

10-1-2010

Reviews

Marvels & Tales Editors

Recommended Citation

Editors, Marvels & Tales. "Reviews." *Marvels & Tales* 24.2 (2010). Web. <<http://digitalcommons.wayne.edu/marvels/vol24/iss2/10>>.

REVIEWS

Folk and Fairy Tales, 4th ed. Edited by Martin Hallett and Barbara Karasek. Buffalo, NY: Broadview Press, 2009. 411 pp.

Hallett and Karasek's fourth edition of *Folk and Fairy Tales*, an anthology of traditional tales and contemporary adaptations that spans contributions from Giambattista Basile to Tanith Lee, is a well-rounded and critically framed collection that is eminently suitable for classroom use. According to the publishers, this new edition contains an additional four articles in the "Criticism" section, an expanded discussion of illustrations, the "Juxtapositions" section, and more cross-cultural variation in the choice of stories.

The book is divided into eleven sections: "Little Red Riding Hood," "Sleeping Beauty," "Cinderella," "Growing Up (Is Hard to Do)," "The Enchanted Bride(groom)," "Brain over Brawn (The Trickster)," "Villains," "A Less Than Perfect World," "Juxtapositions," "Illustrations," and "Criticism." Clearly the organization of the tale selections is somewhat loose and subjective, and many tales could easily be moved elsewhere, but the editors' intention is to demonstrate how a single story or theme has been approached by different writers to serve different purposes. Each section begins with a few pages of commentary and critical remarks to frame readers' reactions. Since the book is first and foremost a collection of primary texts, these orienting remarks are necessarily short, and the criticism is limited and suggestive in order to draw out students' interpretations rather than close them off. The final three sections take a somewhat different format: "Juxtapositions" contains four comparisons of two tales rather than six or eight different versions of the same story; "Illustrations" takes as its subject eighteen beautiful color plates; and "Criticism" contains eight articles from seminal theorists like Max Lüthi and Bruno Bettelheim to Betsy Hearne's terrific article on Disney and James Poniewozik's piece on *Shrek*.

The collection's introductory essay is a concise, accessible, historical overview of fairy-tale authorship and criticism that distills the complexity of the genre into a very manageable ten pages. The editors sketch briefly the

influence of nationalism, the complex relationship of orality and literacy, the use of fairy tales as moral arbiters, and the triviality barrier that haunts the scholarship on children's literature, touching on many larger discussions without overwhelming the reader or shortchanging the genre. While the entire anthology is well worth reading, the introductory essay could easily be assigned on its own, in any class on folklore, fairy tales, Western literature, childhood, or children's literature.

The editors acknowledge that their selections are largely (really, almost entirely) from the Western canon, because this reference book is aimed at students and intended to give them new critical perspectives on familiar stories. However, because of this there is an emphasis on the universality of the tales that could have been problematized, even in a collection aimed at students. It is presumably left to the teacher to frame stories like "The Indian Cinderella" (even the title tells the story!) and explain how parallels in cross-cultural narratives might be played up for the translator, author, or editor's own reasons.

If this anthology has a weakness, it is that it is constrained by length. Of course, in any comparison of a tale type it is inevitable that some versions will be left out, but I wished that the Grimms' version had been included in the "Cinderella" section, because it is the pagan undertones of the Grimms' story that Tanith Lee's dark retelling draws out, and without it some of the allusions made in Sexton's poem are lost. The short essays that frame each section are likewise required to do what they can in the space permitted. For instance, the discussion of class and gender preceding "Growing Up (Is Hard to Do)" is brief but good, asking provocatively, Why passive princesses but outspoken peasant girls? This section provides many good starting points for classroom discussion. The section titled "Growing Up" is another place where brevity is a necessary evil—childhood as a natural state is so unconsciously romanticized that the brief paragraph devoted to the creation of "childhood" as a cultural concept may well startle and upset an unfamiliar student. The orienting remarks that begin each section cannot discuss exhaustively the complexity of the stories, nor do they attempt to. This book is a starting point, not an ending point, and the thorough bibliography that closes the book ensures that interested readers will know where to go next.

Also particularly valuable is the section "Juxtapositions," new to this edition, in which the editors provide the social and historical context for each of the two versions. Typically the comparison is between an earlier version, considered to be "the original," and a later, literary adaptation. However, something this book does particularly well is to dispel the notion of immaculate original texts: the modern tales are generically tight, though they use the conventions of older texts to create more pointed satire and commentary. The more recent, literary revisions underscore the collection's ongoing focus on

how markers of orality are reinvested in literary tales in order to emphasize their authenticity and immediacy.

The analysis of the illustrations is eloquent, succinct, and assuredly welcome to those students drawn to fairy tales for their rich, symbol-laden imagery. Indeed, this volume takes care to include some small element of nearly every angle of study on traditional fairy tales. There is something for budding psychologists, historians, and literary theorists as well as artists, animators, and illustrators. This section concludes with some discussion of the currently popular “salad” approach (also discussed in an essay in the “Criticism” section)—the active engagement of story and the artifact of the book in works like *The Stinky Cheese Man*, which finds characters referring openly to the type size or dragging each other onto the next page. A reference to the comic book series *Fables* may have been fitting during the discussion of graphic novels, but admittedly any one of these topics could be developed far beyond the scope of this book. Moreover, a section on visual representations could hardly ignore Disney entirely, but it is left to a dismissive postscript, to be dealt with more thoroughly in an essay in the “Criticism” section.

Hallett and Karasek have drawn together a diverse array of authors and time periods, from Joseph Jacobs and Madame d'Aulnoy to Angela Carter, Italo Calvino, and Gabriel García Márquez. An engaging, accessible anthology of well-loved as well as overlooked tales, the latest edition of *Folk and Fairy Tales* would be my first choice among the many fairy-tale anthologies available for students.

Kristiana Willsey
Indiana University

Lucky Hans and Other Merz Fairy Tales. By Kurt Schwitters. Translated by Jack Zipes. Illustrated by Irvine Peacock. *Oddly Modern Fairy Tales* 1. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009. xiii + 235pp.

When thinking about Germany and fairy tales, one inevitably thinks of the Grimms. The Grimms, as numerous accounts from the sociohistorical approach to fairy-tale studies have shown (see John Ellis's *One Fairy Story Too Many: The Brothers Grimm and Their Tales* [1985], Maria Tatar's *The Hard Facts of the Grimms' Fairy Tales* [1987], or Ruth B. Bottigheimer's *Grimms' Bad Girls and Bold Boys: The Moral and Social Vision of the Tales* [1989]), edited and reshaped traditional oral fairy tales into literary fairy tales that were compliant with the bourgeois ideology of nineteenth-century Germany. Jack Zipes has no small share in this reevaluation of the Grimms' collection as sanitized and ideology-shaped tales through his own studies, such as *Fairy Tales and the Art of Subversion* (1991) or *The Brothers Grimm: From Enchanted Forests to the Modern World* (1989). Through his work as an editor and translator, however, Zipes has also

been introducing a different set of German fairy tales to English-language readers. In *Fairy Tales and Fables from Weimar Days* (originally published in 1989), he collects fairy tales from the time of the Weimar Republic (1919–1933), when Germany had successfully rebelled against its kaiser, embraced the democratic experiment, and enjoyed a period of artistic license and liberty. These highly political fairy tales by authors such as Béla Balázs, Joachim Ringelnatz, or Oskar Maria Graf question the traditional fairy-tale roles of kings and fools and employ the fantastic nature of the genre to toy with utopian social prospects. With his latest editorial work on the fairy tales of Kurt Schwitters, Zipes takes us back once more to Germany's "roaring twenties" and its intellectuals' engagement with the fairy tale.

