Chapter 30

The Implied Reader of the Translation

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In this chapter, Petros Panaou and Tasoula Tsilimeni approach the translation of children’s literature from a different perspective than that of the more academic arguments critiqued by Maria Nikolajeva in the previous chapter. By combining insights from narratology with translation theory and practice, they discuss how translators, when they move from source texts to target texts, translate cultural expectations and ideologies regarding childhood along with the actual words, sometimes distorting the originals and seeking to remove the “foreign” elements that make translated literature so valuable for children in their quest to understand cultural difference. Kostia Kontoleon, in her point of departure essay, focuses more on her commitment to preserve the aesthetic qualities of a text, but she too recognizes the importance of translation as an intermediary between diverse cultures.

Considering the Implied Reader

Let us consider this: An author is writing a story from a boy’s perspective about the death of his favorite pet. At a crucial point of the story, the boy’s
father attempts to explain “death” to him. The author ponders two versions of this scene:

[1] ‘Dead,’ said Daddy, ‘is very different from sleeping. Dead is –’

‘– NOT alive!’ I shouted.

or

[2] ‘When somebody dies,’ said Daddy, ‘it doesn’t mean that he is asleep.

It means that…’

‘…he is not alive?’ I asked.

Which version of the scene will she decide to include in the final draft? What effect will this choice have on her story? A boy protagonist who shouts “NOT alive!” is significantly different from a protagonist who reservedly asks “…he is not alive?” The first expresses anger, an emotion that is part of a series of emotions associated with mourning. The latter avoids expressing intense feelings. How will the author decide? If she thinks that the child reader is capable of processing the intense emotions that accompany loss, then she will probably choose the first. If she believes that children are too innocent and hyper-sensitive to be asked to empathize with such powerful feelings, she will choose the latter.

Now let us consider this: Both choices have been incorporated in published picture books, the first one in the English version of Goodbye Mousie (Harris & Ormerod, 2001, n.p.), and the second one in its Greek
translation (translated by Dimitra, 2003, n.p.). Aren’t we justified to infer that both a different protagonist and a different reader are implied by each text?

In her comparative analysis of translated versions of Roberto Innocenti’s and Christophe Gallaz’s (1985) Rose Blanche, a picture book portrayal of a young girl who discovers a Nazi concentration camp on the outskirts of her German city, Susan Stan (2004) concludes that, […] cultural, aesthetic, national, ideological, pedagogical, and economic issues are all at work in shaping these translations. The Italian saying traduttóre, traditóre – ‘to translate is to betray’ – underscores the impossibility of capturing the whole of the original in a translation, but perhaps more to the point in a work for children, where fidelity is not always the main concern, is the Latin motto of the marketplace, caveat emptor – ‘let the buyer beware.’ (p. 31)

Emer O’Sullivan (2005) asserts that “The implied reader of the translation will always be a different entity from the implied reader of the source text” (p. 105). Perry Nodelman and Mavis Reimer (2003) observe that “All texts have an implied reader. That is, they suggest in their subject and their style the characteristics of the reader best equipped to understand and respond to them” (p. 16). Since the translation of a text, pragmatically, can never preserve the exact same subject and style – let alone that these are often intentionally altered in the case of children’s literature translation – the reader best equipped to understand and respond to the new text may be a different reader than that implied by the original.
Building on Whalen-Levitt’s (1983) ideas, Nodelman and Reimer describe the implied reader in terms of what the text asks its reader to know and to do while reading it. A text, Nodelman and Reimer tell us, implies a reader with specific tastes and interests, a reader who possesses particular knowledge about literature and life, and a reader who can implement specific reading strategies in order to decode the text at hand (p. 17). A translated children’s text, perhaps because of children’s assumed inexperience of literature and the world, always assumes that its child-reader in the target culture will not share the same knowledges and strategies with the implied child-reader of the source text. In its anticipation of a reader who knows and acts differently from the reader of the source text, the translation constructs a different implied reader.

Giuliana Schiavi (1996) was perhaps the first to focus on the difference between the implied reader of the source text and the implied reader of its translation. The process she describes is quite simple: The implied reader of the source text is generated by the implied author; likewise, the implied reader of the translation is generated by the implied translator. The translator, according to Schiavi, interprets the original text, follows certain norms, and adopts specific strategies and methods, creating in this manner a new relationship between the translated text and the reader. By doing this, s/he creates a different implied reader from the one in the source text.

**Communicating across Cultures**

In *Comparative Children’s Literature*, Emer O’Sullivan (2005) takes this theoretical framework one step further, presenting a valuable analytical tool, a
communicative model of translation which links the theoretical fields of narratology and translation studies. O'Sullivan explains that the communication between the real author of the source text and the real reader of the translation is mediated by the real translator. The real translator functions at first as “a receptive agent” (p. 107), an interpreting reader of the source text. S/he then “transmits the source text via the intratextual agency of the implied translator” (p. 107). The implied translator, to one degree or another, generates a different narrator, narratee, and implied reader within the target text. O’Sullivan asserts that we should take more notice of the “second voice” in any translated text, “the voice of the translator” (pp. 107-108). Thus, we should persistently ask such questions about translated children’s books such as “What kind of translator can be perceived in the text? Where can the translator be located in the act of communication which is the narrative text? How does the implied reader of the target text differ from that of the source text?” (p. 104).

