

From a Gods and Spirits Story to Socialist Realist Children's Literature: *The Wizard of Oz* in China (1920s–1970s)

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Abstract

This article intends to investigate how *The Wizard of Oz* was introduced, translated, and retranslated in China from the 1920s to the 1970s. Inspired by the historical archives mostly from *Shenbao* 申報, this paper firstly delineates the early acceptance of the Oz story by revealing how it was introduced, synopsized, and advertised in China between the 1920s and the 1940s. In this part, the novel's early translation versions are investigated, with a particular focus on its title translation—"Lüye xianzong 綠野仙蹤," to illustrate an initial acceptance of the novel as a story about gods and spirits. In the second part, as the sociopolitical context underwent major changes after the establishment of the People's Republic of China, the translation of the novel was required to conform to the prevailing socialist realist tenets, and the novel was reinterpreted, retranslated, and reshaped as a piece of socialist realist children's literature. This part concentrates on a comparative reading of Chen Bochui's 陳伯吹 three translations (published sequentially in 1942–1943, 1953, and 1979). In investigating the translation history of *The Wizard of Oz* in China in the given period, this study suggests the nature of (re)translation as a complex process with multiple mediating forces.

Keywords

The Wizard of Oz, retranslation, gods and spirits story, socialist realism, children's literature