For his collection *Lucky Hans and Other Merz Fairy Tales*, Jack Zipes selected and translated fairy tales from among short prose pieces by artist Kurt Schwitters (1887–1948). Zipes's detailed and readable introduction to the volume, titled "Kurt Schwitters, Politics, and the Merz Fairy Tale," informs readers about the life and times of Schwitters, his Merz project, his relationship to the art scene of his time, and his exile from Nazi Germany. Schwitters was a multimedia artist *avant la lettre*: he created paintings, performed recitals, designed houses, and wrote prose and poetry (most famously the satirical love poem "To Anna Bloom"). For one of his collage paintings, Schwitters cut the syllable *merz* out of a newspaper page. "Merz" soon became the name of his artistic program, which involved showing up bourgeois conventions through nonsense prose and poetry. As Zipes points out, even though Schwitters had a keen awareness of political issues, at the same time he was radically critical of any political commitments, be they bourgeois or socialist.

This attitude of criticism and playfulness—the "Merz attitude," if you will—shines though all the fairy tales in the collection. The tale "The Scarecrow" features the letter *X* as its main protagonist, which is equipped with a tux of letters and dots and "such a lovely lace scarf" (73) made of serifs. The *X*'s typographical adventures show readers, in a most delightful and imaginative fashion, how much more a letter can be than the simple, conventional carrier of a sound. The title hero of the collection, Lucky Hans, dons a rabbit's skin and makes a lot of money from selling it to a rich man. By tricking the rich man into giving the skin back to the rabbit, he makes even more money. Hans is lucky, because he makes a lot of money out of nothing with the support of a typical animal helper. Read against the fact that *merz* is a syllable taken out of *Kommerzbank*—that is, commercial bank—this Merz fairy tale can be seen as a hilarious parable of the capitalist system.

Yet even though Lucky Hans's tale has a happy ending, being lucky and getting your way by no means translate into being happy in Schwitters's fairy tales. *Glücklich* can mean both happy and lucky in German, as Zipes points

out. And many of Schwitters's fairy tales revolve around the notion of *Glück*. Schwitters's Merz fairy tales are not of a time when wishing still helped one to become happy. His characters are granted a great many wishes, but neither a steep rise in social status from swineherd to prince, as in "The Swineherd and the Great, Illustrious Writer," nor beauty and riches, as in "Happiness," nor power, as in "The Three Wishes," leads to happiness. In fact, no matter how rich, beautiful, or powerful Schwitters's characters are, it always seems to be other people who have reason to be happy, as the narrative of "The Fairy Tale about Happiness" explicates. Schwitters's characters face a hard time in their search for happiness. To readers of his tales happiness comes effortlessly—for example, while reading sentences like the following when, dissatisfied with riches and world domination, a character reasons: "Naturally, fish, they've got it good" (128).

Lucky Hans and Other Merz Fairy Tales performs the feat of being a both serious and likable collection of Schwitters's Merz fairy tales. It works as a scholarly edition with Jack Zipes's comprehensive introduction to Schwitters and his times and through Zipes's commentary on the individual fairy tales, their contemporary context, and translation issues at the end of the book. *Lucky Hans and Other Merz Fairy Tales* is also a thoroughly enjoyable little book of fairy tales. Irvine Peacock's illustrations reflect Schwitters's playfulness and sense of humor, and Schwitters's tales themselves provide reading pleasure and much food for thought. The Merz fairy tales are the first volume in a series called *Oddly Modern Fairy Tales*, and they set a high standard for future volumes, which, hopefully, will explore more of the lost Weimar tradition of entertaining and thought-provoking fairy tales.

Karin Kukkonen

Johannes Gutenberg-Universität Mainz/University of Tampere

The Forgotten Bride. By Sigrid Schmidt. *Afrika Erzählt* no. 10. Köln: Rüdiger Köppe Verlag, 2009. 535 pp.

This volume begins with sixty-two folktale texts that the author collected in Namibia from Nama-speaking informants from the 1960s through the 1990s. The tale types they represent are all of international provenance; for example, there are representatives of the popular female-centered folktale cycles of the Forgotten Bride, Substituted Bride, and Cinderella, along with male-centered hero tales such as "The Three Stolen Princesses," "The Dragon Slayer," and "The Helpful Horse." For each text, the narrator and the tale type are identified in part 2, and analogs in other volumes of the series, *Afrika Erzählt* (Africa Narrates), are listed. The volume includes indexes (tale type, motif, subjects) and a bibliography.

Part 3 establishes the international importance of Namibian tradition. First the history of European folktales in southern Africa is sketched. Beginning in

the seventeenth century, immigrant settlers came to South Africa, bringing their folktales with them. The early settlers were largely Dutch (now Afrikaans) along with some Belgians and French and a smattering of other nationalities. This “ancient,” predominantly oral, tale tradition largely predates the Grimms’ tales. European tales were eventually adopted by the African Nama-speakers for family entertainment. Forty-eight of the most popular of the complex tale types (magic tales, religious tales, and novellas) are discussed individually on the basis of the author’s lifetime collection and her research in folktale collections from Namibia (beginning in the eighteenth century) and elsewhere.

Part 3 is full of interesting discoveries. For example, the names of the seven-headed dragon; of the hero’s fantastic, loyal dogs; and of the boy Thumbling come from Afrikaans. For two interesting versions of ATU 329, Hiding from the Princess, Schmidt identifies Czech, Austrian, and French analogs. There are two different forms for ATU 302, The Ogre’s Heart in the Egg, each with foreign examples. Some of the complex tale types are represented in as many as three or four redactions, each corresponding to a different ancestral nationality. AT 313C, The Forgotten Bride, includes a curse that is also found in southern Europe. This remarkable ability to match up details of the Namibian texts with those of foreign countries works like archaeology: old forms of the traditional tales are reconstructed and corroborated. In contrast, other Nama tales (e.g., ATU 533, The Speaking Horsehead) come directly from Grimm versions. Some types have two forms, one international and one identified as ancient African.