And, of course, the next question is: How have the different cultural contexts influenced these changes? Literary critics have long acknowledged the importance of the cultures and ideologies within which literature is created. Historical and geographical factors often determine both the content and the perspective of a story. Peter Hollindale (1988) claims that a big part of any book is authored, not by its author, but by the world its author inhabits (p. 15). What happens, then, when this book is translated into another world?
Shouldn’t we also presume that a big part of any translated book is translated, not by its translator, but by the world its translator inhabits?

Critical analysis of translated texts becomes much more meaningful once we begin asking questions like the ones listed above. This is evident, for instance, in Viggo Hjørnager Pedersen’s (2008) analysis of Victorian translations of Andersen’s fairytales. Professor at Copenhagen University and a literary translator himself, Hjørnager Pedersen begins the introduction of his analysis as follows:

Unlike plays, books were not censored in Victorian England, censorship having been abolished in 1695. But that does not mean that there were not fairly strict rules governing what might and might not be published, especially for children. As Hans Christian Andersen was generally perceived as a children’s writer pure and simple rather than as a writer for both adults and children, such rules were also applied to translations of his stories. (p. 308)

While the source texts produced in Denmark were intended for a dual audience, the target texts in Victorian England were intended for children only. By identifying this pivotal difference regarding the intended audience of each text, Hjørnager Pedersen has paved the way for a productive and well-structured analysis of the translations. The application of Victorian children’s literature norms to Hans Christian Andersen’s stories inscribed a different implied reader in the target texts.
After a brief discussion of Andersen’s own ideas about censorship and the literary climate in early 19th century Britain, Hjørnager Pedersen moves on to “examples from Andersen’s tales in Victorian translation where there is clear evidence of departures from the text that must be due to the publisher’s and/or the translator’s ideas about decorum where children were concerned” (p. 309). Through these examples, he demonstrates how sexual references, as well as references to violence, death, and religious taboos were toned down by Victorian translators. One such example is found in Caroline Peachey’s translation of “The Top and the Ball.” A female ball, who had previously rejected a male top, meets him again in a garbage can several years later and tells her story about never getting married and falling into the roof “gutter”:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hjørnager Pedersen’s translation of the Danish text:</th>
<th>Peachey’s translation:</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>‘[...] there I have lain five years, soaking! That is a long time, believe me, for a maid!’</td>
<td>‘I fell into the gutter, and there I have lain five years, and am now wet through. Only think, what a wearisome time for a young lady to be in such a situation!’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Pjørnager Pedersen, pp. 312-313)

Peachey tones down, of course, the sexual connotations; connotations that become even more explicit when Hjørnager Pedersen explains that in Danish the word “Jomfru,” which he translates as “maid” and Peachey as “young lady,” means both “young woman” and “virgin.”
Some Revelatory Differences in English-to-Greek Picturebook Translations

But let us test O’Sullivan’s analytical tool in practice, asking the questions suggested by her model in relation to picture books translated from English into Greek, and identifying possible shifts in the constructs of the implied reader. We have intentionally chosen to comment on translated books that deal with “sensitive” issues (i.e., “death” and “difference”) in the hope that these translations will be more revealing. While we do not claim that analyzing a few translations will result in broad and irrefutable conclusions, we do agree with Márta Minier (2006), when she writes that,

A translation as a metatext will speak about how an individual culture (and translator) perceives and constructs within its own boundaries the foreignness of another culture; hence, it is determined to reveal a great deal about contemporaneous discourses in a receiving community. (p. 120)

Translations of children’s books, in particular, are bound to reveal contemporaneous discourses in the receiving community regarding “childhood” and “children’s literature.” O’Sullivan (2005) suggests that “shifts in the narrative style of the translation provide evidence of the preferences of translators and their assumptions about their readers, and also of the norms and conventions dominating the translation of children’s literature” (p. 118). According to Michal Borodo (2006), because of their connection to the child as a specific type of addressee, norms in child-oriented
translation and translation studies have proceeded along different lines from mainstream translation.

O’Sullivan (2005) observes that, in translated texts, culture-specific notions of childhood play at least some part in determining the construction of the implied reader. She argues that the implied reader in a translated text can differ substantially from the implied reader in the original, depending on the manner in which a translator in a given time and culture will answer such questions such as: “What do ‘children’ want to read? What are their cognitive and linguistic capabilities? How far can/should they be stretched? What is suitable for them? What do they enjoy?” (p. 110).

