Translation, Illustration, Transcreation. From the Fairy Tales of Charles Perrault to Classic Fairy Tales Retold

Martine Hennard Dutheil de la Rochère

Electronic version

URL: <https://journals.openedition.org/edl/1578>

DOI: 10.4000/edl.1578

ISSN: 2296-5084

Publisher

Université de Lausanne

Printed version

Date of publication: 15 September 2019

Number of pages: 59-80

ISBN: 978-2-940331-71-0

ISSN: 0014-2026

Electronic reference

Martine Hennard Dutheil de la Rochère, "Translation, Illustration, Transcreation. From the Fairy Tales of Charles Perrault to Classic Fairy Tales Retold", *Études de lettres* [Online], 310 | 2019, Online since 15 September 2021, connection on 22 September 2021. URL: <http://journals.openedition.org/edl/1578> ; DOI: <https://doi.org/10.4000/edl.1578>

This text was automatically generated on 22 September 2021.

© Études de lettres

Translation, Illustration, Transcreation. From the Fairy Tales of Charles Perrault to Classic Fairy Tales Retold

Martine Hennard Dutheil de la Rochère

- ¹ As they are passed on from one generation to the next, fairy tales owe their “eternal youth” to various forms of translation, transposition and transmediation in the endless play of repetition, reinterpretation, and transformation across languages, art forms, and media. The present essay exemplifies this phenomenon through the editorial history of Angela Carter’s translation of Charles Perrault’s *Histoires ou contes du temps passé* (1697) and its remarkably productive reception. This translation, first published as *The Fairy Tales of Charles Perrault* (1977) with artwork by Martin Ware, gave rise to different editorial projects under the aegis of the progressive publisher Victor Gollancz (then headed by his daughter Livia), owing to the young and adventurous editor Liz Calder recommending Carter’s *The Passion of New Eve* (1977)². These collaborations shed light on the *transcreative* dynamics at the heart of the genre as involving authors, translators, illustrators and editors alike³. A leading British publishing house that collaborated with renowned writers and artists, Victor Gollancz Ltd played a key role in changing perceptions of the fairy tale in the late 1970s and 1980s by enhancing its status as literature. Angela Carter’s creative method of translating French fairy tales for children before rewriting them for adults in *The Bloody Chamber and Other Stories* (1979), also issued by Gollancz, further contributed to rehabilitate this crossover genre par excellence. This collection of innovative, erotic, densely allusive, and woman-centered tales changed perceptions of the genre so that “you could say that the fairy tale grew up in 1979” to quote Marina Warner⁴, and they have had a profound and pervasive influence on literature, film, and other media ever since⁵. As I have shown elsewhere, Carter’s project originated in her freshened-up translation of Charles Perrault’s *contes* for children, published with arresting black-and-white illustrations by Martin Ware that transpose the fairy-tale world in a modern, mundane setting.

- 2 In this article I pursue my analysis of the interplay of text and image in a more child-friendly and prize-winning edition of Carter's translation with dreamy and colourful illustrations by Michael Foreman (born in 1938), which came out in 1982 from the same publisher as the 1977 edition. This book "rejuvenates" the familiar stories in a different sense, this time by locating them in a distant, imaginary past that activates the link between the *contes du temps passé* and childhood nostalgia, in marked contrast with Ware's raw, drab and stark etchings portraying real-life people as fairy-tale characters against a stylized backdrop. The reissue entitled *Sleeping Beauty and Other Favourite Fairy Tales* (1982) reproduces Carter's Perrault translations in a different order, along with two fairy tales by Marie Leprince de Beaumont, "Beauty and Beast" and the lesser-known "Sweetheart", also translated by Carter. This newly illustrated edition marks yet another reinvention of the genre, more in keeping with readers' expectations and traditional fairy-tale iconography, and yet keenly alert to its crossover nature and potential for disguised autobiography, as it would in turn inspire *Classic Fairy Tales Retold and Illustrated by Michael Foreman* (2005).

1. The Fairy Tales of Charles Perrault (1977) or translation as rejuvenation : Perrault's " politics of experience " for young readers

- 3 *The Fairy Tales of Charles Perrault* is situated in a long line of retranslations since Robert Samber's first English rendering of Perrault's *contes* in *Histories or Tales of Past Times* (1729), of which Carter owned a copy (reprint). It was published in a series that sought to re-discover the old stories anew in editions that bridge the gap between popular culture and modern art, children and adults, lay and scholarly audiences⁶. This editorial project was therefore not unlike Perrault's own strategies of dual address that ensured the popularity of his tales.
- 4 An examination of the paratext shows how Carter seeks to give a sense of Perrault's original project for a modern readership, and bridge the gap between past and present⁷. Jean-Paul Sermain has shown how the *mise en recueil* was an essential aspect of the institutionalisation of the *conte de fées* in late seventeenth-century France, and he has stressed the role of the composition, framing and elaborate discursive strategies of fairy tale collections in establishing the new literary genre⁸. The programmatic prefaces and complex textual and visual framing devices, he argues, were originally designed to mark a deliberate rupture from oral practices and popular culture in order to affirm the *literariness* of the author's project. The *conte de fées* was therefore institutionalised as a genre that reclaimed and yet profoundly transformed an oral heritage during this period, the posture of childhood adopted by Perrault contributing to popularise it.
- 5 The 1977 edition of Carter's translation of *The Fairy Tales of Charles Perrault* does not reproduce the dedicatory preface of Perrault's *Histoires ou contes du temps passé*. However, it contains an introduction and a select bibliography including Andrew Lang's critical edition of *Perrault's Popular Tales* (1888) that the translator draws on to portray the author as a gifted, rebellious and independent spirit, a loving husband and devoted father who supposedly authored fairy tales to amuse his children. The anecdote of Perrault's argument with a philosophy teacher when still a pupil, which led to his