The native people (Nama, Damara, and Hai||om) consider the international tales their own rather than seeing them as imported or borrowed. While from a comparatist’s point of view these narrators have preserved an “ancient” tradition, they have also made some interesting changes. For example, witches become ghost women or man-eaters, and a goblin is turned into a devil. The “grateful dead” helper is a bird. Some changes result from forgetting or misunderstanding, while others seem more constructive. Of course these people also have African and indigenous folktales. Volume 9 in Schmidt’s *Afrika Erzählt* series, *Children Born from Eggs* (2007), concentrates on African magic tales, and earlier volumes were assembled based on other genres (volumes 1–7 are in German and 8–10 are in English).

In 1989 Schmidt published *Catalog of the Khoisan Folktales of Southern Africa* (2 vols. Hamburg: Buske). (Nama, also called Khoekhoe, is the official language of Namibia, spoken by about two hundred thousand people there. It belongs to the Khoisan language family.) Tale types in that catalog can have local, regional or African, or more thoroughly international currency. In the next two decades, through her *Afrika Erzählt* volumes, Schmidt has repeatedly augmented and updated this catalog. Because, unlike many collectors, she

recorded “European” folktales from her African informants, she herself has greatly added to the evidence available.

Part 4 of *The Forgotten Bride* gives abstracts and references for tale types numbered ATU 300 and higher, up through the cumulative tales. For example, five variants of AT 313C are listed in the 1989 catalog while *The Forgotten Bride* lists eighteen (plus bibliographic references). Similarly, seven variants of ATU 613, The Two Travelers, have been joined by seven more. When Schmidt began her collecting in 1960, only seven tale types from the entire section ATU 300–999 were known from Namibia; now that number is eighty-nine (213). As for the native magic tales, *Children Born from Eggs* includes a section that updates the section of the *Khoisan Folktales* catalog that covers regional (as distinct from international) tales featuring life-threatening supernatural powers.

The Forgotten Bride would work as a self-guided introduction to comparative folktale scholarship. The texts in part 1 are engaging. Part 2 identifies each tale-type number, which the reader can use in part 4 to locate a summary and corroborative texts. Then, in many cases, part 3 explains the variation in that tale type and its distribution in Namibia, Africa, and elsewhere. More experienced folktale scholars can use the book in the same way, but they will also value the glimpses it affords of folktales in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. As Schmidt points out, many of the striking details in the tales in part 1 replicate folktale elements from different parts of Europe and elsewhere. Modern Anglophone fairy-tale scholarship is largely concerned with literary or heavily edited texts disseminated through published sources. The Grimms have been treated as folktale authors more than as collectors. Granted that they assembled many of their folktale texts from separate components, we would still like to know as best we can what the earlier forms of the tales were. Oral tradition, even in Africa, preserves many intriguing archaic elements.

Christine Goldberg
University of California, Los Angeles

Mütter und Anti-Mütter in den Märchen der Brüder Grimm. By Nathalie Blaha-Peillex. Tübingen: Tübinger Vereinigung für Volkskunde, 2008. 266 pp.

In this published dissertation, Nathalie Blaha-Peillex explores the transformation of maternal figures from the first (1812/1815) to the seventh edition (1857) of the Grimms’ *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* (KHM). She examines a corpus of sixty-four fairy tales in the KHM in which mothers or “anti-mothers” appear. By analyzing Wilhelm Grimm’s contamination of the tales over several editions, she is able to draw attention to how the KHM reveals the nineteenth-century bourgeois construction of a cult of motherhood. As her analysis shows, this cult highlighted in particular the “Stimme des Blutes” (literally the “voice of the blood”) revealed in the mother’s devotion to her biological child.

Toward the end of the study Blaha-Peillex also includes an overview of portrayals of fathers in the tales; in addition, she briefly compares the maternal figures in the Grimms' tales with those in earlier tales by d'Aulnoy and Perrault, as well as with the mothers in Ludwig Bechstein's collection.

The principal parts of the book are unnumbered and divided into several sections and subsections, which are also unnumbered. After giving an overview of constructions of the "good mother" in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and a brief introduction to the Grimms' collecting and editing of their tales, Blaha-Peillex explores the various categories and subcategories of the positive maternal figures she identifies in the Grimms' tales. These figures include not only biological mothers, foster mothers, grandmothers, and female protagonists who are mothers, but also maternal figures one might not at first glance regard as positive, such as stepmothers, mothers-in-law, and witches. As Blaha-Peillex suggests, the categorization of these figures as positive or negative is perspectival; for example, she regards the stepmothers in tales such as "Mother Holle" and "One-Eye, Two-Eyes, and Three-Eyes" as positive maternal figures to their biological children but negative maternal figures to their stepchildren. She points out that Wilhelm Grimm at times added a brief explanation of the stepmother's preference for her biological children or chose a variant (or part of a variant) of a particular tale that included such an explanation. In this way, he accentuated the stepmother's selective maternal love for her own biological offspring.

Of particular interest is Blaha-Peillex's analysis of dead mothers, whose status as perfect and indeed almost saintly figures is assured by their early deaths and the subsequent usurpation of their roles by a malevolent stepmother. Wilhelm Grimm idealized the dead mother in tales such as "Cinderella," where he used the words *liebes Kind* (dear child) to emphasize the loving relationship between the biological mother and her child. Blaha-Peillex points out that the number of dead mothers grows from nine in the first edition to fourteen in the seventh edition.

Many of the same categories examined as positive maternal figures reappear in the sections on anti-mothers, which include biological mothers, stepmothers, witches, and mothers-in-law. Blaha-Peillex reminds her readers that in order not to violate the notion that mothers naturally love their biological children, Wilhelm Grimm at times changed a wicked biological mother into a stepmother or preferred variants in which a stepmother appears instead of a negative biological mother. She observes that whereas the mother in "Hansel and Gretel" is referred to as *Mutter* (mother) eleven times while she is a biological mother, she is referred to as *Mutter* only twice in the 1857 edition, where she first appears as a stepmother. She also notes that whereas biological mothers are not punished for their misdeeds, stepmothers routinely are.

Other interesting observations appear in the sections on witches. Noting that witches are the largest group of anti-mothers in the collection, Blaha-Peillex studies how Wilhelm Grimm's editorial changes standardize the physical appearance of witches in the tales, and she also draws attention to his insertion in the 1857 edition of an explanation for why the prince in "The Frog King" had been turned into a frog; as she notes, only in this edition does the prince explain that he had been cursed by a witch.

It is principally as a typology of the various mothers and anti-mothers in the tales that readers will find this study of interest. Blaha-Peillex examines many types of mothers (such as foster mothers and grandmothers) that have been largely ignored in secondary literature. Moreover, she provides a useful appendix with numerous tables pertaining to the various categorizations she examines in her study, and she is to be commended for her thorough analyses of the changes made to individual tales over several editions.

