CREATION, TRANSLATION, AND ADAPTATION IN DONALD DUCK COMICS, BY PETER CULLEN BRYAN

Carina Cerqueira[1]

ISCAP-P.PORTO

To mention Donald Duck and the imaginary world of fictional characters is, at the same time, to stress the importance of analyzing disruptive case studies. Donald Duck comics functions as a niche market, intercultural and intersemiotic. In 'Creation, Translation, and Adaptation in Donald Duck comics' by Peter Cullen Bryan we have the opportunity to better understand the intercultural relevance of this fictional character, the social positioning of the character and creators, and the ability to portray cultural transformations mirrored in Donald Duck.

In chapter 1, titled "'A Duck's Eye View of Europe": How to Read Donald Duck' the author starts with three key perspectives. Chapter one opens the book tone, focusing on the character Donald Duck, the character's relationships with the quintessential representation of Disney's world, Mickey Mouse, and the triangular approach to be developed throughout the book – Donald Duck, Translation, and Cultural Adaptability.

The author highlights the adaptability of the character by being present and relevant in culturally different countries like Italy, Sweden, and Germany. The analysis is focused on the American and German contexts, but many other countries have created a special identification with the character. The book highlights not just the character's importance as a cultural product exported to the rest of the world, but also references made to the creators and translators, as fundamental components to understand the preference and continuum

[1] ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3272-4156; Email: crocerqueira@gmail.com.

relevance of the character, not just to junior audiences but also to older audiences, and even the ability to be transversal to several generations.

In present-day Italy, Donald Duck (there called Paperino) appears on every newsstand, often in the guise of the Batman-Esque superhero Paperinik. In Sweden, Donald Duck (Kalle Anka) is a Christmas tradition watched by half the country annually. In Germany, Donald Duck has inspired a travelling art exhibit called Duckomenta. Though they are members of the European Union, these countries each have considerably different cultures; part of different regions: Sweden in Scandinavia, Italy in the Mediterranean, Germany in Central Europe; and possess different histories, particularly in the post-World War II period. Each must be approached as an independent setting, and while the emphasis in this project will be on the American and German components, Donald Duck delights readers worldwide for reasons that will be identified and analyzed. (p. 1-2)

Another relevant approach taken by the author is the idea of Disney as a cultural representation, in particular, of America's cultural representation. Disney comes out as a creative space used in its capacity for message bearers. To consume Disney and its creative products is also to accommodate the "American way of living":

"Disney was one of the first cultural products to enter post-war Germany; the militarized, de-Nazifcation efforts of the occupation, succeeded by the Adenauer Era, created a fertile space for American culture to flourish while staking a position in the larger cultural diplomacy of the early Cold War As an editor, Fuchs was single-handedly responsible for the written content of these comics in Germany for several decades, allowing her readers to consume them not as exotic foreign media but as familiar storybooks. Her translations are especially notable for subtly shifting and changing the written words to suit the German audience, and reflect a significant case for the consideration of translation studies" (p. 6).

And in chapter 2, "The Empire-Builder from Calisota": Donald Duck and the Rise of Disney, the author highlights this relevant contextual perspective on understanding the

reception of Donald Duck, a Disney character, created in the Depression period (Great Depression in the United States of America from 1929 to1939) moving through the World War II (1939 to 1945) being received and perceived in the modern period. So, "[t]o better comprehend Donald Duck's function in the scholarly memory, we should start with his creation in the context of animation history, and how he naturally grew into a figurehead of propaganda efforts of World War II" (p. 29).

And of course, we cannot talk about Disney and forget that "[…] Mickey Mouse had become the new cultural ambassador for the United States" (p. 39). Mickey Mouse was the front-stage figure, and Donald Duck was "[…] another member of the sprawling Disney cast. He was, as with most of the Disney stable, a background addition first, existing as just another anthropomorphic animal within the menagerie" (p. 41). Donald Duck is more in tune with the times, as he evolves during the Depression years following the loomed economic deprivation that became a reality, "[…] Donald was the perfect antidote to Mickey Mouse" (p. 41).