leaving school with a friend to embark on a course of self-study, clearly delights the anti-authoritarian and mostly self-taught Carter. She also approves of Perrault's siding with the Moderns against the more conservative defenders of the Ancients. This rather fanciful portrait emphasising Perrault's own youth and interest in children's education presents the Academician in fairy-tale terms as a resourceful Hop o' my Thumb or Puss-in-Boots figure rewarded for his artful adaptation of popular tales by eternal fame. The translator attempts to bridge the adult and child audience, while the more curious and scholarly-inclined reader can find a list of further reading in the bibliography.

- 6 Likewise, Carter tries to bridge folklorist and literary approaches in her introduction. Even though she knows that Perrault's *contes* are not the simple and naive stories that most readers take them to be, she insists that they are the result of collaborative work and stresses the role of nurses, servants and children. Simultaneously, she praises Perrault's artfulness and attributes the popularity of his versions to their literary merit. Although they seem straightforward and simple, they are "told with a great deal of literary art [...] that conceals art" (p. 15) and invite a double reading. Perrault's productions are therefore both artful and folk-like, as they retain (or imitate) "the simplicity of form and the narrative directness of the country story-teller" (p. 15). She not only draws attention to the constant traffic between the oral and literary traditions, but also to the circulation of the tales between France and England, in the personal anecdote of being told the story of "Red Riding Hood" as a child "in almost Perrault's very words" by her grandmother, "although she never spoke a single word of French in all her life" (p. 13).
- 7 Finally, she recognizes that "Each century tends to create or re-create fairy tales after its own taste" (p. 17). This applies to Perrault as much as to Carter's own translation and subsequent rewritings, and generally captures the spirit of this issue of *Études de Lettres*. Carter notes that Perrault's late seventeenth-century tales prefigure the Enlightenment in their concise style, precise language, worldly-wise irony and realism, which is consistent with her own standpoint as a children's author and translator. In "Little Red Riding Hood" and "Bluebeard", for instance, Perrault usefully cautions his readers against the dangers of the world but he also neutralizes their disturbing content when he situates the story in a faraway past in the moral. She also approves of Perrault's matter-of-fact attention to "worldly security" (p. 18) and progressive sexual politics: Bluebeard's wife cleverly "uses her inheritance to secure for herself another, better husband" (p. 18), and Cinderella's sisters are forgiven, because the tale condemns their moral defects redeemable through "moral effort" (they are not ugly as in Disney's film), in sharp contrast with the Grimms' bloody punishment. This enables Carter to reclaim Perrault for the type of materialist feminism that she embodied and defended.
- 8 Even Perrault's fairies "have rather less the air of supernatural beings [...] than that of women of independent means [...] prepared to help along a little sister who finds herself in difficulties, personages as worldly-wise and self-confident as Mae West" (p. 18-19). Carter's rapprochement between the fairy godmothers and the witty and voluptuous movie star is visualised in Ware's illustration for the Lilac Fairy, modelled on a photograph of Mae West in "My Old Flame". The fairy is made to embody confident, creative, funny, free, smart and sexy femininity, and she also functions as a delegate of the author in the fiction. Carter thereby aligns herself with a long tradition of women authors who have represented themselves as fairies in the literary tradition,

as well as with the worldly-wise female storytellers of old. She concludes by praising “the work of this humane, tolerant and kind-hearted Frenchman” from whom children can learn useful life lessons “and gain much pleasure, besides” (p. 19).

- 9 Although Carter takes care to situate Perrault’s project in the introduction, she subtly “freshens up” the text in her translation, especially the morals, in keeping with her declaration on the dust cover :

Perrault wrote down his fairy tales in a style of absolute simplicity and perfect charm and it seemed to me both a challenge and a pleasure to translate them in a manner which makes them seem as fresh as they must have seemed to the first readers in the time of Louis XIV.

- 10 Thus, her prose rendering of the verse moral of Little Red Riding Hood no longer sets the seduction scene in a young lady’s bedchamber, but cautions against sexual predators stalking girls in the streets (maybe a translation error). Likewise, Carter removes the gendered address in the old misogynistic saw about female curiosity in the moral of Bluebeard, and disambiguates the rather convoluted second moral to suggest that patriarchal domination has now given way to women’s liberation.
- 11 When Carter read Charles Perrault’s *contes* in the original language in 1976, she rediscovered the stories anew, and this firsthand experience made her realise that his tales had nothing to do with the escapism associated with the genre. In “The Better to Eat You With” (1976), she opposes the practical politics of Perrault’s tales, based on their morals, to Victorian fairyland and fantasy, and goes on to reclaim Perrault’s “project for worldly instruction” (*Shaking a Leg*, p. 453) for young readers of the 1970s, who can learn from these “fables of the politics of experience” (*Shaking a Leg*, p. 452-453). Although Carter presents Perrault’s *contes* as nursery tales in the article, she did not ignore the fact that they were intended as mock-naïve stories addressed to a sophisticated adult audience. Her archives confirm that she was wellversed in fairy-tale scholarship, and so does the bibliography of *The Fairy Tales of Charles Perrault*. While she had to downplay the tales’ textual and semantic complexity to make them amenable and accessible to children in her translation, rewriting them in *The Bloody Chamber*, published two years later, offered the freedom to explore and pursue the more hidden dimensions of her textual sources including intertextual echoes, sharp irony, sexual allusiveness and a socially critical edge. As she lucidly observes in the introduction to her translation, fairy tales have always been (re)made to speak to different kinds of audiences, and that is what she emulated in her twofold project : while the Perrault-based translation addressed to a child audience subtly changes their message to fit her own agenda, *The Bloody Chamber* is a self-consciously literary endeavor that fashions a complex reading experience for an older and bolder, more knowing and knowledgeable reader confronted with a wealth of allusions, unexpected departures from the plots and new perspectives on the familiar stories.
- 12 Martin Ware’s artwork for *The Fairy Tales of Charles Perrault* was not intended for children, and his black-and-white etchings already depart from conventional fairy-tale imagery (fig. 1). On the dust cover (also reproduced on the inside cover page) fairy-tale characters pose as if for a family picture : Donkey-Skin, a Dwarf, Puss-in-Boots, Hop o’ my Thumb, a Wolf, and an Ogre; on the back, Bluebeard’s bride in a wedding dress, the fairy godmother locking arms with the groom, Donkey-Skin’s incestuous father, an ogre, six lizards changing into footmen and two butterflies, smaller figures disappearing in the background and some iconic objects : a key, a shattered pot, a tiny