Nevertheless, her emphasis on categorizations also weakens her analysis, which occasionally seems to focus more on justifying why a particular character has been assigned to one category or another than on relating nuanced, in-depth interpretations. The structuring of the analysis around many categories and subcategories makes it difficult to analyze how various mothers and anti-mothers might operate and interact within the same tale, because these various figures are examined in different parts of her study. For example, "The Maiden without Hands" contains a mother who laments that her husband has unwittingly promised their daughter to the devil; the daughter, who later becomes a mother herself; and the daughter's mother-in-law, who protects her daughter-in-law from what she believes is her son's order that the daughter-in-law (his wife) and her child be killed, but is really an order from the devil. Because of the structure of the study, these figures for the most part are examined individually, in separate sections on "Living Passive Mothers," "Heroines," "Mothers-in-Law," and "Passive Fathers." A more integrated and sustained analysis of the maternal figures in the tale might have yielded greater insights. The structure of the study also leads to unnecessary repetitions, as, for example, in the many passages where the reader is told that wicked biological mothers are often replaced with stepmothers.

Greater reference to existing secondary literature would also be helpful, in particular to psychological or sociohistorical interpretations of the tales Blaha-Peillex examines. The isolated reference to Bruno Bettelheim's analysis of the witch and her gingerbread house as maternal symbols in "Hansel and Gretel" (89) does not do justice to the many subsequent psychoanalytical interpretations of witches and stepmothers in the Grimms' tales. Similarly, in the analysis of the sorceress in "Rapunzel" as a foster mother, it might have been appropriate to briefly mention associations of "Maiden in the Tower" tales with

cultural practices of protecting girls at the time of puberty. And in her categorization of the father in "The Maiden without Hands" as a "passive father," it is striking that Blaha-Peillex does not consider the incest motif that underlies many variants of this tale, and that the Grimms expunged from a version of the tale they drew on for the second and subsequent editions of the KHM.

As a published dissertation that explores the various categories of mothers and anti-mothers in the KHM, Blaha-Peillex's study will provide useful observations to scholars who are interested in the Brothers Grimm or in depictions of women in the European fairy tale. Her work might also serve as a springboard for further research on this interesting topic.

Ann Schmiesing
University of Colorado at Boulder

Enchanted Hunters: The Power of Stories in Childhood. By Maria Tatar. New York: W. W. Norton, 2009. 296 pp.

In light of the furlough days imposed on public schools nationwide in 2009 as a means of cutting state budget shortfalls, Maria Tatar's *Enchanted Hunters: The Power of Stories in Childhood* offers, by fortuitous coincidence, to parents and concerned adults a message of solace: some of the best learning happens outside the classroom, when a child is engrossed in a good book. Tatar argues that reading tales of enchantment for pleasure at home, on the bus, in the park, at the library, or at bedtime benefits children and prepares them for the complexities of adulthood. As the publisher advertises on the dust jacket, *Enchanted Hunters* thus enters the territory laid out in Bruno Bettelheim's best-selling study *Uses of Enchantment: The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales* (1976), although it should be noted that Tatar's interest is not the psychological effects of childhood reading, but rather the "transformative power of words and stories" (10).

Maria Tatar, the John L. Loeb Professor of Germanic Languages and Literatures at Harvard University, is renowned for her scholarly works and annotated editions of classic fairy tales, the Brothers Grimm, and Hans Christian Andersen. *Enchanted Hunters* ventures beyond the dark, thorny hedges that make academic writing a somewhat prickly territory for general readers and saunters into the sunny field of polemic, essayistic writing. Some traces of academic jargon and the urge to quote a bit too copiously from authorities in literary theory remain, but overall *Enchanted Hunters* appeals to anyone who takes an interest in children's literature, the form and function of childhood reading, and the importance of reading in stimulating children's innate sense of wonder as a pathway to learning about life.

The canon of classic children's stories offers "shocks, terrors, and wonders, as well as wisdom, comfort, and sustenance," Tatar states in the introduc-

tion (5). Her method of investigating “the power of stories in childhood” (the book’s subtitle) is to draw upon anecdotal evidence and interviews with Harvard students in her courses on children’s literature, her personal experience as a mother of two, her extensive reading of both children’s and adult fiction, and her scholarly background. The introduction loosely defines the theoretical framework for her inquiry without actually explicating exactly how Mary Louise Pratt’s concept of the contact zone can be meaningfully extrapolated to this study. In spite of veiled as well as explicit references to Walter Benjamin, Pierre Bourdieu, Roland Barthes, and Michel Foucault, no focused theoretical analysis is set up. Nor is the empirical scope of Tatar’s methodology clearly defined. Rather, Tatar has a broad agenda that aims to dismantle “the unconscious biases against reading in our daily language” (27), ultimately hoping to turn the negative trope “bookworm” into “enchanted hunter” instead.

Chapter 1 is dedicated to “storytelling and the invention of bedtime reading” (33). To supplement this piece of cultural history, Tatar offers an interpretation of a number of historical paintings and prints depicting children being read to. Chapter 2 explores horror, beauty, and the notion of literature’s “ignition power,” which Tatar defines as “the ability to kindle the imagination” (79). Chapter 3 heads further into the dark corners of human experience, exploring uplifting examples of children’s literature in which death and abandonment threaten the stability of the known world but at the end offer hope through transformation and regeneration. Chapters 4 and 5 are respectively titled “How to Do Things with Words” and “What Words Can Do to You” and discuss children’s literacy from the triangulated perspective of wonder, boredom, and curiosity. These five chapters cover two hundred pages. Following Tatar’s acknowledgments, an appendix of thirty-four pages titled “Souvenirs of Reading: What We Bring Back” presents observations and thoughts about reading (some of which have already been quoted in the chapters) from famous people ranging from Menander to Sherman Alexie. These “souvenirs” are offered in no alphabetical or chronological order and with no synthesizing commentary. After the appendix are notes, bibliography, and an index. Information in the notes is not indexed, which means a reference to Tatar’s friendly jab at Jack Zipes being one of the “grinches” (198) who criticizes the Harry Potter phenomenon’s multimillion-dollar commercial apparatus is apparent only in the footnote. Zipes’s name does not appear in the index.

The loose and baggy organization of the argument does not necessarily detract from the valuable insights Tatar offers in her readings of the classics. What is more interesting, and ultimately relevant to the salience of her argument, is the selection of books Tatar discusses. Which books does she consider classics? Obviously, it is impossible to include everything, but her choices alert us to the politics and standards of the canon’s inclusions and exclusions, which

librarians and educators, not to mention editors and publishers, deal with on an ongoing basis.

