

FOREWORD

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The following essays were written at the editor's express request to commemorate the first centenary of Lewis Carroll's death (1898-1998). The idea for such a collection first arose in conversations held with Maria Cristina Schleder de Borba who was at that time based in the University of Birmingham, carrying out research in the field of Translation Studies, in respect of *Alice in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking Glass*.

The title of the compilation, *Alice in Translation*, was deliberately chosen to reflect the diversity of topics and analytical approaches adopted by the contributors. Translation, here, is understood in its broadest sense, incorporating the different meanings of 'version', 'reworking', 'transference', 'transportation' and 'transformation', thus according equal importance to the different translations of Carroll's works and his impact on other cultures and writers. The degree of cohesiveness that characterises this volume owes more to serendipity than editorial prescriptiveness, though Carroll himself is a unifying force to be reckoned with. In some instances the contributors have, quite independently of one another and from completely different perspectives, reached similar if not identical conclusions about Carroll's works and their various translations. Equally remarkable is the fact that Carroll continues to inspire in his commentators the disparate but not irreconcilable qualities of whimsicality and critical rigour.

Initial discussions with colleagues from the fields of Catalan, Galician, Portuguese and English Language Research confirmed Schleder de Borba's early hypotheses about the linguistic demands made by *Alice* and raised further questions about the types of choices, strategies and solutions available to translators. Some of these issues are broached by Schleder de Borba in

her essay about text diversity and intertextuality, in which she challenges the orthodoxy about the (un)translatability of parodic texts and refutes the claim that readers of translations must be acquainted with the original works in order to infer their burlesque tone.

However, our discussions of *Alice* had other, unexpected repercussions, prompting forensic linguist Chris Heffer to draw on his knowledge of the courtroom and embark on a spirited defence of Italian author Aldo Busi's recent translation *Alice nel paese delle meraviglie* (1998). Heffer takes a comparative approach, confronting the provocative Busi translation with the more canonical Amico rendering from two decades before (1978), and argues that Busi's translation is not only more fun, but ultimately more faithful to the communicative intent of the original.

Oriol Massegú and Fiona Mackintosh, for their part, chose to explore Carroll's appropriation by the Latin American authors who are the subject of their own doctoral theses, Julio Cortázar and Alejandra Pizarnik respectively. As Mackintosh points out, Pizarnik and Cortázar had far more in common than their Argentine nationality, being bound together by the ties of friendship, professional regard, inter-referentiality, and of course, their profound appreciation of Carroll's *Alice*.

Massegú painstakingly traces the habitually taken for granted parallels between "Jabberwocky" and Cortázar's experimentation with *glíglico* in *Rayuela* (1963), reaching conclusions about nonsense language, neologisms, meta-language and reader participation that add significantly to our understanding of both texts.

In similarly intertextual vein, Mackintosh reflects upon the astonishingly pervasive presence of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking-Glass* in Pizarnik's works, discernible above all in her incorporation of direct quotations from Carroll and her use of the garden as symbol, even though this traditional *locus amoenus* gradually becomes transformed into the stuff of nightmares.

Readers may note certain similarities between the non-traditional or unconventional translational approaches adopted by *enfant terrible* Aldo Busi and the Catalan writer and academic Salvador Oliva. Known in particular for his translations of Shakespeare and Auden, Oliva was interviewed for this number of *Fragmentos* by Sílvia Mas, who has also sketched in the context for Oliva's controversial rendering as well as his views on translation in general and the specific challenges posed by *Alicia al país de les meravelles* (1996). The Oliva interview reinforces my long-held belief that the *good* translator, if not a creative writer as such, certainly reads with skill and sensitivity, frequently achieving more penetrating insights into the source text than many professional critics.

Maria González Davies considers the (im)possibilities of translating certain text types and of evaluating translations. Referring to the Carner translation of 1927 and Oliva's more recent work, she warns against subjectivity in evaluating translations, preferring instead to use statistical

evidence to measure degrees of accomplishment. González Davies maintains that in the case of the Catalan *Alices*, substitution is more effective than literalness, and further suggests that the translator's style is an important factor to be taken into account.

Carmen Millán-Varela is already known for her studies of the role of translation in normativising the Galician language. Applying the methodology she has devised to examine the ways that canonical works in English – and James Joyce – become part of the Galician cultural system, Millán-Varela's study of the prize-winning 1984 Galician translation, *Alicia no País das Maravillas*, crosses the boundaries of several disciplines to encompass issues in Linguistics, Translation Studies, Children's Literature, the current status of the Galician language as well as the thorny subject of Galician identity.

At the same time, it was felt that attention should be paid to Lewis Carroll's reception in Portugal. To this end, the two most prominent Portuguese scholars of Children's Literature, Glória Bastos and José António Gomes, were invited to assess the nature and extent of *Alice's* presence in Portugal. The result is two articles as interesting for where they coincide as for where they diverge from one another. Taking as their point of departure Virginia de Castro e Almeida's books for children, both critics offer a historical survey of *Alice* translations into European Portuguese.

Bastos, who regales readers with the added tidbit of an original poem, "Alice", looks closely at existing *Alice* translations available in Portugal, and concludes with regret that the majority of these are incomplete, generally inadequate or even seriously flawed.

Gomes, on the other hand, endeavours to find merit in some of the translations, and takes the more positive view that they guarantee a future readership for Carroll, whose perennial influence on Portuguese writers should not be underestimated.

The compilation includes a hitherto unpublished translation into Spanish of "Jabberwocky", *La Jipijaraguera*, composed after the manner of Juan de Mena, fifteenth-century Castilian court poet, by Nicholas G. Round, one of the handful of British academics who has successfully bridged the gap between Translation Theory and the actual practice of translation.

Finally, since it is virtually impossible to disassociate Carroll's literary texts from the illustrations that have enhanced them for many generations of readers, we include two drawings which were commissioned for a special *Alice* section in the Catalan literary review *El Pou de Lletres* (Autumn 1998/Winter 1999), reproduced here in *Fragmentos* with the kind permission of the distinguished artist Josep M. Masegú.

Clearly much work remains to be done on *Alice's* projection into the Romance languages and cultures, whether from the perspective of Translation Studies, Applied Linguistics, Comparative Studies or Literary Criticism. It is our earnest hope that other scholars will add to this body of knowledge, continuing to explore Carroll's enduring influence on the languages and letters of the Old World as of the New World.