glass slipper, and a pile of bones. The unusual treatment of this gathering of fairy tale characters is not only perceptible in the realistic, almost photographic style in which Ware portrays them, but also in their blank, emotionless expression and stiff side-by-side juxtaposition like cut-out figures from a family album. The visual echoes nevertheless suggest that they belong together and so hint at the dynamics of repetition, variation and combination typical of the fairy-tale tradition. The device of the photo album invites recognition and identification but also unexpected and suggestive rapprochements, like the incestuous king's dark glasses and Bluebeard's monocle, or the symmetrical tails of Puss and the Ogre, such as those imagined by Angela Carter in her own retellings⁹.

<Image en attente de droits>

Fig. 1 — Cover of *The Fairy Tales of Charles Perrault*, translated by Angela Carter and illustrated by Martin Ware, London, Victor Gollanz Ltd, 1977. © Courtesy of Orion Publishing.

- 13 Carter's 1977 translation of *The Fairy Tales of Charles Perrault* was rather well received if we consider the reviews collected in the Carter Papers, although this may not have translated into high sales. The translation was praised for its energy and wit, and the unsentimental illustrations admired for their force and originality. The book was marketed as a collection of fairy tales for children and reviewed in the children's books sections of a number of English and Irish newspapers that tend to stress the ironic, allusive and disturbing illustrations meant for adults more than children¹⁰. Some reviewers express their surprise at Perrault's take on the familiar stories, and even claim his versions as a more authentic rendering of his folkloric sources than the bowdlerized and moralized adaptations with which they were familiar, as they differ both from the cruel and heavily moralistic stories collected by the Grimms as well as Disney's sugar-coated films. Perrault's tales (as mediated by Carter) are described as "ironical, witty, direct. Young girls beguiled by strangers are fools, Red Riding Hood deserved to be gobbled up". Some comment on the horror of the Bluebeard story and the persecution of the bride in *Sleeping Beauty*, but also on the neutralizing effects of Perrault's dry humour and matter-of-fact morals.

2. Back to childhood, or the fairy tale as bedtime story : *Sleeping Beauty* and Other Favourite Fairy Tales (1982)

- 14 Victor Gollancz Ltd reissued Carter's translation as *Sleeping Beauty and Other Favourite Fairy Tales* in 1982, possibly to give it renewed attention in the aftermath of *The Bloody Chamber*. This second edition marketed for children "Age 7 upwards" was published in a larger format with plenty of colourful illustrations by the celebrated, prolific, and award-winning illustrator and author of children's books Michael Foreman¹¹. The picture book was awarded two prestigious prizes, the Kate Greenaway Medal and the first Kurt Maschler Award rewarding translator and illustrator alike for artfully balancing text and image. One of the judges, Elaine Moss, explains in the November 6, 1982 issue of *The Bookseller* that the decision to give the prize to Angela Carter and Michael Foreman (£500 each) was unanimous, based on the quality of the original text and its translation, the illustrations, as well as the impeccable production. Moss praises Carter's "grasp of traditional material", her "novelist's eye" able to capture the "human condition" at the core of the stories that "change as time and place

demand”, as well as her “ear for speech” conveying the “French masterpieces” in “the rough-edged vigorous oral language of the fire-side enchantress”. For his part, “Michael Foreman has drawn and painted a set of superb illustrations”. His great gift as an illustrator is his versatility, from a “dreamy and romantic” Cinderella by the fireside to “a coarsely humorous scene” depicting the ugly sisters dressing up for the ball. “Each element in a story—the romantic, the faery, the hideous, the ghostly, the humorous, the horrendous, the happy—finds its visual realisation in Foreman’s pictures, which follow one upon the other in quick succession, the style matching the mood, ringing the changes, exercising the emotions.” The review ends with a praise of the publisher for his “great series of traditional stories in excellent texts with Foreman’s illustrations”, including the Alderson Grimm and the Haugaard Andersen.