Tatar covers a range of nineteenth- and twentieth-century British and American children's literature in addition to the classic fairy tales of the Brothers Grimm, Charles Perrault, and Hans Christian Andersen. She offers interesting readings of *Charlotte's Web*, *Peter Pan*, *Peter and Wendy*, *The Wizard of Oz*, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, *The Secret Garden*, and *Chronicles of Narnia* as well as of more contemporary classics like the *Harry Potter* series, Norton Juster's *The Phantom Tollbooth*, Philip Pullman's *His Dark Materials* trilogy, Dr. Seuss, Roald Dahl, Margaret Wise Brown's *Goodnight Moon*, and Maurice Sendak's *In the Night Kitchen*. Jean de Brunhoff's (misspelled "Bruhoff" [294]) *The Story of Babar* is mentioned, but not Antoine de Saint-Exupéry's *The Little Prince*. *Uncle Tom's Cabin* is also included, but not Joel Chandler Harris's *Uncle Remus*. Other "standard" classics are entirely missing: Laura Ingalls Wilder's *Little House* series, Beatrix Potter's tales, *Winnie the Pooh*, *The Hobbit*, and *Lord of the Rings*. Nor is Eoin Colfer's best-selling *Artemis Fowl* series mentioned. The fairy-tale-reading heroine of *Pan's Labyrinth*, Ofelia, is pictured on the dust jacket's spine, but Tatar makes no reference to the film. Most surprising is the omission of *The Arabian Nights*, which has inspired and delighted countless readers through the ages, including Hans Christian Andersen, who recalled Aladdin's words "here came I as a poor lad" when he spent his first enchanted night at Amalienborg Castle. The only reference we get to *Arabian Nights* is its "fabled magic carpet" (130).

Tatar throws her net wide, and inevitably some of the big fish slip away. Thus, while *Enchanted Hunters* offers insightful readings of selected books, which Tatar deftly situates in the context of enchantment, the socialization of children, and the accumulation of cultural capital via canonical reads, the book also invites us to continue the debate on social and political aspects of children's classics and their impact on children's, and eventually adults', lived experience.

Kirsten Møllegaard
University of Hawai'i at Hilo

Relentless Progress: The Reconfiguration of Children's Literature, Fairy Tales, and Storytelling. By Jack Zipes. New York: Routledge, 2009. xv + 189pp.

Could our blind faith in globalization and multiculturalism prevent us from recognizing the potentially destructive consequences of unchecked progress? Jack Zipes's *Relentless Progress: The Reconfiguration of Children's Literature, Fairy Tales, and Storytelling* argues that these utopian concepts may instead foster the collapse of communities and drive lasting wedges between classes and races as capitalist interests, rather than cultural curiosity, dominate the cultural landscape. Zipes's essays, which he nearly called "interventions" (x),

are weighty, comprehensive, and provocative, particularly when he considers how the international spread of mass consumerism affects the most vulnerable segment of our world, our children.

Noting that the contemporary storyteller is a chameleon, Zipes engages both the specialist and the novice through essays that vacillate between scholarly and intimate, pessimistic and optimistic. While his ample research on economics, sociology, and history may be challenging, such sections provide theoretical underpinnings for the more accessible portions of the text in which he eagerly promotes various contemporary works. Zipes's tone is also adaptive; most essays commence with frustrated or confrontational remarks concerning the state of our world and the place of children's literature within it, yet he consistently moves each discussion toward encouragement and hope. An ardent admirer of the most innovative contemporary tales, Zipes trusts their capacity to help us fight the evils of the word through literary enlightenment.

Declaring globalization "a sickness that troubles my soul" (71), Zipes fears our "multimodal" (9) world exploits children by treating them as consumers, a practice embraced by multinational publishing companies that market primarily entertainment. The astonishing increase in published books intended for children and adolescents does not assuage Zipes's qualms regarding literacy, for "[t]here are indeed many pieces of delectable literature that we simply eat and spew from our systems like candy bars that provide instantaneous pleasure but are not nutritional or long lasting" (13). Although Zipes calls for readers to subvert the capitalist order and reconfigure the status of children's literature, he concedes that children are more engaged socioeconomically than ever before, using capital and commodity to define themselves. Additionally, significant disconnects affect the way children and their elders engage with both books and technology as the era of the written word has been overshadowed by the age of image and screen. In fact, Zipes argues that "we have succeeded in transforming children into functional literates, nonliterates, and alliterates, . . . Perhaps we should call this process the 'endumbment of children'" (27). Our consumerist culture trains children to misread, and they are unable to discern the difference between critically valued literature versus "copycat books" (35) created solely for profit. Zipes argues that such shoddy knockoffs demonstrate the guiding principle of present-day book publication: "milk the cow when she is full and continue milking until she is empty. If she can't produce any more milk, kill it, skin it, and wear it" (38). Contending that the genre should be typified by artists who construct something from nothing to address problem-solving with autonomy, Zipes suggests that corporations and movie studios have unfortunately followed the Disney model in commodifying hope, flooding the market with "predictable schlock" and works that are deficient in "critical reflection and self-reflection" (53).

When the reader begins to think there is no hope on the horizon, Zipes offers a path from “delusion” to “illumination” (53) by turning to those writers and illustrators who are eager for alternative visions. Zipes encourages readers to explore some of his favorite selections in children’s literature, including the work of Peter Sís, Vladimir Radunsky, Neil Gaiman and Dave McKean, and Shaun Tan, all of whom use color, black-and-white, varying illustration techniques, reader participation, unorthodox imagery, and typography to evoke meaning. He also describes the outsiders and refugees who populate the landscape of current graphic novels penned by Bill Willingham and Linda Medley, both of whom subvert fairy tales, legends, and nursery rhymes. Noting that children raised on “banality” (M. T. Anderson, qtd. in Zipes 66) become conditioned to accept it, Zipes gently guides the reader to promising territory through investigation of unfamiliar works. Furthermore, he makes a strong case for increasing exponentially the number of international works available in translation. Insisting that multiculturalism should be embraced with a spirit of curiosity and respect for others’ traditions, Zipes offers a lively discussion of works by authors and illustrators from Germany, France, and Italy, including Franz Hohler, Kirsten Boie, and Jean-Claude Mourlevant. To remedy intolerance and ignorance, Zipes calls for increased collaboration and criticism on an international scale between writers, artists, and publishers coupled with additional cohesiveness between teachers and librarians, those who have the most impact on children’s literacy and literary pleasure.

Two essays in Zipes’s text do not necessarily mesh seamlessly with the theme nor tone of the other essays and may be seen as somewhat tangential to his larger purpose, but they are relevant in the sense that both represent interdisciplinary progress in fairy-tale studies. Concerning Richard Dawkins’s research on memes and forty years of feminist fairy tales respectively, these essays indicate Zipes’s admirable efforts to expand the ways we think about fairy tales’ transmission and their relevance to evolutionary biology, relevance theory, and gender studies. Though he admits that the term *meme* has been “attacked” and “mocked” (102) and his theories first advanced in *Why Fairy Tales Stick* (2006) cannot yet be buttressed by scientific proof, Zipes nonetheless advocates for collaboration between the humanities and natural sciences to help us understand the evolution of culture and the place of fairy tales within our lives. Taking up a lengthy discussion of “The Frog Prince” variants, Zipes argues that this tale type has become memetic because its focus on mating rituals and gender roles is vital to our survival as a species. It remains to be seen whether the proposed link between fairy tales and evolutionary biology will be substantiated, but Zipes should be praised for his efforts to bring fairy tales to a broader, more diversified audience.

