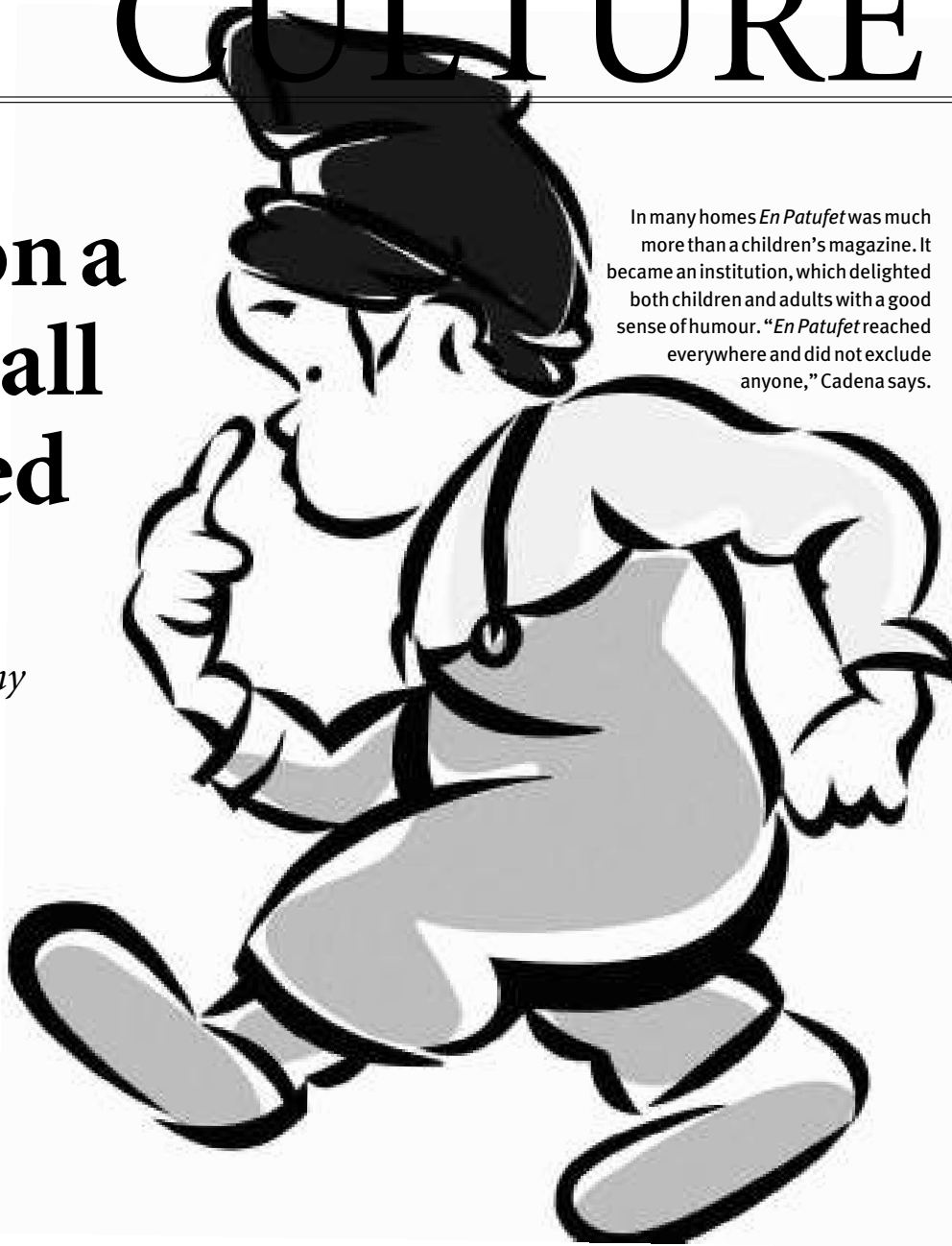
ANNA AGUILAR/RICARD VIÑAS

"Hasn't your grandma ever told you who Patufet is? Well then, I am a very smart, very charming and very naughty boy. I promise you we'll tell plenty of jokes if you join my company. One year after we first meet, you'll have learned funnier and more instructive things than in one year at school." Patufet, a literary character after whose name the first children's magazine written in Catalan was entitled, used these words to introduce himself to his readers one hundred years ago. The first issue of *En Patufet* was available at the newsstands on January 3rd 1904. This first issue contained eight 16x11 cm two-color pages and its price was 5 cents of peseta. "The magazine office was located at Rambla de les Flors, 11, home of director Aureli Campmany," reveals Lluís Solà in his book *En Patufet. Antologia*. However, the magazine rapidly grew everywhere from page number to price, and especially in print run. In the first stage (1904-1938), 1,806 issues were published.

"Its objectives were to *Catalanise*, to moralise and to teach," says Solà. Three generations of Catalans learned Catalan reading *En Patufet*. However, as well as its pledge to normalise the language, the magazine

decisively contributed to the spread of Catalan reality and traditions from the first decades of the 20th century. The Spanish Civil War meant an end to *En Patufet*. However, after many struggles, the magazine was published again between 1968 and 1972. Up to 141 issues were published but it was not nearly as successful as the first run. The censors shortened the name to *Patufet*, since the original sounded too Catalan. "They tried to link the new edition with that of 1939, as if nothing had happened, which was a mistake," Josep M. Cadena, an expert on the magazine, says.

In many homes *En Patufet* was much more than a children's magazine. It became an institution, which delighted both children and adults with a good sense of humour. "*En Patufet* reached everywhere and did not exclude anyone," Cadena says.



## Excellent illustration

Apart from the texts, an important aspect of the magazine's success was due to the illustrations. Joan G. Junceda, Gaietà Cornet and Joan Llaverias were the illustrators. "They were the most sought after illustrators at the time. Junceda was simply the best, his works are still artistically valid, although the jokes may seem old-fashioned," says magazine expert Josep Maria Cadena. However, other illustrators also played an important role in the history of the magazine. In the first stage, some of the other illustrators were Ricard Opisso, Feliu Elies, Pere Prat, Lola Anglada, Joan Vila, as well as Antoni Muntanyola, author of the character who gave name to the magazine. In the second stage, important illustrators were Urda, Bécquer, Moreno, Batllori, Abadal, Valentí Castanys and Joaquim Muntanyola. The last two also wrote some articles in *Patufet*.



Cover of the 1918 calendar. At the end of every year *En Patufet* published a special calendar.



*Papà, que em puc casar amb l'àvia, jo? / Tu, casar-te amb la meva mare? / Que no es va casar amb la meva, vostè? Dad, may I marry grandma? / You want to marry my mother?! / Why? Didn't you marry mine?*



*Aquest nen és molt llest. Només té cinc mesos i ja camina tot sol. El meu encara és més llest. Podria correr si volgués però s'estima més que el portin.* This little boy is very smart. He's only five months old and can already walk. Well, mine is even smarter. He could run if he wanted, but prefers to be carried.



*No vull que vagis a casa de l'Enric, perquè és molt dolent. / Així, que vingui a casa perquè jo sóc molt bo.* I don't want you to go to Henry's place, he's a bad boy. / Well then, he can come over here because I'm a good boy.