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Fryer, Louise (2016). *An Introduction to Audio Description. A Practical Guide.* **London & New York: Routledge, pp. 194, paperback, £29.00. ISBN: 978 1138848177.**

I n recent years, accessibility for the blind through audio description (AD) has received attention and full recognition from many stakeholders. Yet still comprehensive materials for AD teaching or self-teaching are scarce. This is where Louise Fryer's newest book comes in. As the author herself notices, its aim is "to fill the gap" since there is "no practical manual combining the results of research with practical advice" (XIV).

Louise Fryer's book consists of 14 chapters and can be roughly divided into two parts. The first one (Chapters 1-7) discusses the basics of audio description and the second one (Chapters 8-14) goes beyond them. All chapters, except for Chapter 14 which is an afterword, end with exercises and discussion points – useful both for those who want to train themselves and for those who train others. They also contain illustrative real-life examples of solutions adapted in audio descriptions. What is even more appreciated, on many occasions, Louise Fryer yields the floor to the blind and partially sighted users of AD and allows them to comment on different approaches to audio description presented in this book.

Chapter 1, "Introducing audio description," presents the general notion of audio description, provides its definitions and places it within the scope of audiovisual translation. Chapter 2, "A brief history, legislation and guidelines," just like its title suggests, gives an overview of the history, legislation and guidelines. Special attention is given to the development of AD in the United Kingdom and Louise Fryer – as a first-hand witness – provides us with little known facts. In Chapter 3, "Putting the audio into audio description," explores the importance of the auditory channel in audio description and how it dictates whether, when and what audio description should be provided. In Chapter 4, "The audience for audio description," Fryer answers the question about who we are describing for and discusses different viewpoints on blindness and visual processing. Chapter 5, "Audio description skills – Writing," is dedicated to the art of scripting audio description. It explores the issues of what, to what extent of detail or ambiguity and in which order should be included in the AD script. Chapter 6, "Audio description skills – Script preparation," moves away from theory to practice and explains the intricacies of script preparation and discusses issues such as free and paid software, speech rate, timecodes and the process of script preparation. Chapter 7, "Audio description skills – Delivery," ventures into a topic rarely discussed in scientific research and guidelines – the style of vocal delivery of audio description and its influence on meaning making, understanding and enjoyment. Fryer discusses aspects such as accent, gender, emotions, stress, segmentation, tone, pace, pitch, pronunciation and fluency. Chapters 8 – 11 tackle issues that go beyond

the basics of audio description, namely: the relation between AD and source text genre, text on screen, accessible filmmaking, describing camerawork and dealing with censorship. In Chapter 12, "Audio introductions," Fryer defines the concept of audio introductions and discusses how they are prepared and delivered, depending on the AD (screen vs. life) they are prepared for. Chapter 13, "Contentious issues and future directions in audio description," considers the most controversial areas of audio description – the subjectivity paradigm and the description of facial expressions. It also presents new avenues for research in audio description including ideas that venture into sociology, biology, cognitive neuroscience, artificial intelligence and sensory substitution. Last but not least, Chapter 14 – "Afterword" – although it is barely two pages long, is one of this book's hidden gems as Fryer gives the floor to audio description users to explain what audio description means to them - it is a priceless lesson to anyone involved in audio description research and practice.

This book reads like a good story. A story for those who already have at least basic knowledge about audio description. A story whose motive is audio description's mission to provide equivalence of meaning and experience. It actually feels as if Louise Fryer herself sat down with you and over a cup of good English tea told you all about audio description. Giving you real-life examples, practical tips and anecdotes – like when she advices you to make notes for audio introductions during a theatre play with a pen rather than with a scratchy pencil that might annoy other members of the audience. And just like when speaking with someone – after you are done, sometimes you wish they told you more about some things and maybe in a different order.

An Introduction to Audio Description. A Practical Guide might not be the one book 'to rule them all' but it is an essential reading for anyone interested and involved in audio description practice and/or research.

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