

Adapting Canonical Texts in Children's Literature

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Adapting
Canonical Texts in
Children's Literature

Edited by
Anja Müller

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Adaptations of canonical texts have played an important role throughout the history of children's literature and have been seen as an active and vital contributing force in establishing a common ground for intercultural communication across generations and borders. This collection analyses different examples of adapting canonical texts in or for children's literature encompassing adaptations of English classics for children and young adult readers and intercultural adaptations of children's classics across Europe. The international contributors assess both historical and transcultural adaptation in relation to historically and regionally contingent concepts of childhood. By assessing how texts move across age-specific or national borders, they examine the traces of a common literary and cultural heritage in European children's literature.

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Editorial Review

Review

By introducing a wide-ranging set of case studies, from multi-media versions of plays by Shakespeare to cross-cultural reinterpretations of classic tales, this volume places a welcome emphasis on international research into adaptations for children. Transitions from the adult to the children's canon, from one language to another and from page to feature film, animation, comic strip or dance are all examined with scholarly attention to the aesthetic and ideological issues that arise in the course of adaptation. Anja Muller has succeeded in drawing together a lively and informative series of insights into the transcultural reach of adaptation strategies for the child reader or viewer. Gillian Lathey, Reader in Children's Literature, Roehampton University, UK Featuring an impressive set of renowned international scholars, this collection combines rigorous theory with fascinating reader-friendly analysis of individual texts, that goes far beyond case studies. Positioned within the rapidly expanding field of adaptation theory, it targets a wide audience and punctures common misconceptions about children's literature and its role in society and education. A timely and welcome volume. Maria Nikolajeva, Professor of Education, University of Cambridge, UK *Adapting Canonical Texts in Children's Literature* is a benchmark contribution that challenges the reader to reconsider the status of canonicity and adaptation within the realm of children's literature. Covering a huge historical range and addressing key topics in research and criticism, such as genre-crossing, intermediality, and intercultural studies, the essays combine illuminative close readings with a broad theoretical astuteness. Bettina Kummerling-Meibauer, Professor of German Literature, Eberhard Karls University Tübingen, Germany The topic of this book, edited by Anja Muller, concerns adaptations for children and young adult readers of adult canonical texts ("The Merchant of Venice", "Hamlet", "The Tempest", "A Midsummer Night's Dream", "Julius Caesar", "Macbeth", but also "Beowulf" and "Le Morte d'Arthur"), of children's classics ("Winnie-the-Pooh"), and of novels ("Oliver Twist", "Pinocchio" and "The Nutcracker") that can be regarded as canonical both for adult and child readers. It shows how adaptations can question the very notion of canons and classics of children's literature and it presents us with a variety of positions with regard to the approach to adaptation. It certainly gives food for thought. Elena Paruolo, Lecturer in English Literature, University of Salerno, Italy

About the Author

Anja Müller is Professor of English Literature and Culture at the University of Siegen, Germany. Her publications include *Fashioning Childhood in the Eighteenth Century* (Ed. Ashgate, 2006) and *Framing Childhood in Eighteenth-Century English Periodicals and Prints, 1689-1789* (Ashgate, 2009) which was designated the Honor Book 2009 of the Children's Literature Association.

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