Answers to such questions are often culture-specific. In the Greek translation of Daniela Bunge’s (2006) *The Scarves*—translated by Dimitra Simou (2006) from English even though it was originally written in German—different culture-specific answers about the needs of children lead to a major change regarding the main characters and their closeness to the child-reader. Since divorce is still, at least to some extent, a taboo subject in the Greek speaking world, the implied translator makes the separation of the child protagonists’ grandparents less traumatic by turning them into godparents instead. The implied child-reader is one who might be shocked or damaged by representations of disruptions to relations within her/his immediate family. Grandparents are certainly immediate family for Greek children; indeed in some cases they are closer to children than their own parents are. Thus, the
implied translator feels that the distance between implied reader and protagonists needs to be increased.

**Translation Norms in Reductive and Amplifying Narration**

Birgit Stolt (1978) identifies educational intentions in child-oriented translation, which often result in censoring and didacticism, a tendency to adjust the text according to the assumptions about children’s needs and capacity, and a “tendency to sentimentalize and prettify” (p. 77). Isabelle Desmidt (2003) proposes a typology of translation norms, distinguishing between:

- **preliminary norms** (in relation to the selection of texts to be translated, etc.);
- **literary and educational norms** (whether ‘literary entertainment’ or ‘the educational aspect’ is prioritized);
- **pedagogical norms** (the tendency to simplify the story and to modify elements which are not congruent with the prevalent pedagogical values in the receiving culture);
- **business norms** (the role of the publisher and the market in general). (pp. 168-172)

In *Goodbye Mousie* (Harris, 2003), the example mentioned at the beginning of the chapter, Stolt’s (1978) “educational intentions” or Desmidt’s (2003) “educational norms” are prevalent. The priority of this translation is not so much to entertain and to preserve the literary quality of the original, but rather to teach the child-reader about death in a subtle and sensitive manner. A
tendency to adjust the text according to children’s assumed needs and capacity is also apparent. The implied translator constructs a different implied reader by smoothing down the edges, as it were. A more sensitive and gullible child-reader is implied. Besides substituting the boy’s shouting with mere questioning, the implied translator also substitutes the taboo word, “dead” ("πεθαμένος"), wherever she finds it, with a different, smoother word or phrase. Here is an example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source text:</th>
<th>Target text translated back into English:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>‘Mousie did NOT die! Mousie is NOT dead!’</td>
<td>‘Mousie did NOT die! Mousie is alive!’</td>
</tr>
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The implied translator also views a shoebox as an inappropriate coffin for Mousie, so she changes it into “a nice carton box” (Harris, 2003, n.p.) And since she finds the use of past tense in the phrase “You were a good mouse” (Harris, 2001, n.p.) too disturbing, she chooses to omit the sentence altogether, minimizing in this manner the boy’s realization and acceptance of Mousie’s death. Finally, since the implied reader is considered uncritical and easily confused, some potentially confusing phrases are also omitted. Before burying Mousie, the boy places food and toys in the shoebox-coffin, so that Mousie won’t be hungry or bored. The translation does not include the phrase “‘Now
Mousie won’t be hungry!’ I said” (Harris, 2001, n.p.), keeping only the phrase “‘Now Mousie won’t be bored!’ I said” (Harris, 2003, n.p.). This is probably due to the translator’s eagerness to protect the child-reader from possibly misleading notions (i.e. that the dead are able to eat). The Greek translation is characterized, for the most part, by substitution and omission, the latter pointing to some extent towards a reductive narration:

…changes in the constitution of the implied reader of the translation made by the implied translator omitting features, cutting sections of text, or reducing several readers’ roles inscribed in the source text to only a few in the target text. (O’Sullivan, 2005, p. 115)

Substitution and omission also characterize the translation of Ann De Bode’s (1997) Grandad I’ll Always Remember You, translated from English into Greek by Fotini Peramatzeli (2000), even though the original is in Flemish. This is another text that deals with death. In the scene where Grandma is describing how Grandad died, the phrase “You’re an angel, Grandad said” (De Bode, 1997, p. 8) is substituted with the phrase “You’re an angel, Grandad smiled” (De Bode, 2000, p. 8) even though there is not a hint of a smile on Grandad’s face in the picture. The implied translator strives to foreground Grandad’s tranquility during the last hours of his life. Moreover, the translation omits some phrases that are emotionally charged; one such phrase is: “They [the relatives] are staring into space, and sighing” (De Bode, 1997, p. 5). Educational intentions, which aim to introduce the subject of death and loss as gently as possible to children, are once more prioritized.
The translated picture books analyzed below operate in a completely different manner, but under the auspices of similar norms and assumptions about children. What we have in these target texts is amplifying narration:

Extensive additions to the text, however, can amplify it to the extent that the explanatory voice of the translator as narrator of the translation is so different in nature from that of the narrator of the source text that it drowns out the original narrative voice. We then have a new constitution of the implied reader. (O’Sullivan, 2005, p. 114)

Rather than substituting, simplifying, and omitting, the implied translators of these picture books add, expand, and explain.

