

Never-ending Stories:
Adaptation of Canonical Texts in Children's Literature
Call for Papers – Symposium
Ghent University, Belgium
20-21 January 2011

Adaptations have always played an important role in the field of children's literature. During this symposium, we want to explore the relationship between the status of the source text and the act of adaptation, in general and more specifically in children's literature.

We depart from a broad view on adaptation as the product of a transformation of a source text, thus including translations, retellings and remediations. Central to our approach is a view on the act of adaptation as a dynamic process with a strong ideological dimension. As stories are reworked to function in a new literary and social context, intercultural, intertemporal or intermedial transformations may occur.

Within both adult and children's literature, the canonical status and authority of the source text may be the reason why it is chosen for adaptation. Conversely, adaptations can enhance the status of the original work. Without these adaptations, the work might not be able to be reread and thus live on.

Focusing on the interplay between the status and adaptation of canonical texts in children's literature, we pay special attention to two categories of adapted works: on the one hand, canonized literary works for adults that are reworked as children's books, which may contribute to the preservation of the source text's canon position within the adult literary system, and on the other hand, children's books which have acquired a high status and are adapted to fit the needs of new readers in other contexts.

When it comes to studying the adaptation of literary classics, both source text and target culture approaches can be taken. Adopting the point of view of the target culture, one can note that the original text is transformed in the process of adaptation and that its ideological identity is diffused. A source text perspective allows the highlighting of adaptations' and remediations' possible contribution to the preservation of the original work's status within the canon of children's literature.

In short, our aim is to investigate this interaction between canonization, adaptation and ideology. We want to look into the nature of the process of adapting literature and the way in which it influences the status of literary works. We welcome contributions which either address this idea in general or deal with its application on children's literature.

Possible topics include:

- Motivations for adapting works of adult literature for children, both explicit (e.g. paratext, literary criticism) and implicit.
- Intermedial transformations as a form of adaptation: the effects of the reworking of a certain work into picture books, comic series, games, cartoons, theatre plays, movies, musicals, merchandising.
- Other forms of adapting children's literature (abbreviation, translation, editing).
- Ideological changes in adaptations of a particular work: an examination of the child reader implied in a particular adaptation (with respect to the child's cognitive abilities, society's pedagogical norms and concepts of children's literature).
- Possibly ambivalent status of canonical texts: blurring of the boundaries between adult and children's literature.
- Adaptations as a form of written folklore.

It is our pleasure to announce that the following leading scholars will be holding a key note lecture:

- Vanessa Joosen (Antwerp University, Belgium)
- Bettina Kümmerling-Meibauer (University of Tübingen, Germany; guest professor in memory of Astrid Lindgren at Växjö University, Sweden)
- Julie Sanders (University of Nottingham, United Kingdom)
- John Stephens (Macquarie University, Australia)

In addition, British author Aidan Chambers will discuss adaptations of his work.

We welcome proposals for papers on any topic related to this matter. 300-word abstracts, along with biographical information, can be submitted to sara.vandenbossche@ugent.be and sylvie.geerts@ugent.be.

- Closing date for submission of abstracts: 30 September 2010.
- Abstract acceptance notification: 15 October 2010.

A selection of contributions to the symposium will possibly be published during the fall of 2011. Authors of accepted proposals are expected to send in a manuscript version of their paper by 1 April 2011.

Organization

Sylvie Geerts (1985) studied Greek and Latin at Ghent University where she currently works as an assistant at the department of Classics. In her doctoral thesis she examines contemporary Dutch retellings of classical mythology for young readers as a form of reception of the classical tradition. In 2010 she was awarded a fellowship for a stay of three months at the International Youth Library of Munich (Germany).

Sara Van den Bossche (1982) studied Swedish and English at Ghent University. She currently works as a PhD researcher at the Department of Nordic Studies at Ghent University on a doctoral thesis on Astrid Lindgren's position within the canon of children's literature in Sweden, Flanders and the

Netherlands. She was granted the 2009 "Astrid Lindgrens Stiftelse Solkattens Stipendium", a scholarship which allowed her to spend a one-month research period at the Swedish Institute for Children's Books. Later that year, she was awarded a fellowship by the International Youth Library in Munich (Germany), where she spent a six-week research period in 2010.