"Clarence Nash's voicework—the famous nasally, borderline unintelligible quack—allowed Donald to be more easily adapted to non-English speaking locales, avoiding the need for translation and often even redubbing. This adaptability to foreign locales would become a key component of his popularity in the war years, but would also form the basis for the character's strength in comic stories" (p. 43).

The USA Government used Disney and Hollywood as production machines, manufacturing movies to be used as a diplomatic path when starting to dialogue with Latin America and other parts of the world – cultural diplomacy. A relevant perspective is taken in chapter 3: "Donald Gets Drafted": Donald Duck at War and as Propaganda.

[…] Ron Grover states "Donald Duck made his first appearance in 1934. Five years later he eclipsed even Mickey in popularity; in World War II he was the symbol that appeared on more than 200 military insignias." The recognizability of Disney characters, especially

Donald Duck, combined with prior reliance on foreign markets fostered various relationships that were useful to these diplomatic efforts (p. 53).

And focusing on practical analysis, the "*Saludos Amigos* and *The Three Caballeros* are certainly propaganda, but function to glorify the nations they documented as much as to push American ideals; […] in particular emphasizing democracy as a way of life" (p. 54). So, "[…] the films were tools to reaffirm the ideals of the Good Neighbor policy, soft propaganda under Disney's soft veneer" (p. 59).

Another interesting perspective is that in chapter 4: "The Buckaroo of the Badlands": Carl Barks Remembering the Frontier; as Carl Barks transforms the comic books and Donald Duck using the concept of travel literature:

Inhabitants of Barks's frontier were no more noble or honest than the city dwellers, reflecting a certain idea that people are alike all over, avoiding more stereotypical framing like the "noble savage." This is not to proclaim that Barks was a progressive crusader against colonialism, just that he avoids the more problematic stereotypes common to the other Western and adventure comics of the era (p. 90).

Chapter 5: "The Good Duck Translator": Erika Fuchs and the Exporting of Donald Duck, brings to the readers' attention an opportunity to reflect on the relation between Donald Duck and the Disney characters and translation studies. As we talk about a cultural product with a worldwide presence, this chapter offers a moment to think about the translation function as an adaptation/transcreation work. The author focuses his attention on Erika Fuchs and what he calls "the Fuks Effect" (p. 105).

Her translations are especially notable for subtly shifting and changing the written words to suit the German audience, and reflect a significant case for the consideration of translation studies. […] wherein the translation functions more as an adaptation of the work, changing the meaning to a significant degree and effectively Germanizing Donald Duck for a receptive audience (p. 105).

And because comics are nowadays a well-established cultural product, with their own special fans groups, mandatory as the competition (Marvel and DC) transformed the way to tell stories and to interact with the audience, as new, modern characters emerged, the retirement of Carl Banks and the death of Walt Disney (1965), chapter 6 titled: "Guardians of the Lost Library": Developments of the Duck Fan Communities, explores the importance of fans, namely the fanzines, as a form to promote and maintain interest in comics and Donald Duck in particular. The chapter also takes an interesting approach, thinking about comics as an expression of low (popular) culture vs high culture: "While essentially anyone can read comics, collecting is an elite activity" (p. 162).

"Carl Barks created the world of Duckburg for the comics. Erika Fuchs made the Ducks German. Bruce Hamilton and Russ Cochran revived the Ducks. Don Rosa connected all of the pieces and made them into something new" (p. 185). Chapter 7: "The King of the Klondike": Don Rosa and (Re)envisioning the Frontier and Chapter 8: "The Dream of the Three Lifetimes": Barks, Fuchs, Rosa and Artistic Hybridity in Donald Duck Comics connects the author and the readers, the importance of this relationship in maintaining the cultural product relevant and looked for: "The modern state of Disney comics is built on the foundations of the works of Carl Barks, Erika Fuchs, and Don Rosa, with the comics serving as a connecting thread between fans from all walks of life and in all geographic spaces" (p. 211).

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