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Reading, Translating, Rewriting; Angela Carter's Translational Poetics, Martine Hennard Dutheil de la Rochère, Detroit, Wayne State University Press, 2013, 384 pages, US\$29.95 (paperback), ISBN 978-0-8143-3634-2

There is an extensive body of critical work on Angela Carter but her translations are rarely considered as part of her creative output, although the act of linguistic and cultural translation was central to Carter's approach. This is a complex book using complex material: It analyses Carter's English translation of Charles Perrault's and Mme de Beaumont's French fairy tales in *The Fairy Tales of Charles Perrault* (1977) and her rewriting of classic fairy tales in *The Bloody Chamber* (1979). Hennard Dutheil de la Rochère's aim is to demonstrate that Carter's work as a translator not only fundamentally shaped her understanding of the creative interplay of reading and writing but also to demonstrate the connections and mutually reinforcing creative processes between writing, rewriting and translating in Carter's output. She bases this on Carter's intertextual understanding of the interconnectedness of literature, culture and the world on the one hand and the production of meaning as a process of translation engaged in by reader and writer.

Using Benjamin, Derrida, reception and postcolonial studies, she aligns translation with writing as aspects of creative production: both are a "process of repetition with productive differences" (p. 5) – a process Carter herself referred to as "new wine in old bottles" when talking about her feminist versions of traditional tales in *The Bloody Chamber* (p. 345). Neither writing nor translation is original creation but instead a transformative process which responds to the context of production and reception. And this is what Hennard Dutheil de la Rochère sets out to show in three chapters of carefully argued theory (introduction, chapter 1, conclusion) and six chapters of detailed analysis of a rich assembly of textual and visual sources: Carter's own notebooks, the French source texts of fairy tales by Perrault and Beaumont; Carter's English translations of these stories; oral and literary variants; Carter's revisioning of these into literary texts, radio plays and film script; plus the illustrations and covers of *The Fairy Tales of Charles Perrault* and *The Bloody Chamber*.

The chapters analysing Carter's creative process are based on the fairy tales Carter both translated and rewrote: "Little Red Riding Hood", "Bluebeard", "Puss in Boots", "Sleeping Beauty", "Beauty and the Beast" and "Cinderella". Except for "Beauty and the Beast" by Mme de Beaumont, all are by Charles Perrault, and all were rewritten by Carter for *The Bloody Chamber*, apart from "Cinderella", which she rewrote for *American Ghosts and Old World Wonders* (1993).

Hennard Dutheil de la Rochère establishes how Carter's translation and her creative revisioning complement each other and allow for a full rendering of the French source texts' complexity. The translations (aimed at a child reader) simplify, modernize and have a subtle,

emancipatory didactic dimension, while the rewriting (aimed at an adult reader) brings out the omitted subtexts of Perrault's and Beaumont's tales, exploring and foregrounding them in a way that is often in direct contradiction of Carter's translation decisions. These contrapuntal readings are sustained throughout the book, teasing out nuanced meanings in a carefully woven intertextual net which "sheds light on Carter's double project of translation and rewriting as interconnected and yet distinct" (p. 15) in a way I have not encountered before.

This is also one of the main contributions of the book to translation studies: it is a rich and carefully argued demonstration of translation as creative production, even in terms of productive misreading. Carter's translation of "Little Red Riding Hood" warns against the dangers modern children face in "the streets"; but this urbanization is the result of Carter misreading the French *ruelles* as "street", rather than "the space between the bed and the wall in seventeenth-century France" (p. 91). However, while the discussion of translation in each chapter is insightful and interprets the shifts between source and target in relation to context and reader, carefully establishing the effects of particular linguistic choices on the meaning and positioning of the target text, the presentation of this discussion seems to have suffered from the pressures of word limits. I would have preferred a more detailed analysis and more documentation of translation choices where examples from the French are glossed in English or the meaning of particular phrases is more explicitly explained. This is especially the case with Hennard Dutheil de la Rochère's analysis of Perrault's morals (which sum up each of his fairy tales), where a gloss of the French would have allowed all readers to follow the argument more closely to see how Carter mediates her translation. It is often difficult to understand a particular point or to assess to what extent an interpretation of a translational choice works or *how* it works.

