

The Time Traveling Robin Hood: Readings from the Past Reimagined for the Children of the Future.

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Introduction

During my time at EBBA, I transcribed old English ballads to be put into a digital archive. The process involves looking at white letter and black letter ballads and transcribing them into a word document with specific parameters given to us. I noticed certain stories that have been written in the past for one type of audience had been made new for a younger audience. This initially caught my eye because the name Robin Hood sounded very familiar to a character I was familiar with ever since I was a child. This not only brings into question the significance of remediation but also the massive impact of taking these stories and recycling them for a specific audience through remediation, specifically, the story that involves the character of Robin Hood. Although transcription of these ballads still only remains suitable for an adult audience even when they are transcribed, how has the opportunity to remediate these ballads allowed us to tailor these stories to children in the modern-day? I believe this is a fascinating question because, given that I was in the position of someone who had the unique opportunity to transcribe these ballads, I felt as if I was unraveling a story. Through unraveling a story, I began to understand what sets apart a story for a child amid reading and transcribing a tale for adults. One thing that specifically stood out to me was the graphic scenes, whether they be about romance or quarrel. I immediately took note of this because in children's story, themes of romance and quarrel are still present, rather, it is much more muted, and, therefore, better suited for children. The story is able to still stay true to the theme and to the heroic idea of Robin Hood, still conveying that sense of passion and excitement to children, however, it is presented in such a way that suits the audience at hand.

Discussion

Working in transcription taught me a lot about my own thinking processes that I had never really noticed about myself. As a research assistant, I quickly learned how ballads and the digital process is how long it truly takes to transcribe a ballad for the first time (and even the second and third time) due to what I seriously consider to be a language barrier. I did not realize how laborious and time-consuming it truly took to transcribe one ballad. I still continue to struggle, taking me quite a few hours. One major part of my thought process involved trying to “finish the sentence” when I did not know a particular word or letter. This allowed me to at least attempt to figure out what the ballad was saying before I asked a question on it. Transcribing sparked questions within me, specifically around the importance of printing and the history of how these ballads were made. Frequently when I am transcribing, I think about how printing sparked accessibility. This spread of knowledge had a significant impact on how readily people were able to obtain ballads. Fast forward to the 21st century, in which we are transcribing ballads and putting them into an online archive to further the accessibility of these ballads. In each successive step of making these writings accessible, we are removing a barrier, but even transcribing ballads to an online archive has barriers, such as internet access. What is the next step in making these writings accessible? We don’t know. This question has yet to be answered, but this is what makes these endeavors exciting. When printing culture came along, it changed the world, and its impact was undeniably one of the greatest on all of humankind. In my opinion, this makes printing culture timeless because it genuinely revolutionized the spread of information. EBBA has taught me to think outside the box, asking questions beyond what is being presented in front of me. I noticed that I tend to put myself in a box when I am researching a topic, constantly putting myself into a box, thus restricting my thought parameters. In the future, the skills I have learned from EBBA will help me question the importance of further analysis of a specific research project I am doing, asking questions beyond what is expected of me. I have found that this is what makes me valiantly passionate about the work I am doing.