- 15 After winning the Kate Greenaway medal, the picture book was advertised alongside four others also illustrated by Michael Foreman as follows :

“Beauty and the Beast”, “Puss in boots”, “Bluebeard”, “Hop o’ my Thumb” and eight other favourite French tales are collected here in a book of exceptional beauty. Angela Carter’s translation achieves that rare state of being not only very readable, but also steeped in poetry and magic. Michael Foreman’s pictures, in full colour and black and white, amplify, deepen and bring alive the mystery, pathos, humour and charm of each story in turn. Together they have created a book which will be enjoyed by children of all ages and their parents, and which is ideally suited to children who are beginning to read with confidence (*Books for Children*, December 1983, courtesy of Michael Foreman).

- 16 Foreman is known for fairy-tale illustrations that celebrate childhood imagination, adventure, and wonder. He seeks to capture the emotional truth of a story, often set in natural landscapes based on his travel sketches and summer walks in the Cornish countryside. In marked contrast to Ware’s geometric, abstract or blank backgrounds, landscapes play a key role in Foreman’s work and contribute to the enchanted atmosphere. As the title and cover of *Sleeping Beauty and Other Fairy Tales* make clear, “The Sleeping Beauty in the Wood” is given pride of place, and the sequence of stories is reorganized accordingly¹². The 1982 edition is composed, illustrated and marketed for children, and the French source disappears from the cover in favour of the anonymous category of the “favourite fairy tale”. Unlike the more daring and experimental 1977 edition, the 1982 reissue is delightful, colourful and captivating although the translations themselves remain unchanged. The first edition challenged received ideas about the origin, nature, function and public of the fairy tale as imaginative literature, introduced new versions of the familiar stories in the British canon, and marked a deliberate rupture with traditional fairy tale iconography. The reissue, with its choice of title, format and colours, dream-like landscapes and gentle humour, situates the stories within a tradition of medieval and courtly romance in line with the golden age of fairy tale illustration, and so returns the genre to England, or rather to the illustrator’s sense of a universal folklore of childhood. In keeping with readerly expectations, the cover highlights the pursuit of love as the primary theme of the collection, and the happy ending is figured through the visual leitmotiv of the heart in several closing vignettes (fig. 2).

<Image en attente de droits>

Fig. 2 — Cover of *Sleeping Beauty and Other Favourite Fairy Tales*, translated by Angela Carter and illustrated by Michael Foreman, London, Victor Gollancz Ltd, 1991 (1982). © Courtesy of Orion Publishing.

- 17 In contrast to the 1977 edition, Foreman depicts a young Prince in shining armour on his way to Sleeping Beauty's castle, shifting the focus from drab reality to fairy-tale romance. The Prince riding his white horse references the medieval revival iconography of late Victorian books illustrated by James Whitcomb Riley, Arthur Rackham, Henry J. Ford for Lang's fairy books, Wilhelm Roegge, Walter Crane and Margaret Evans Price. The soft, pastel colours, hazy edges and dreamy atmosphere of Foreman's watercolour technique visualise the "twilight realm" of fairyland as well as the enchanted sleep of the Princess. In contrast to the frozen pose of Ware's fairy-tale figures, Foreman's Prince materialises narrative drive and desire: wearing a Hermes-like winged helmet, he is riding a galloping horse richly harnessed in pink and mauve and decorated with hearts. Foreman captures the driving force of the story of the beautiful princess that fired the Prince's imagination and spurred his desire to ride through the enchanted forest and declare his love. The Prince also looks like a boy on a rocking horse, which confirms that the child reader has now become the main audience of the book. The illustration, however, invites a more hidden and knowing play with the adult reader/viewer in true fairy-tale fashion, as Foreman created "a shared experience between adults and children, as are most of [his] own books".
- 18 The Prince is heading towards a pinkish castle set on a greenish-blue background bordered by a leafy, dark green forest. The mountainous landscape outlined behind the forest is shaped like the neck and profile of the sleeping Princess, who may in fact be dreaming about the fairy-tale Prince, the scene being bathed in the warm, soft light of dawn or dusk. The concept of the woman-shaped landscape cleverly visualises a textual ambiguity in the title ("sleeping" qualifying either Beauty or the wood – or both), which conflates the young Princess with her environment, and the narrator's shrewd observation that the "good fairy had made sure she had sweet dreams during her long sleep"¹³, Perrault's corresponding phrase even containing a more explicit sexual innuendo typical of the fairy tale as a galant pastime. Despite the child-friendly first impression, then, Foreman's cover illustration contains subtle and gentle erotic undertones in the shapes and colours of the fleshy high-turreted castle, and the reclining figure of the female sleeper who may be bathing in child-like or in erotic dreams. This becomes even more obvious when the book is opened and held vertically, complete with the back cover assembling various fairy tale figures, including a bald, pink (phallic?) ogre in the forest frowning at Cinderella's coach down below, unless he is ogling the body of the sleeping princess protected by the trees. The scene depicted on the back cover is also more disquieting: a heart-shaped yellow coach is travelling in a dark forest, observed by an ogre looming over the woods, while a fanged wolf is hiding in the bushes in the forefront. The golden coach could be Cinderella's, but also Bluebeard's. Even the good fairy in her dragon-drawn chariot is crossing the sky in the wrong direction, leaving the passengers unprotected. Overall, however, the picture emphasizes movement, magical action and fabulous creatures, as it brings together various fairy-tale characters and episodes in the same visual space.
- 19 The motif of the Prince on his horse also features on the title page inside the book, followed by the fairy-tale castle on the next page, as if to foster the child-reader's identification with the Prince getting closer to his destination, the enchanted fairy-tale castle functioning as a metaphor for the fairy-tale realm depicted on the cover. The title tale opens with a tender vignette of the royal couple and their baby, followed by an illustration of the dramatic episode of the curse spread out over two pages (p. 10-11)

but treated comically, with the bad fairy on the left and the good fairy peeking behind a tapestry on the right, and so cleverly visualizing the unfolding of the plot. The motif of the feminized landscape is used again on pages 16-17, as if to provide a key to the “adult” reading of the cover¹⁴. Foreman thus alternates dreamy and more whimsical, playful illustrations for *Sleeping Beauty* to convey the pace and rhythm of the stories as well as their changes of tone and mood.