In the translation of David McKee’s (1989) Elmer by Athina Andritsopoulou (1996), perhaps the most important difference between source and target text is found in the title. The English title is a single word, the protagonist’s name: “Elmer.” The Greek title, on the other hand, consists of the protagonist’s name “Elmer” followed by the explanatory phrase “the dappled elephant.” This is a twofold change. To begin with, the addition of explanatory text after the elephant’s name solidifies his identity, his central characteristic, his essence: This is Elmer, the dappled elephant. Thus, the Greek picture book “essentializes” Elmer even before the story begins. The English version avoids this “essentializing” notion, using a similar phrase only in Elmer’s thoughts: “Whoever heard of a patchwork elephant?” he thought” (McKee, 1989, n.p.).
One suspects the workings of Desmidt’s (2003) “business norms” here. Of course, we can only speculate about the reasons behind this addition. One possible explanation, however, is marketing-related; one could suggest that the change in the title announces a spectacle in the form of an advertisement. From this point of view, the cover calls for attention by inviting prospective readers/consumers to read/buy this intriguing picture book about a strange, dappled elephant. The cover invites readers in; just like in the old days a circus director would invite customers into the tent to have a look at a “freak of nature.”

As O’Sullivan (2005) explains, many real people usually contribute to the agency of the implied translator. The “‘translator’s consciousness’ is not necessarily or exclusively that of the real translator” (p. 107). Joel Taxel (2002) writes that “[w]hile obvious to those within the industry, the impact of the business side of children’s literature has not been given the sustained and systematic scrutiny it deserves by children’s literature scholars and the educational community in general” (p. 146), which he will further explore in his own Handbook chapter. The business impact is observable even in the case of English source texts that get exported from one English-speaking country to another. Perhaps it is even more observable in this case, since the text gets altered in spite of the fact that there is no significant need for linguistic translation. Laura Atkins (2004), reflecting about her work as an assistant editor at Orchard Books in New York, describes a process of “Americanising” British books for children, through which elements such as unfamiliar
spellings, words, and locations are edited. These changes are based on the assumption that “the North-American child reader is by and large reluctant, and only wants to read about familiar experiences in recognisable language” (p. 49). We may conclude that, even though these texts are not translated from one language into another, the cultural translation that takes place does result in a different target text with a different implied reader. What is even more important is that Atkins points to market forces that guide the construct of a different implied child-reader. Children’s books are usually bought by adults (parents, teachers, and librarians): “The child’s needs here are constructed according to the perception of what the majority of teachers and librarians will accept, as perceived by the publisher whose concern is selling to that market” (p. 52).

In relation to the Greek translation of Elmer (McKee, 1996), a second market-related issue arises regarding the extension of the title. The translator avoids a word-to-word translation of “patchwork” and chooses instead the Greek word “παρδαλός,” an adjective that, for lack of a better word, we have translated back into English as “dappled.” Παρδαλός usually means both dappled and multicolored, but is also charged with negative or sarcastic connotations: Someone who is παρδαλός is often viewed as too flashy and pretentious. One could claim that this choice of words was probably made by a publisher, an editor, and/or a marketer who intentionally marketed the picture book as “funny” by making fun of Elmer. The new implied reader is expected
to read the picture book as a funny book and thus view Elmer from an ironic
distance rather than empathize with him.

Yet another noticeable alteration is the employment of *amplifying
narration* to foreground Elmer’s friendship with the rest of the elephants. In
the same manner that negative emotions are toned down in the translations of
*Goodbye Mousie* (Harris, 2003) and *Grandad I’ll Always Remember You* (De
Bode, 2000), in the translation of *Elmer* (McKee, 1996) any unpleasant
connotations that might stem from Elmer being different are also toned down.
The implied translator achieves this effect by emphasizing the fact that Elmer
may be different from the other elephants but he is their friend. Several
phrases that point to Elmer’s strong friendship with the rest of the elephants
are added to the translated text:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source text:</th>
<th>Target text translated back into English:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[... and lastly same old elephants.</td>
<td>...the elephants were also the same, <em>his old friends</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘All elephants must decorate themselves and Elmer will decorate himself elephant colour.’</td>
<td>‘All of us will paint ourselves like him, dappled and <em>our Elmer</em> will paint himself in plain elephant color.’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


*Amplifying narration* is found in the translation of *Susan Laughs* (Willis, 1999, translated by Filipos Mandilaras, 2001) as well. Both the Greek and the
English text are poems, but the manner in which the Greek poem relates to the images in the picture book, in terms of space and meaning, differs significantly from the relationship between the English poem and the pictures. In terms of space, the English poem is spread out in such a way that each verse is divided in half and each half is linked to a separate picture. In this manner, the number of words that correspond to each picture is kept to a minimum. Also, since eight out of the eighteen verses take up the entire lower part of the open book, the reader is often urged to move on to the next double-spread in order to complete the rhyme; this achieves a fast and animated rhythm. This feature is lost in the Greek translation, where a complete verse is found under each picture and the rhyming verse can be read on the adjacent page.