Each chapter focuses on a particular aspect and in "Little Red Riding Hood" it is on Carter's updating and urbanizing of the tale's cautionary theme in the translation and her subversion of it in the three rewritten versions ("The Company of Wolves", "The Werewolf" and "Wolf Alice") in *The Bloody Chamber*, drawing on little-known oral material and producing "a palimpsestic history of the tale" (p. 73). However, in claiming that Carter "invented her own ur-version of the tale" (p. 81), the author overlooks the fact that the most dramatic new motifs in "The Werewolf" are taken from a little-known Dutch version (Seago 1996, 87). But this is a minor inaccuracy in an otherwise impressively rich, nuanced discussion which makes a genuinely new contribution to not only the body of work on Angela Carter but also translation studies, by producing 1) what are in effect case studies of meaning production shaped by context and reader, where both translation and writing selectively appropriate and creatively manipulate source materials; and 2) new interpretations of authors often seen as conservative and restricted in their didactic or moral outlook. Hennard Dutheil

de la Rochère's contrapuntal interpretation brings out the emancipatory potential in Carter's revisioned fairy tales, revealing Perrault as a pragmatist and establishes Beaumont as a proto-feminist teaching girls to think for themselves. Hennard Dutheil de la Rochère's discussion of Beaumont's "Beauty and the Beast" and "Sweetheart", a variant of the tale, shows these stories as transitional texts, but also uses the chapter as (her own) and Carter's tribute to a female fairy tale author marginalized by the international fairy tale's primarily male canon.

In the three remaining chapters, Hennard Dutheil de la Rochère's interpretation focuses on non-textual frames of meaning construction: in her interpretation of Carter's handling of "Bluebeard", the visual motifs and how they construct the story are read against and within the debate over the male gaze and female representation in the arts, which Carter explicitly explores in her retelling. In "Sleeping Beauty", she discusses how Carter tones down the erotic dimensions of the Prince's enchantment to foreground the translation's emancipatory potential while the retelling uses the conventions of the gothic tale, playing "with the idea of the creative process as a deliberate vampirizing of the literary and cultural past" (p. 220). The chapter on "Puss-in-Boots" interprets the story in the context of music hall and pantomime, while that on "Cinderella" focuses on the intergenerational female passing on of teaching and support, establishing the contrast between Perrault's (and the translation's) literary context and the folk tradition informing the rewriting.

However, Hennard Dutheil de la Rochère is interested in showing not only the interplay between translation, authorship and oral tradition in Carter's work, but also the creative transposition between text and image as a form of intersemiotic translation. This book helpfully shows how Martin Ware's extraordinary illustrations in the first edition of *The Fairy Tales of Charles Perrault* generate additional layers of meaning in relation to the translated text and in relation to famous fairy tale images, picking up on and foreshadowing motifs and interpretations that are further developed in *The Bloody Chamber*. In addition, the visual framing and positioning of texts through their cover images is demonstrated in the reception of Carter's English translation of Perrault, where the three editions' different covers contribute to positioning each for a subtly different market – although the translated text remains the same, and in its choices is clearly aimed at a child reader. In contrast, the sleazily glamorous photo-art cover of the 2008 Penguin paperback edition of *The Bloody Chamber* unequivocally targets a knowing, adult reader and visually references its more sexually explicit stories.

I very much enjoyed this book and recommend it; it achieves its aim of showing the interconnectedness of reading, writing and translating and offers new insights into a sometimes challenging thematic argument.

Reference

Seago, Karen. 1996. "Intertextuality and the Fairy Tale in Angela Carter's *The Bloody Chamber*". In *Identity, Gender and Creativity: Women's Writing in Germany, France and Britain*, edited by Lyn Thomas, 83-90. London: UNL Press.

Note on contributor

Karen Seago has published widely on the translation and reception of fairy tales, feminist adaptations of fairy tales and feminist translation theory. Her current research is in crime fiction translation.

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