- 20 Anthropomorphised landscapes are also found in “Bluebeard”, “Beauty and the Beast” and “The Fairies”. Bluebeard’s castle is built on a skull-shaped rock emerging from the sea and connected to the mainland by a stone bridge and winding road. The castle references Cornwall’s Saint Michael’s Mount (near Saint Ives) in Foreman’s signature style¹⁵. The illustration also materialises a simile in Perrault’s text at the climactic moment when the bride begs forgiveness in vain because, the narrator observes, Bluebeard’s heart is harder than stone. Foreman thus captures the cruelty and nightmarish atmosphere of the story, as it foreshadows the macabre discovery of the slayed women bathing in their blood in the secret cabinet (represented quite realistically and staring at the viewer in *memento mori* fashion on page 35). Interestingly, the image parallels Carter’s own Gothic rewriting of the story in *The Bloody Chamber*, complete with the lavishly described Breton castle by the sea (isolated from the mainland at high tide) inspired by a visit to the Mont Saint-Michel¹⁶. The decision to confront the child reader with corpses in various stages of decomposition may reflect a shift in perceptions of childhood and death, or a growing interest in the dark and disturbing content of classic tales that has become a staple feature of contemporary adaptations. It may even be a faraway memory of Carter’s own *Bloody Chamber*, although Foreman declared in the interview that, although ‘familiar with it,’ he ‘was not consciously influenced by it’, adding: ‘Placing Bluebeard’s Castle on a mountain top, resembling a gigantic skull, seemed natural. I often incorporate faces, skulls, monsters etc. into landscape to make it more romantic, dramatic or horrific’. The macabre discovery, however, soon gives way to a comic-book-like illustration of sister Anne calling to her brothers, while a threatening but grotesque Bluebeard roams the surroundings.
- 21 It is noteworthy that in this newly illustrated edition, Angela Carter’s presentation of the authors of the tales, Charles Perrault and Marie Leprince de Beaumont, is relegated to the end of the book, and the bibliography disappears altogether. Casually titled “About the Stories”, it is placed under the aegis of a grinning and triumphant Puss in Boots in a colourful, harlequinesque costume. The translator summarizes the Perrault introduction for the 1977 edition, and introduces Marie Leprince de Beaumont’s own work for children as marking the emergence of children’s literature, Beaumont’s concern with moral education reflecting a profound change in socio-cultural attitudes towards children. It is noteworthy that Carter locates the origin of Perrault’s *contes* in a universal and orally transmitted folklore associated with old wives, nurses and children much more firmly than in the previous edition. She also underlines that Beaumont “worked exclusively for young people, both as a writer and as a governess” (p. 127). Once again, Carter’s portrayal of a fellow-writer becomes a self-portrait of sorts: a talented, enterprising woman earning a living by retelling fairy tales as a means to combine literary creation, entertainment and pedagogy. The decision to include Beaumont is also very much in the spirit of second-wave feminists honoring their literary “foremothers”¹⁷. In this sense, Carter’s choice to include two tales by Beaumont in the 1982 edition reflects a growing interest in a female tradition

overshadowed by Perrault, Grimm and Andersen. Beaumont's "self-conscious, sensuous, evocative" (p. 128) prose marks a shift from "the Age of Reason" to "the Cult of Sensibility": "In her lovely stories," she concludes, "we see the fairy tale melting into both a magical art, and also into the kind of abstract moralising that would dominate nineteenth century stories for children" (p. 128). Like the authors, translators or illustrators past and present, Beaumont is therefore at once an adaptor, a creator and an innovator. Generally speaking, *Sleeping Beauty and Other Fairy Tales* harmonizes the implied child reader of Carter's translation with Foreman's illustrations in this coloured picturebook that celebrates childhood imagination and emotional life.

- 22 It is fair to claim that Carter's translations have now achieved the status of "modern classics". They were recently reprinted in a Penguin paperback edition (without illustrations) marking a renewed interest in the history of the fairy-tale genre after a spate of adaptations in different media, as well as a belated recognition of the impact of Angela Carter's activity as a translator from the French. Interestingly, Penguin reissued Carter's translation in two series distinguished by their cover. They draw on distinct images of Perrault as a children's author, and as a writer of faux-naïf *contes* for grown-ups filtered through *The Bloody Chamber*. The first reprint was published as *Little Red Riding Hood, Cinderella, and Other Classic Fairy Tales of Charles Perrault* in the Penguin Classics series in 2008, with John Hassal's Art Nouveau illustration of "Little Red Riding Hood" among the poppies on the cover. The other reprint, this time in Penguin's Modern Classics series, places the emphasis on the *translator* over Perrault as the actual author of the tales. The cover illustration is by the controversial visual artist Marilyn Minter, known for her daring and provocative pictures that play with the codes of pornography, mixing smut and glamour, art and advertising, fairy-tale romance and rough trade. Entitled "Stepping Up", it offers an ironic visual commentary on a modern-day Cinderella through her muddied or sooty foot in a fetishized shoe, a high-heeled strass Dior slipper, slick and shiny, in pink, glittery and silver colours, thereby drawing attention to the dual reception of Perrault's *contes* in the twenty-first century as a canonical author of children's stories, as well as of coded tales for adults that continue to inspire writers, artists and publishers. This new image evidently owes much to *The Bloody Chamber*, which took the fairy tale out of the nursery in the twentieth century.