In terms of meaning, the text-image relation is altered by the implied translator’s tendency to allocate more content and power to the text. Things left unspoken by the author are spelled out by the translator, altering the entire viewing and reading process. Regarding the translation of the specific genre of picture books, O’Sullivan (2005) writes:

In this genre combining words and pictures, an ideal translation reflects an awareness not only of the significance of the original text but also of the interaction between the visual and the verbal, what the pictures do in relation to the words; it does not verbalize the interaction but leaves gaps that make the interplay possible and exciting. (p. 122)
This translated picture book does the exact opposite. “Susan waves, Susan grins” (Willis, 1999, n.p.), for example, is translated as “Argiro waves from the car. Argiro goes to the museum for a walk” (2001, n.p.), describing the exact actions depicted in the illustrations. We will comment on the name change later, but what is most unfortunate here is the loss of the “training” performed by the source text. The source text seems to be continually preparing the reader for the work s/he will need to do in the end to decode the final page. By leaving things unsaid, it forces the reader to switch to a certain mode of reading, where one has to look for additional meaning in the picture. This is exactly what one needs to do to understand the ending of the book, where the reader has to combine the visual and textual signs on the last page and on all of the preceding pages, in order to realize that Susan can do all these things even though she is in a wheelchair. But the implied translator translates both text and pictures, spelling out almost everything. The markedly different implied reader of this text would find it hard to decode the last page of the book. The implied reader of the translation is perceived as either lazy or incompetent, someone that doesn’t seek out additional meaning in the images.

**Differences in Narrative Style and Voice**

O’Sullivan (2005) asserts that shifts in the narrative style of the translation may be guided by “narrative methods of children’s literature more familiar to the target culture” (p. 118). This might be the case here, since the minimal text in the English version of *Susan Laughs* (Willis, 1999) is highly uncommon in children’s literature originally written in Greek. Zohar Shavit (2006) explains
that in the translation of children’s literature, “If the model of the original text does not exist in the target system, the text is changed by deleting or by adding such elements as will adjust it to the integrating model of the target system” (p. 28). The picture book, as a distinctively different genre from the illustrated book, is very new in the system of Greek children’s literature. This may be one of the reasons behind the addition of text and the resistance to allocate narrative value and power to the image, observed in the Greek translation of Susan Laughs (Willis, 2001). Culture-specific conventions, such as the narrative style of stories addressed to very young children, may have influenced the last translation we will be discussing as well.

In the translation of Something Else (Cave, 1995, translated by Tourkolia-Kidoneos, 1997), the implied translator introduces a certain shift in the voice of the narrator. In this picture book, the shift in the narrative style is even more evident than in the examples of amplifying and reductive narration discussed so far. Here, on several occasions, the translator modifies words to become what she conceives as more “child-friendly.” What we comment on in relation to this translation may seem insignificant, but, as acclaimed translator Anthea Bell (2006) stresses in “Translator’s Notebook: Delicate Matters,” small changes can often be quite important:

By ‘delicate matters’, in the context of translation, I mean they are fiddly and may look very minor: choice of tense, use of pronouns, those matters of everyday occurrence in translation work which you would think couldn’t possibly make much difference to actual
meaning. And yes, translators do take them in their stride every day.

Only sometimes one has to stride back again for a second look, and it turns out that quite tiny things can affect meaning a good deal after all.

(p. 232)

The use of diminutives, a common practice in Greek stories for very young children, is an illustrative example. The implied translator of *Something Else* (Cave, 1997) applies this convention, inserting diminutives in several parts of the target text. On the first page alone, three diminutives are added. The Greek diminutives “σπιτάκι” [little house], “μοναχούλι” [little and alone], and “φιλαράκι” [little friend] are used:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source text:</th>
<th>Target text translated back into English:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>On a windy hill alone with nothing to be friends with lived Something Else.</em></td>
<td><em>Up on a windblown hill, in a little house, lived little and alone Something Else without a single not even a single little friend.</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Cave, 1995, 1997, n.p.)

Ten more diminutives are found in the rest of the translation, bringing into effect a certain narrative shift. The narration is explicitly addressed to very young children and a sweet, sentimentalizing tone is adopted. Stolt’s (1978) identification of a tendency to “sentimentalize and prettify” (p. 77) comes to mind. In the above example, the English text is kept simple, straight-forward and minimal (only 13 words), matching the bare hill and the
emptiness/loneliness that surrounds it. The Greek text subverts this atmosphere, by introducing diminutives and by using more words than necessary.

A few pages later, the voice of the translator is heard once again. When a second “strange creature” (Cave, 1995, n.p.) visits the protagonist’s home, the English text strives to communicate a feeling of alienation, by referring to the visitor as “the creature.” The translation, on the other hand, refers to him as “το πλασματάκι” [the little creature] (Cave, 1997, n.p.):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source text:</th>
<th>Target text translated back into English:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>‘You’re welcome,’ said the creature.</td>
<td>‘You’re welcome,’ said the little creature.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The creature shook its head.</td>
<td>The little creature shook its head.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Cave, 1995, 1997, n.p.)