Zipes also explores the forty-year progression of feminist fairy tales and

scholarship and reflects on their radical and subversive power, particularly their ability to comment so poignantly on the struggle between the sexes. Noting our present tendency to become so bombarded by imagery and amazed by “spectacle” (127) that we dupe ourselves into keeping the status quo, Zipes has faith in feminist fairy tales because they challenge rigidly-defined boundaries. They reveal both oppression and hope. However, just like the fantasy genre and the publishing world in general, the feminist voice may itself be threatened by oversimplification and banality. We must insist on truly revolutionary feminist works and endorse them over those written to appease the market. Zipes promotes the work of Aimee Bender, Lauren Slater, and Kelly Link, as well as the prose and poetry featured in Kate Bernheimer’s *Fairy Tale Review*. The most groundbreaking feminist work embraces diversity, magic realism, and psychology in works that subvert the “typical” feminist tale, revealing a lack of closure and a focus on estrangement, suggesting that both genres and genders are “indefinable” (135) in our postmodern world.

In his final essay, Zipes questions the place of storytelling in a world where spectacle and narrative are used for deceit and where globalization forces even greater socioeconomic divisions. As fairy tales evolve, so does the role of the storyteller, who has lost authenticity in having to shape-shift to adhere to expectations of people and institutions. Censorship, lack of funding, and lack of support affect the professional storyteller, forcing guidelines onto the very person whose tales possess the ability to help us learn, ask questions, and solve problems. Just as books that overlook harmful cultural realities mislead readers, a shackled storyteller deludes his audience. Thus, both books and storytellers must bravely portray optimism and pessimism. As Zipes proclaims, “Great children’s literature is great literature,” (85) and we need a balance between truth and fantasy to create lasting progress. In sum, Zipes’s essays provide a compelling and well-researched set of arguments to his readers; while at times he paints a dire picture of the fate of children’s literature and the fantasy genre, he also provides readers with the tools necessary to embrace the promises of globalization and multiculturalism, provided we confront the threats of unchecked progress and mass consumerism, and stifle our tendency to become lost in the multicultural milieu.

Susan Redington Bobby
Wesley College

Wie kommt man ans Ziel seiner Wünsche? Modelle des Glücks in Märchentexten. Edited by Brigitte Boothe. Gießen: Psychosozial-Verlag, 2002. 172 pp.

As Brigitte Boothe states in her foreword to this collection of essays, fairy tales have charmed researchers across a vast expanse of disciplines, from linguistics and literary studies to psychology and psychotherapy, from mythology

and theology to pedagogy (7). This book focuses on the fairy tale as an object of interest for the psychotherapist. As the title suggests, a central question of the collected essays is how fairy tales encode strategies of achieving happiness in the face of adversity and deeply rooted fears that have come to life. Closely aligned with this question is an inquiry into how fairy tales may embed expressions of wish fulfillment. While these questions may be asked of traditional fairy tales, such as those collected by the Grimms, the chapters of this book build upon research of fairy tales imagined by young research subjects, and the book is organized along an axis of age: from tales authored by children and adolescents to an account of the few Grimms fairy tales that offer a model of happiness for aging adults.

The book opens with a foreword by Boothe, followed by an essay by Kristin Wardetzky that examines sex/gender differences in the fairy-tale fantasies of young children. The chapter by Lorenz Lunin adds the dimension of age-specific narrative themes in children's fairy tales. This is followed by Claudia Galli and Catherine Paterson's chapter on the notable emergence of a subgenre in the fairy tales of adolescents: the anti-fairy tale. The research on young people's fairy tales is then synthesized in a chapter by Boothe that asks questions about the developmental value of fairy tales. Boothe closes the book with a chapter on the few Grimms tales that imagine happiness in the twilight years, and a brief afterword that analyzes a fairy tale with a curious model for happiness in marriage.

The chapter "Eroberer und Königstöchter" (Conquerors and Princesses) by Wardetzky utilizes two corpuses of children's fairy tales: the first corpus contains approximately two thousand fairy tales by eight-to-eleven-year-old children in the former East Germany (written between 1986 and 1988), and the second corpus includes approximately two hundred fairy tales by Swiss children of the same age (Lunin's 1994 Zurich study). All of these tales were written essentially spontaneously. They were provided brief, simple prompts written by Wardetzky; all of the prompts avoided specifying the sex of the child-hero in the tale (in the Zurich study, the prompts were presented in pairs differing only by the sex of the protagonist—each child was given free choice of which to use). For example, one of the prompts reads (translated): "Once upon a time there was a child playing on the edge of a sea. Suddenly the child went pale from fright, for the waves rose up and the water foamed" (46). The data reveals narrative features and themes often specific to the sex of the child author. Once identified, these features and themes are not surprising: children tend to imagine a protagonist of their own sex (18–19); boys tend to focus on a selfless hero battling a monster that threatens his family (22); girls typically present marriage as the ultimate goal of the heroine (29); and so forth. Less ob-

vious is that the tales of boys conform largely to the hero-myth of antiquity, while girls compose wonder tales in which magical, rather than physical, skills are typically critical to the success of the heroine (19). What the research does not illuminate at this stage is whether these are sex or gender differences, or to what degree they are a combination.

Lunin claims boldly in his chapter, “Der Weg in die Fremde—der Weg nach Hause” (The Way to the Foreign—the Way Home), that Vladimir Propp’s structural analysis of fairy-tale functions has lapsed into triviality and can regain interest only through the revelation of their psychological relevance (55). His efforts in this direction, based on the 1994 Zurich corpus mentioned above, uncover an age boundary in fairy tales spontaneously composed by children. Children were presented with two prompt pairs differentiated only by the sex of the protagonist; the prompts were (here in translation): “Once upon a time there was a boy/girl, who could no longer find his/her way home” and “Once upon a time there was a boy/girl, who ventured forth from home and out into the world” (56). The age-specific pattern that emerges in the data is that children under the age of ten tend to choose the first prompt, and children ten years and older tend to select the second. Lunin explains the choice of the younger children as a reflection of an anxiety that is quite common and of primary concern to that age group—the fear of separation from parents and home. The tendency of older children to choose the second prompt expresses the emerging wish to separate from parents and home life and gain autonomy. Lunin concludes his chapter with a brief mention of a run of tales in the corpus that may be classified as anti-fairy tales: tales in which the protagonist of the fairy tale ventures out into the world only to meet death or be condemned to a life of isolation. This leads into Galli and Paterson’s study (1999–2000) of cued fairy tales written by 168 fourteen-year-old students in Zurich (80). While anti-fairy tales did not dominate the resulting corpus (roughly 22 percent were anti-fairy tales), they did appear significantly more frequently than in the writings of younger children. Galli and Paterson interpret the appearance of the anti-fairy tale to indicate failure anxieties in young adolescents fantasizing about venturing away from home and seeking autonomy.