3. The generative power of translation and illustration

- 23 Angela Carter perceived the relevance of Perrault's *contes* for her feminist project, and she responded to their dual nature in her translation and rewritings. In turn, Michael Foreman based his illustrations for several book projects on modern translations filtered through his own life experience, travel sketches, and sensibility. Prompted by his current publisher Pavilion, he even went on to retell the familiar stories in his own voice in *Classic Fairy Tales Retold and Illustrated by Michael Foreman* (2005), dedicated to his three sons Jack, Ben and Mark¹⁸ (fig. 3).

<Image en attente de droits>

Fig. 3 — Cover of *Classic Fairy Tales Retold and Illustrated by Michael Foreman*, London, Pavilion, 2013 (2005). © Courtesy of Pavilion Books.

- 24 Drawing on a selection of tales by Grimm, Perrault, Beaumont and Andersen that he had previously illustrated, Foreman modernises the texts, adds new details and introduces changes in the plot, while also revisiting his own artwork in a different technique (coloured drawings). The style is oralised, simplified, and modernised for a child reader (monosyllabic words, repetitions, familiar language and idioms – e.g. “super-fast”). Logical links and clarifications are inserted, suspense created, and poetic or comic details introduced. The stories of Sleeping Beauty, Cinderella, Puss in Boots and Little Red Riding Hood are based on the Carter translation that he had illustrated over two decades earlier, although his retelling also includes elements borrowed from the Grimms : for instance, Sleeping Beauty ends with the wedding, as in “Dornröschen”¹⁹. Another borrowing from the German version is the grim visual detail of the dead princes caught in the thorns, visualized on a full-page illustration, which depicts the Prince hacking a path through a dense, jungle-like forest. Foreman’s versions of the familiar stories, which alternate dramatic scenes with heightened suspense, romance, or comedy seem to respond to his own illustrations at least as much as to the texts themselves. Thus, he elaborates on the transformation of the deathly thorns into white flowers (hawthorn) already present on the Sleeping Beauty-inspired cover, as well as in several illustrations of the tale, including vignette-like inserts and the visual motif at the end of the tale. The striking and macabre moment thus gives way to love and happiness, symbolised by the white flowers marking the triumph of life over death. Even the birds that are roasting on the spits are revived by Foreman, when they reappear at the end as cooing pigeons celebrating the union of the lovers, complete with a new and optimistic fairy-tale ending playing on the briar rose motif : their marriage indeed had “far more roses than thorns” (p. 17). Similarly, the story of Little Red Riding Hood ends well, with the added comic detail of the wolf turning vegetarian. Generally, the disturbing, bloody or nasty aspects are softened or erased, ensuring a happy ending for all. As exemplified by the interplay of translation, illustration and retelling the age-old stories are, therefore, constantly re-invented anew. An examination of the editorial history of Carter’s translation, repackaging, and re-editing with a new paratext and illustrations shows how it has achieved the status of a modern classic, and highlights the transcreative dynamic at the heart of the genre. While Carter found inspiration for her own fiction in translating French fairy tales for children, Foreman’s work as an illustrator of classic tales by Perrault, Grimm, Beaumont and Andersen (but also Alan Garner and Terry Jones) led him to revisit them in *Classic Fairy Tales Retold and Illustrated by Michael Foreman*. Both Carter and Foreman show an awareness of the crossover nature of the genre and of the double audience of illustrated books, and each responds to it in their own way, Carter focusing on their ‘politics of experience’ while Foreman stresses imagination and fairy-tale romance²⁰. In this sense, the translation-rewriting and illustration-retelling dynamics captures the generative power and transformative effects of translating across languages and art forms as a transcreative practice leading to further experiments, editorial projects and reimaginings. A comparative analysis of fairy-tale editions based on translations, retellings, and reinterpretations of classic tales thus demonstrates how the collections are complex, collective creations by authors, translators, illustrators, editors, and publishers, whose collaborative work – even when involving some of the same creators/mediators – generate new texts with differing agendas, intended audiences, media, paratextual frameworks and personal resonances, and hence demonstrate the

force of transcreativity in the production, reception and continuing relevance of fairy tales in every generation.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary texts

- CARTER, Angela (trans.), *The Fairy Tales of Charles Perrault*, illustrated by Martin Ware, London, Victor Gollancz Ltd, 1977.
- , “The Better to Eat You With”, *Shaking a Leg : Collected Journalism and Writings*, London, Vintage, 1998 (1976), p. 451-455.
- , *The Bloody Chamber and Other Stories*, London, Victor Gollancz Ltd, 1979.
- , *Sleeping Beauty and Other Favourite Fairy Tales*, illustrated by Michael Foreman, London, Victor Gollancz Ltd, 1991 (1982).
- , “Notes from the Front Line”, *Shaking a Leg : Collected Journalism and Writings*, London, Vintage, 1998 (1983), p. 36-43.
- , Interview with Anna Katsavos : <https://www.dalkeyarchive.com/a-conversation-with-angela-carter-by-anna-katsavos/>.
- , *The Fairy Tales of Charles Perrault*, introduction by Jack Zipes, London, Penguin (Modern Classics), 2008.
- , *Little Red Riding Hood, Cinderella, and Other Classic Fairy Tales of Charles Perrault*, introduction by Jack Zipes, London, Penguin (Penguin Classics), 2008.
- FOREMAN, Michael, *Classic Fairy Tales Retold and Illustrated by Michael Foreman*, London, Pavilion, 2013 (2005).
- , *A Life in Pictures*, with a foreword by Michael Morpurgo, London, Pavilion, 2015.
- GRIMM, Jacob and Wilhelm, *Kinder- und Hausmärchen*, ed. by Heinz Rölleke, Frankfurt am Main, Reclam, 1980 (1857).
- JONES, Christine A., *Mother Goose Refigured : A Critical Translation of Charles Perrault's Fairy Tales*, Detroit, Wayne University Press, 2016.
- PERRAULT, Charles, *Contes*, ed. by Jean-Pierre Collinet, Paris, Gallimard (Folio classique), 1981.