When plain and simple “creature” becomes “little creature,” it inevitably looks less strange and alien. Another change that tones down the alienation is that the translation allocates the name “Something” to the creature much earlier than in the source text, where the creature is given a name only after it becomes Something Else’s friend: “From then on, Something Else had Something to be friends with.” (Cave, 1995, n.p.) Also, with the exception of the word “ανεμοδαρμένο” [windblown] on the first page, the implied translator introduces a more oral-oriented language compared to the source
text. For example, “You don’t belong here” (Cave, 1995, n.p.) is translated into “Your place is not here” (Cave, 1997, n.p.). In this manner, a new implied reader is constructed, one who uses and understands a limited number of words and is closer to the oral than to the written word.

The Translation of Culture-Specific Items

The last issue we would like to discuss is the treatment of culture-specific items. These are items that, according to Göte Klingberg (1986), belong in certain categories:

- literary references
- foreign languages in the source text
- references to mythology and popular belief
- historical, religious and political background
- building and home furnishing, food
- customs, play and games
- flora and fauna
- personal names, titles, names of domestic animals, names of objects
- geographical names
- weights and measures (p. 17-18)

Even though interesting conclusions can be drawn from studies that pay special attention to the treatment of these items in the translation, for the purposes of this short discussion, we refer only to personal names. In two of the picture books we have analyzed, there is “domestication” (Venuti, 2000, p.
16) of the characters’ names; they are substituted with Greek names. In the translation of *Susan Laughs* (Willis, 2001), Susan is turned into “Αργυρώ,” while in the translation of *Grandad I’ll Always Remember You* (De Bode, 2000), Tom becomes “Νικόλας,” Martin becomes “Παύλος,” and Kate becomes “Έλλη.” As Gillian Lathey (2006) observes, this kind of adaptation “rests on assumptions that young readers will find it difficult to assimilate foreign names, coinage, foodstuffs or locations, and that they may reject a text reflecting a culture that is unfamiliar” (p. 7). However, Lathey then proceeds to argue that,

> Once a narrative engages their interest, young readers will persevere with names and localities that are well beyond their ken in myths, legends and fantasy fiction written in their native languages, let alone in translations, and they will certainly never be intrigued and attracted by difference if it is kept from them. (pp. 7-8)

Stolt (1978) agrees with this opinion and supports it, citing both her personal experience and examples like Johanna Spyri’s Heidi (1880/1899), a character who managed to become internationally renowned even though – and perhaps *because* – her name was not domesticated.

Child-oriented translation studies have dealt exhaustively with issues that pertain to culture-specific elements and the dilemma of “domestication” or “foreignization”:

Translators may assume two different positions and on this basis they will employ a specific translation strategy. On the one hand they
may think that reading a book rich in culture-specific elements enables children to learn and enlarge their knowledge of the world, or on the other they may believe that children cannot deal with a foreign culture because they do not yet possess adequate interpretative and cognitive capacities. (Ippolito, 2006, p. 108)

Göte Klingberg (1986), Mártal Minier (2006), Riitta Oittinen (2000), Lawrence Venuti (2000), and many others have participated in heated discussions of this complicated issue. It would certainly take much more than a short chapter to analyze this dilemma in depth. Some scholars even claim that there is no dilemma, since translation inevitably domesticates, at least to some degree, the source text: “Perhaps we should only speak of different levels and dimensions of domestication” (Paloposki & Oittinen, 2000, p. 386).

For the purposes of the present discussion, we agree with scholars like Venuti (2000) and Klingberg (1986), and Ippolito (2006) that “a translation should preserve the cultural values expressed by the original text, because these will promote mutual respect, friendship and dialogue, widen their knowledge of the world and open their minds to new and original ideas” (Ippolito, p. 109). When the culturally different is allowed to remain in the translated text, Helen W. Painter (1968) argues, it can be of charm, interest, and educational value to the child-reader.

**Becoming the Implied Reader of a Translation**

This brings us back to the *implied reader of the translation*. It should be stressed that the implied reader has a performative effect. Nodelman and
Reimer emphasize that the implied reader, rather than being just a quality of the text, “is a role a text implies and invites a reader to take on” (p. 17).

Wolfgang Iser (1974), who originally coined the term of the implied reader, explains that the term “incorporates both the prestructuring of the potential meaning by the text, and the reader’s actualization of this potential through the reading process” (p. xiii). While reading the text, the real reader is asked to become, at least to some extent, the implied reader (Nodelman & Reimer, 2003, p. 17). In the same manner, the implied reader of the translation “pulls” the real reader of the translation towards a certain direction. We have already explained, at the beginning of our discussion, that the implied reader is inscribed in the text’s expectations about what its reader will know and do. The repeated construction of a particular implied reader of the translation who does not have the knowledge or the ability to decode “foreign” (or “foreignized”) texts, may become a self-fulfilling prophecy; it may very well create real child-readers who do not have the knowledge, the ability, or even the willingness to decode unfamiliar stories.