Boothe follows this chapter with a contemplation of the psychological functions of fairy tales. In addition to serving as models of happiness and expressions of wish-fulfillment fantasies, fairy tales engage tellers and listeners in communal meaning-making and encourage the development of empathy. Readers who are interested in this line of thought may benefit from consulting recent work on the narrative practice hypothesis by Shaun Gallagher and Daniel D. Hutto. Boothe closes the collection with two brief chapters. Her penultimate essay surveys the scant models of happiness for the aging in the Grimms’ tales,

but she is able to find rich material in the transformation of marginalization into paradisiacal solitude in “The Bremen Town Musicians” (KHM 27). Boothe’s afterword considers the complex model of marital happiness in “The Peasant’s Wise Daughter” (KHM 94).

This collection of essays is of interest to anyone involved with research on fairy tales and children, fairy tales and sex/gender, or the psychology of fairy tales. It would also make an engaging secondary text in a German-language course on fairy tales; while reading this book for review, I presented students with the children’s fairy tales from Wardetzky’s appendix (children’s names blacked out) and asked them to try to determine the sex of each author. They were surprisingly successful (without having read Wardetzky’s chapter yet), and our discussion of narrative structures and features that may have led to their intuitions was lively and exciting. A final note on this collection is that it presents research at a preliminary stage. As mentioned above, it is not clear if the differences between the fairy tales of young girls and boys are sex or gender differences, or what the complex interplay of sex and gender may be. Further research is also required to explore the diagnostic value of fairy tales spontaneously composed by children.

R. Seth C. Knox
Adrian College

Tales of Bluebeard and His Wives from Late Antiquity to Postmodern Times.
By Shuli Barzilai. New York: Routledge, 2009. xii + 194 pp.

This is a subtle and multi-threaded book that will prove interesting to a wide variety of readers. It is not, however, a study of “Bluebeard” in the aural traditions of Europe: it is not concerned with the folk versions that inspired the classical texts by Charles Perrault and the Grimm Brothers, nor does it examine how this particular theme—classified by folklorists as ATU types 311 (Rescue by the Sister) and 312 (Maiden-Killer [Bluebeard])—relates to other themes in the European oral repertoire. Rather, this is primarily a literary study of the Bluebeard theme in a cluster of Victorian novels by Charles Dickens (1812–1870), William Makepeace Thackeray (1811–1863), and Anne Thackeray Ritchie (1837–1919), as well as in contemporary revisions by Angela Carter (1940–1992) and Margaret Atwood (born 1939).

Barzilai’s sophisticated approach combines intertextual readings with an extratextual viewpoint that explores the interplay between stories using the Bluebeard theme and the story authors’ lives. Within this layered perspective, her study examines the repeated uses of the Bluebeard theme in the oeuvres of Dickens and of Thackeray; then it forcefully reevaluates Ritchie as a pivotal author who draws on the seventeenth-century tradition of women fairy-tale writers while influencing the Bluebeard tradition of the twentieth century. Finally,

the examination of Atwood's recent uses of the theme brings up the question of why the appeal of this old story has endured.

But the literary history of "Bluebeard" is arguably the outer shell of an argument that has deeper undercurrents. From the outset, chapter 1 moors the theme to an ancient pillar of Western worldview by pointing out that the fall of Eve has been a model for understanding the behavior of Bluebeard's wives. Barzilai proposes to recognize the first instance of Bluebeard in a folktale contained in *Genesis Rabbah* (the midrashic commentary on the book of Genesis), which works as a parable for the Fall and its aftermath. According to her, the author of the folktale in *Genesis Rabbah* was presumably the first author of "Bluebeard"; otherwise put, the Bluebeard theme is a variation on the Fall story. Indeed, Barzilai calls Perrault's "Bluebeard" a late midrash on Genesis. (Shrewdly, Barzilai proposes that Perrault's text internalizes the snake in the woman, which agrees with the age-old notion that Eve herself is a snake.) This stance appears to imply two things. First, that "Bluebeard" transposes up to our time the theme of knowledge acquisition and sexual initiation contained in the Genesis episode. Indeed, in the discussion of Atwood's *Bluebeard's Egg* the Eve-Adam-Snake pattern comes up again, along with the proposition that the themes of consumption and knowledge may be retraced to Perrault "and yet farther back to the timeless plots played out in the biblical garden of Eden and its midrashic corollaries" (153). The second implication is that Barzilai's book on Bluebeard is an offshoot of midrash studies; that, in other words, this examination of a fairy-tale theme positions itself within the tradition of *pilpul* (rabbinical disputation) concerning themes at the very root of the Judeo-Christian worldview.

Even though Barzilai mentions the biblical roots of her theme only in the first and last chapters, another exegetical paradigm supplements the midrashic inspiration in the remainder of the book. Barzilai maintains that creative writing, like daydreaming, bears the imprint of each individual artist. Moreover, she proposes that "Bluebeard" is the tattletale par excellence, for it concurrently camouflages and reveals the inner realities of writers who dabble with it. That is, a fairy-tale theme rife with the ontological enigmas of Genesis also operates as though it were a screen memory as defined by Freud. For example, Barzilai proposes that the Bluebeard theme stems from the triangulated structure of husband-wife-interloper (snake) shown in the story of the Fall. And she shows in Dickens's humorous evocations of Bluebeard, as glossed by the Freudian insight into the tendentious joke as a form of concealment, the ideal of a happy triangulated family along with a fantasy of intrafamilial union—a pattern of domestic ménage à trois. This structural fit between the proposition of a Genesis model for "Bluebeard" and the results of a Freud-inspired analysis of Dickens raises the mooted question of whether Freudian discussions belong in the line of rabbinic hermeneutics (see Alan Dundes's *The Shabbat Elevator*

and *Other Shabbat Subterfuges: An Unorthodox Essay on Circumventing Custom and Jewish Character* [2002] 149, and Susan Handelman's "Interpretation as Devotion: Freud's Relation to Rabbinic Hermeneutics" (1981)).

And so this delightfully complex book calls for readings from various perspectives as well as on several levels. Fairy-tale historians will find in it intertextual analyses that propose hitherto unseen connections. (The persuasive argument on the probable influence of Ritchie's *Bluebeard's Keys* on Angela Carter's "The Bloody Chamber" is one case in point.) Social-minded critics will find nuanced discussions of uses of the Bluebeard theme as a means for expressing social satire and cultural dissent. (The chapters dedicated to Thackeray and Ritchie are fine examples of this.) Readers who are interested in postmodern uses of "Bluebeard," or in why this theme still matters, will also find their share of insightful discussions. (The two chapters dedicated to Atwood are a case in point.) Last, but not least, readers who are preoccupied with wider issues will find intriguing food for thought. Barzilai's discussion ends with the remark that late twentieth-century retellings of "Bluebeard" raise issues concerning epistemology as well as moral agency and responsibility. As befits Barzilai's sophistication, her book is more about asking the right questions than about providing definite answers.