Critical texts

- ANON., “Tribute to Michael Foreman”, *Books for Children*, December 1983 (unnumbered).
- BARCHILON, Jacques, *Le conte merveilleux en France de 1690 à 1790. Cent ans de féerie et de poésie ignorées de l'histoire littéraire*, Paris, Honoré Champion, 1975.

- BECKETT, Sandra L., *Crossover Fiction. Global and Historical Perspectives*, New York, Routledge, 2008.
- , *Recycling Red Riding Hood*, New York, Routledge, 2009 (2002).
- , *Red Riding Hood for All Ages : A Fairy-Tale Icon*, Detroit, Wayne State University Press, 2008.
- GORDON, Edmund, *The Invention of Angela Carter : A Biography*, London, Chatto & Windus, 2016.
- HENNARD DUTHEIL DE LA ROCHÈRE, Martine, *Reading, Translating, Rewriting : Angela Carter's Translational Poetics*, Detroit, Wayne University Press, 2013.
- , “ ‘ La magie des voix dans la nuit ’ : ‘ transcréation ’ des contes de Perrault chez Angela Carter ”, in *Les Voies contemporaines de l'oralité*, éd. par Camille Vorger, *Études de Lettres*, 301 (2016/3), p. 87-108.
- , “ From the Bloody Chamber to the Cabinet de Curiosités : Angela Carter's Curious Alices Through the Looking-Glass of Languages ”, *Marvels & Tales : Journal of Fairy-Tale Studies*, 30 (2016/2), p. 284-308 (<<https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.13110/marveltales.30.2.0284>>).
- LATHEY, Gillian, *The Role of Translators in Children's Literature : Invisible Storytellers*, New York & London, Routledge, 2010.
- MOSS, Elaine, “ The Seventies in British Children's Book ”, in *The Signal Approach to Children's Books : A Collection*, ed. by Nancy Chambers, Harmondsworth, Kestrel Books, 1980, p. 41-80.
- , “ Gollancz Fairy Tales Win First Emil ”, *The Bookseller*, November 6, 1982, n. p.
- SEAGO, Karen, “ Nursery Politics : Sleeping Beauty and the Acculturation of a Tale ”, in *The Translation of Children's Literature : A Reader*, ed. by Gillian Lathey, Clevedon, Buffalo, Toronto, Multilingual Matters, p. 175-189.
- SERMAIN, Jean-Paul, “ La face cachée du conte : le recueil et l'encadrement ”, *Féeries*, 1 (2004) (<<https://journals.openedition.org/feeries/64>>, last consulted 20 August 2018).
- WARNER, Marina, *From the Beast to the Blonde : On Fairy Tales and their Tellers*, London, Chatto & Windus, 1994.
- , *Once Upon A Time : A Short History of Fairy Tale*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2014.

Sitography

- <<https://www.dalkeyarchive.com/a-conversation-with-angela-carter-by-anna-katsavos/>> (last consulted 7 September 2018).
- <<https://www.theguardian.com/books/booksblog/2017/feb/16/from-fifty-shades-to-buffy-what-we-owe>>.

NOTES

1. I am grateful to Donald Haase, Gillian Lathey and Jean-Paul Sermain for their useful comments on the piece, and to Michael Foreman for his patience and kindness in answering my questions.
2. E. Gordon has documented the friendship between Carter and Calder in *The Invention of Angela Carter*, which provides some details about the advance contract for the translation (£700). Calder would co-found the publishing house Bloomsbury in 1986.

3. For a tentative definition of *transcreation* as combining different modalities of translation to stimulate creativity, see M. Hennard Dutheil de la Rochère, “ ‘ La magie des voix dans la nuit ’ ”. For a comparative analysis that teases out the *translational* and *transcreative poetics* of Carter’s short stories as well as their main intertextual sources, see “ From the Bloody Chamber to the *Cabinet de Curiosités* ”. I have traced the interplay of translation and rewriting in *Reading, Translating, Rewriting*, including the interplay of text and image in the 1977 edition illustrated by Martin Ware.

4. M. Warner, *Once Upon a Time*, p. 141.

5. Many contemporary writers have paid tribute to Carter, including Emma Donoghue, China Miéville, Salman Rushdie, and Jeanette Winterson, to name a few. On Carter’s impact on contemporary culture, see <<https://www.theguardian.com/books/booksblog/2017/feb/16/from-fifty-shades-to-buffy-what-we-owe-to-angela-carter>>.

6. See M. Hennard Dutheil, *Reading, Translating, Rewriting : Angela Carter’s Translational Poetics*, p. 22 and 46. On English translations of Perrault’s collection, see Ch. Jones’s annotated bibliography in *Mother Goose Refigured*.