Our entire discussion so far supports Márta Minier’s (2006) claim that, “[r]egarding the manner of the translation, the conflict seems to be between making the outcome of the translation process a visibly borrowed text, or rather a familiar sounding one which could have been originally conceived in the receiving language” (p. 102). We argue in favor of “visibly borrowed texts,” not so much because of reverence for the “original,” but because young readers should be allowed to experience other cultures than their own, through
the reading of translated literature. We acknowledge the fact that a translation’s implied reader can never – and perhaps should never – be identical to the implied reader of the source text; but we argue for a *foreignizing construct of the implied reader of the translation*. We argue in favor of implied readers that will have the opposite performative effect than the one described in the previous paragraph.

Are we privileging educational norms by taking seriously into account this performative effect? Perhaps, but at the same time we are also emphasizing the aesthetic value of a foreignizing translation, and the pleasure it can bring to a reader in the target culture. We favor translated texts whose implied readers have the knowledge, the ability, and the willingness to read and *enjoy* foreignized texts. In saying this, we emphasize a third aspect of the implied reader: An implied reader is not only what the text asks its reader to know or do, but also, and perhaps most importantly, what it asks the reader to *feel* and *enjoy*. In *Translating for Children*, Oittinen (2000) suggests that a translation should domesticate foreign elements, in order to stimulate within the target text reader the same feelings and impressions that are felt by the source text reader; we are arguing that the target text reader should be allowed to experience different emotions, emotions which stem from the very difference of a foreign text.

Our use of O’Sullivan’s communicative model has indicated that, in the Greek translations we have read, there seems to be an intense effort to bring the text closer to a child-reader who lives in Greece, belongs to a different
culture than the one in the source text, and – to use Atkins’ (2000) words in a
different context – is “by and large reluctant, and only wants to read about
familiar experiences in recognisable language” (p. 49). This is why the
ideologies, narrative style, and literary conventions of these translated picture
books mimic those of children’s books originally written in Greek. We suggest
that the implied reader of a picture book’s translation from English into Greek
should indeed be a child who lives in Greece and belongs to a different culture
than the one in the source text, but should also be a child who finds joy in
reading books that seem “off-key” when compared to other books in her/his
mother tongue, and pursues the pleasure of reading stories that were produced
within and for “other” cultures.

This means, of course, that the implied reader of the translation will have
to work hard to decode the “foreignized” text. O’Sullivan (2005) writes about
translated picture books: “The implied reader of the translation should have to
do the same work as the implied reader of the original to resolve the complex
connections between text and pictures” (p. 122). Perhaps the implied reader of
the translation should have to do more work than the reader of the original,
both in resolving the connections between foreignized text and image and in
resolving the disconnections between what s/he already knows and routinely
does and what this book is asking her/him to learn or attempt to do. After all,
as described earlier, only then will s/he experience the special kind of pleasure
that differs from the one experienced by the reader of the original.
A fusion of narratology and translation studies – translation theories about culture-specific elements combined with what narratology says about the construct of the implied reader – has led to the formation of our argument for a foreignizing construct of the implied reader of the translation. Our ideal implied reader would have the following response to a foreignizing translation:

“This text was not written for me. It is a translation. It reflects another culture and the manner in which children and the world they live in are viewed in that culture. It is different and refreshing; this is why I enjoy it. I will pretend to be part of this culture for a while, just to get a glimpse of how it would feel to be a child in that culture.”
Literature References


**Academic References**


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**Point of Departure**

Kostia Kontoleon

Competent translators face many difficulties while translating a literary text. I write from the standpoint of an experienced translator, and also from the standpoint of an author, since I believe that creative writing and translation can coexist, without the one working against the other. On the contrary, I would say that they complete each other. I am a “literary translator” and what drives me to engage in this line of work is my love for “beautiful texts.”

I have translated more than eighty books and, in a “masochistic” manner, I often set goals that challenge my limits. Philip Pullman’s *His Dark Materials* is perhaps the most important and challenging text I have translated to date. Pullman’s ambitious work has been something like a school for me, a demanding school, filled with traps and narrow trails that were difficult to follow; I believe, however, that I graduated with distinction. In spite of the difficulties I faced during its translation, I went so deep into Pullman’s world that I could not resist the urge to become part of it, to identify fully with the characters in it. I believe that the chance to work with such a text is the dream
of every translator. I had to enlist the entirety of my skills in the art of translation—because translation is art—while also bringing in all of my imagination reservoirs to match Pullman’s imagination. It would not be an exaggeration to say that after completing the translation of his trilogy, I came out of the process feeling wiser and having a better sense of the true meaning of life; feeling overcharged with intense emotions evoked by a journey into unknown worlds filled with mystery, adventure, myth, and fantasy. I consider myself incredibly fortunate to have been given the chance to work with such a text, the translation of which also brought me a translation award.

