

**Lathey, Gillian (ed.) (2006). *The Translation of Children's Literature. A Reader*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, pp. 259. (Hbk) £54.95 \$99.95 ISBN 1853599069 ISBN-13: 9781853599064 (Pbk) £21.95 \$39.95 ISBN 1853599050 ISBN-13: 9781853599057**

**A**s the editor herself announces in the introduction to the volume, the aim of this 'timely' publication, which appears at a time when the translation of children's literature is finally gaining academic recognition in Europe and beyond, is to gather and make available some of the most outstanding contributions –or parts of them– which have laid the grounds for systematic investigation in this field. The time span is rather wide, as are the analytical perspectives and background of the authors whose voices are gathered in the volume.

Covering almost three decades of research in the wide field of writing and translating for children, calling into play the contributions of scholars involved in the study of children's literature, of the translation of books but also audiovisual texts and, last but not least, the reflections of several distinguished translators, the volume provides a thorough overview of the most significant steps taken in the exploration of this often neglected world.

The essays presented in the volume are arranged in five different sections, whose progression allows the reader to focus on all the significant aspects connected with the art and craft of translating for children. In the first section, contributions are arranged so as to provide a continuum which goes from an ample overview of the relationship between translation studies and the translation of children's literature in a historical perspective, down to the illustration and application of a linguistic-based model for the analysis of two translations, created on the grounds of some of the theoretical standpoints which are discussed in the previous pages. In between these two essays are other contributions which provide insightful theoretical reflections and, most importantly, connect the study of translated children's literature to the socio-cultural and ideological factors which determine the very production of translations.

Ideological considerations are still in the foreground in the second section of the book, which focuses on the child reader and the (in)visibility of translator within the text. Ranging from the identification of factors determining the nature of the communication to the child reader to an insightful analysis of the translator's position which cleverly brings together narrative theory and translation studies, this section lays great emphasis on the abilities and specific requirements of readers as well as translators who are responsible for their reading experience.

The third section is devoted to the careful and informed exploration of the visual component in children's literature. The visual, which in the words of one of the translators contributing to this volume (Anthea Bell) can be defined as the "third dimension" of translating for children, is brought to the fore in all its relevance for translation through three differently structured contributions, all of them more or less overtly pointing to the inextricable relationship between words and pictures in children's books and the intervisuality which the images themselves establish, making it necessary for the translator to work on two semiotic levels.

The fourth section seems to leave the translation process and its implications behind, to focus on the international dissemination of children's literature through translation and its impact on cross-cultural relations. Analysing some of the most popular fairy tales characters of all times, the contributors to this section aim to fuel the debate on the educational as well as socio-cultural effects of the translation of classical figures.

The final section of the book gives voice to the translators, with two contributions provided by translators directly and one by a distinguished scholar with a long-standing experience of research on the translator's role in relaying children's literature. As might be foreseen, the translators' reflections linger on the cultural differences which they constantly have to tackle when doing their job. However, even though they provide examples and discuss practical translation problems, their comments are all but commonplace. They prove to be of interest for students as well as practitioners, thus expanding the potential readership of the volume and enhancing its appeal. Each section of the volume is accompanied by a short but useful introduction, and the case studies which are presented in the essays manage to go beyond their own specificity and provide useful references and information for other applications.

On the whole, resulting from an accurate selection of contributions to the hardly-ever-explored field of translating for children, the volume manages to bring to the fore all the relevant issues and theoretical standpoints, providing thorough background while also highlighting the latest research paths. Furthermore, it proves to have an additional –and uncommon– twofold value: it makes an essential reading for those who approach the translation of children's literature for the first time, but it also stands out as a compendium of the most relevant contributions by scholars inside and outside Europe.

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