7. The emergence of the *conte de fées* as a literary institution has been well documented since Jacques Barchilon’s critical edition of Perrault’s 1695 manuscript and 1697 edition as well as his pioneering study *Le conte merveilleux en France de 1690 à 1790*, both of which are cited in the bibliography to A. Carter, *The Fairy Tales of Charles Perrault*.

8. J.-P. Sermain, “ La face cachée du conte ”.

9. For instance, “ The Bloody Chamber ” references various “ Bluebeard ” stories (including Perrault’s and Grimms’ versions), as well as visual sources (see Hennard Dutheil, *Reading, Translating, Rewriting*).

10. In her overview of “ The Seventies in British Children’s Book ”, E. Moss traces the impact of social, economic and cultural changes on children’s books during the decade, noting a recognition that they “ could be the repository of fine writing ” (p. 58), and a growing interest in teenage readers : she mentions Gollancz’s “ outstanding list of American teenage novels ” (p. 60) and Michael Foreman’s picture books addressing readers “ beyond under-sevens ” (p. 64). She also observes an increasing internationalisation of the book market and “ the growth of a strong literary establishment of children’s books early in the decade ”, including prizes and reviews in the major newspapers.

11. Michael Foreman declared in the email interview conducted between July and September 2018 that : “ To be asked to illustrate a Classic is always an honour and a wonderful opportunity to work with timeless imagery. It is both a challenge and a joy ”. He worked directly from Carter’s translations and : “ Once the Contract was agreed, there was no further contact with either Angela or the publisher, until I delivered the art. Fortunately, everyone was happy with it ”.

12. In his illustrated biography *A Life in Pictures*, Foreman associates the great forests of Europe with fairy tales, declaring that Perrault’s and the Grimms’ collections, which “ convey the deepest wishes and fears of ordinary people ”, “ grew from the folklore of the forest ”. In his turn he “ tried to convey the lurking danger of the shadowy wolf among the trees, and Red Riding Hood like a drop of blood from his jaws ” (p. 111).

13. A. Carter, *Sleeping Beauty and Other Fairy Tales*, p. 16.

14. Other nods at the adult reader/viewer include the Prince’s envoy groping the ugly sister’s breast in the comic depiction of the slipper trial scene in “ Cinderella ” (p. 111), references to film (e.g. “ Dracula ” played by Bella Lugosi in his iconic coat on p. 45 to illustrate “ Beauty and the Beast ”), and Botticelli’s Venus in “ Ricky with the Tuft ” (p. 97) and “ The Fairies ” (p. 64).

15. “ I have had a studio in Saint Ives for many years; the ancient landscape of moorland, rocky cliffs and forests and, of course, the sea, are timeless and perfect for the setting of many fairy tales ” (M. Foreman, e-mail interview).

16. <<https://www.dalkeyarchive.com/a-conversation-with-angela-carter-by-anna-katsavos/>> (last consulted 7 September 2018).
 17. Carter also took an active part in reviving scholarly interest in the fairy tale as a gendered genre by editing two volumes for Virago, which inspired a new generation of scholars including Marina Warner and Jack Zipes.
 18. “It was suggested by the publisher and I had complete freedom to select the stories”.
 19. On the amalgamation of Perrault’s and Grimms’ versions of the tale in English translations, see K. Seago, “Nursery Politics”.
 20. On the fairy tale as a *crossover* genre, see S. Beckett’s *Crossover Fiction*, as well as her books on “Little Red Riding Hood”. On the role of translation in the dissemination and popularisation of fairy tales, see G. Lathey’s *The Role of Translators in Children’s Literature*.
-

ABSTRACTS

The article proposes that the fairy-tale tradition unfolds as a collective, dynamic and transformative process of *transcreation* across languages, contexts and media for different purposes and publics. It notably draws attention to the role of translators, illustrators and publishers whose collaborations have produced new versions of the familiar stories in print form, which have in turn inspired highly innovative projects for children and adults reflecting personal takes on the stories. As a case study, I trace the editorial history of Angela Carter’s translation of *The Fairy Tales of Charles Perrault* (1977) illustrated by Martin Ware, which paved the way for Carter’s own collection of ‘stories about fairy stories’, *The Bloody Chamber and Other Stories* (1979), in contrapuntal fashion. The translation was reissued with child-friendly illustrations by Michael Foreman in *Sleeping Beauty and Other Favourite Fairy Tales* (1982), also published by Victor Gollancz, which later fed into *Classic Fairy Tales Retold and Illustrated by Michael Foreman* (2005)¹.

L’article émet l’hypothèse que les contes se transmettent selon un processus collectif et dynamique de *transcréation* entre les langues, les textes et les images. Il met en lumière le rôle des traducteurs, illustrateurs et éditeurs dont les collaborations ont donné naissance à des versions renouvelées des histoires familières et à des projets novateurs pour les enfants et les adultes. À titre d’exemple, je retrace l’histoire éditoriale de la traduction anglaise des contes de Perrault par Angela Carter, illustrée par Martin Ware, dans *The Fairy Tales of Charles Perrault* (1977), à partir de laquelle la traductrice a élaboré en contrepoint son propre recueil de réécritures *The Bloody Chamber and Other Stories* (1979). La traduction de Carter a été rééditée dans *Sleeping Beauty and Other Favourite Fairy Tales* (1982) avec des illustrations de Michael Foreman, aussi chez Gollancz, qui a à son tour inspiré *Classic Fairy Tales Retold and Illustrated by Michael Foreman* (2005).

AUTHOR

MARTINE HENNARD DUTHEIL DE LA ROCHÈRE

Université de Lausanne