A lot has changed during the past few years in the field of translation. From a subsidiary enterprise with no particular status, today it seems to be gaining a bigger and more important place in the intellectual milieu of a country. My long relationship with the translation of literature—for adults, as well as for children and young people—combined with my own work as an author, has led me to the conclusion that translation is a multifaceted field; one with sides that are not easily seen by outsiders.

The translation of a text, especially of a literary text, is a peculiar case of “linguistic converging”; it is a channel of information exchange between peoples who speak different languages. The term “translation” includes both the translating process and its result, which is the target text. This result is, of course, valuable and extremely important, since it functions as the intermediary between linguistically diverse peoples or ethnic groups.
The final goal of a translation is to relieve its readers from the harder and more difficult task of reading the original text. In theory, translation replaces the source text with the “same” text in the target language. Transferring a text from one language into another is catalytic for both. The language of the translation reveals the hidden dynamic inscribed in the source text, but it also brings in its own dynamic. The target text cannot be the same as the original, but it cannot be something completely different either. There is a widely known discussion around “unfaithful beauties”—translations which are not particularly “faithful” but are “beautiful” precisely because of their “unfaithfulness.” In practice, however, a translation will always be considered incomplete, since it is characterized by a certain loss of information. Thus, the translator is called upon to distinguish between the essential and the trivial and to remain focused on the final recipient, that is, the reading public.

Understanding the age group of a text’s readers is also important, but not easy to do. Let’s take the addresses of Pullman’s work for an example. Because the protagonists are children, people tend to consider it children’s literature; however, its symbolic and scientific richness raises particularly bold ethical and philosophical questions, requiring open and unrestrained readings. Thus, one has to wonder if this text is particularly addressed to children and young adults, the very question of which that vexes Pullman, as he notes in his Point of Departure essay in the Handbook. The question should probably focus elsewhere: We should ask ourselves whether true literature can come to terms with an imposed limitation regarding the age of its reader. My answer is no;
when a reader meets a text, the relationship or conflict to be developed
between them should be based on the reader’s choice. At the same instance, I
recognize the fact that the reader’s will is influenced both by biological age
and mental maturity.

As well as sufficient knowledge of the ages the text is targeted to,
successful translating also requires an excellent knowledge of both the
languages from which, and into which, s/he is translating. This includes a
sufficient grasp of vocabulary, syntax, style, and of idiomatic forms—too
often the latter are mistranslated because of ignorance. A competent translator
is able to achieve the same level of linguistic competence in the source
language as in her/his mother tongue. S/he views literature through a mirror
that magnifies details. However, an overly detailed, word-to-word translation
is a naïve practice which reveals a translator’s ineptitude. It is only natural that
a translator may view the original text as “holy scripture,” but this entails the
great risk of falling into the trap of word-to-word translation.

There are two groups of translators. In the first group belong those who
attach themselves to the source text and to the signifiers of its language,
focusing their efforts on preserving within their translation as many elements
as possible from the source language. The second group includes those who do
not pay as much attention to the signifier as to the meaning and the “aroma” of
the text they are translating, enlisting every available means of expression
from the target language to achieve this. I belong to this second group of
translators; I worship the text’s “purpose” and not its “source.” The translator
is a mediator; a mediator who specializes in the field and the authors s/he is working with. S/he also needs to have extensive general knowledge and education and to continuously upgrade her/his expertise in the field of translation.

Publishers often complain about the poor quality of translations and the low competence of translators; however, they seldom consider the fact that the vast majority of translators are very poorly-paid by their publishers. Nor do they take into account the nerve-racking deadlines translators are subjected to by binding contracts, which often force them to neglect the quality of their work in order to become more productive. Moreover, the translator’s profession as such does not bring any particular social recognition to those who practice it. Nevertheless, a translator should be personally invested in her/his work.

From the very first book I translated, I felt a powerful attraction to translation; I felt it circulating in my veins, demanding my complete devotion. It was not long before I became addicted to translation. It is an excruciating addiction; one that, even after the completion of an exhausting translation and many sleepless nights, and even after promises to myself that I would stay away from my computer for a long time after that, would push me to throw myself into new translating adventures right away. In these adventures, time and place acquire different dimensions; nothing can come in between me and the text under translation because, without even realizing it, I quickly spin an isolating cocoon around me.
I have my own translating style; being an author as well as a translator makes it inevitable for me to bring in “literariness” in every text I translate. I do not know if translation theorists would agree with such practice, but for me it is enough that readers agree with them. From my perspective, if the final recipient, that is the reader, enjoys what s/he reads, then the purpose of the translation is achieved. Finally, since a big part of my work is translating children’s and young adult literature, I always make sure that it is comprehensible—both linguistically and stylistically—by these sensitive age groups.