Francisco Vaz da Silva
Lisbon University Institute

Struwwelpeter: Humor or Horror? 160 Years Later. By Barbara Smith Chalou. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2007. 99 pp.

I figured that a book on the history of good old pathologic nineteenth-century German *Struwwelpeter* had to be a winner—what's not to like? Graphic violence, illustrations, sadism, possible connections to Edward Gorey, Winged Monkeys, Edward Scissorhands, Chris Van Allsburg, Grand Guignol, and so on. Couldn't lose with a plate loaded like that, right? Wrong. Absolutely wrong. This little monograph, simply but honestly put, may be the worst pseudo-academic text I have encountered in my thirty-five-year career.

Take a deep breath, O my reader, and forge on. These quotes are verbatim: "Factors including the Black Plague, smothering, and pregnancy were frequently occurring events that caused the child to die or to be sent home to the birth parents" (17). Or, "Prior to Sigmund Freud (1856–1939) . . . there was Charles Darwin (1809–1882) who believed that the child was the link between the human and the animal species" (26). And "Freud's model [of child development], which was widely known and should certainly have been known to Dr. Hoffmann [author of *Struwwelpeter*]" (27). The teensy little inconvenient facts that Hoffmann published *Struwwelpeter* in 1845 and that Freud was born twelve years *later* need not hamper Chalou's march to horror.

As best I can deduce, Chalou (an associate professor of education at the University of Maine, Presque Isle, who has previously published on “Little Red Riding Hood”) is trying to “locate” the classic *Struwwelpeter* within the history of children’s literature, educational theory, and current cultural studies. Legitimate aims. But almost every page contains wild oversimplifications, historical and theoretical reductions. She takes on 250 years of European and American intellectual, educational, and cultural history in forty or so pages and feels it necessary to provide thumbnail sketches of subjects from Jean Piaget, to Louise Rosenblatt’s reader response theory, to Looney Tunes cartoons, to Jean Jacques Rousseau. And there are really only about fifty pages of Chalou’s “work” in the volume—the rest is a reprint of an English version of *Struwwelpeter* (unattributed, and no reason is given why this particular textual version was selected) with illustrations. There is also a five-page reprint of a nineteenth-century German *Struwwelpeter* cognate tale, *Max and Moritz*, which she links to the Katzenjammer Kids comic but does not comment upon further.

Idiosyncratic *italicizing* spices up Chalou’s text, and it is just a small oversight that her bibliography (which stops at 2004; there is no works cited offered) is *incomplete* (the major German Hoffmann scholar *Walter Sauer*, mentioned on page 48 et passim, is *nowhere* to be found). And typographical errors abound.

More disturbing, however, is Chalou’s implication of a connection between *Struwwelpeter* and the Third Reich. She unearths a World War II parody titled *Struwwelhitler* (47, 61), and she feels compelled to offer one of her one-paragraph summaries under the heading “Hitler’s Youth” (46–47). She ends the section with this troubling assertion: “Deference to authority—parental, institutional, or political—has long been a societal expectation and Germany’s *Struwwelpeter* maintains that legacy in its ideological assumption of deference to arbitrary authority.” Implicitly, then, *Struwwelpeter*, published in 1845, should be seen as an incipient form of Nazi propaganda? Also in this section Chalou compares the fanatic allegiance of the Hitler Youth movement to Beatlemania in the 1960s. Linking fascism and star adulation is a classic mangos/papayas fallacy.

One of the most fascinatingly illogical aspects of the book is its use of anachronism and the *post hoc, ergo propter hoc* fallacy. We’ve already seen this with Freud’s and Hoffmann’s life dates. This next one takes some thinking about. She is writing about Heinrich Hoffmann, the author of the original nineteenth-century *Struwwelpeter*.

Hoffmann, however, was an educated man—a man of science—in fact, a psychiatrist who, by definition, studied the mental, emotional, and behavioral condition of humans. Given this background, it seems reasonable to hold Hoffmann accountable for understanding the phrase *developmentally appropriate* [her italics] and for using that knowledge in crafting the stories/lessons for his three-year-old son (28).

By this “logic,” Galileo should have known about quarks because he was an astronomer, and Mendel must have known about carbon exchange because he worked with plants. Is Chalou offering unacknowledged typological historicism? For her, the future seems hidden in the past—recall *Struwwelpeter* and the Nazis in this connection.

There is no apparent intellectual purpose or thesis to the book. The words “parody” and “didacticism” recur but are never defined beyond what the dictionary offers. The idea that Hoffmann may have had his tongue pretty far up his cheek while writing a fabulously violent book for his three-year-old son does not cross Chalou’s mind. She seems to possess absolutely no sense of irony, and she cannot admit even the merest possibility that exaggeration could be making a Bahktinian, carnivalesque appearance in the *Struwwelpeter* stories. Nor does she recognize the fact, clear to any parent, myself included, that kids can be violent creatures (symbolically in play, if not actually in effect).

Don’t ask Chalou for consistency or even firm opinion. Assessments are usually qualified with “probably,” “somewhat,” “perhaps,” and so on. For Chalou, Jack Zipes (whom she has read) got it wrong. And I think here we may get to the heart of the confusion of this book. Where Zipes sees the cause-effect clarity of *Struwwelpeter*’s violence to be “reasonable,” for Chalou it is “an area of uncertainty” (37). If at this point in her own book she has not figured out what role violence is to play or not to play in imaginative materials for children, then we can hardly expect her to lead us through a clearly defined discussion of ideas that might have ranged from, say, Aristotelian cathartic uses of violence in theater to Pauline doctrines of tolerance to modern theories of fetishism and psycho- and sociopathology, which are precisely the kinds of things that might have made a study of *Struwwelpeter* then and now both interesting and compelling.

Allusive play falls flat again when Chalou encounters the Tiger Lillies’ recent theatrical success, *Shockheaded Peter: A Junk Opera* (YouTube clips available). While she accurately describes its amplification of the tale’s violence, she seems to miss entirely the parodic brilliance of the stagecraft, which echoes elements as diverse as Kurt Weill, early punk rock, and Federico Fellini. All Chalou can say is that the Tiger Lillies’ rendition is “somewhat unnerving” (62).

Chalou does bring in Edward Gorey toward the end, only to explain that “his work is not actually intended for an audience of children” (77). Tell that to the kids who love his work. She is aware of Harry Potter and the Baudelaire children, but they don’t receive much attention. In fact, we learn everything we need to know about children’s fantasy as a genre in two pages (75–76), one of which is devoted to *Alice in Wonderland*; everything else that needs to be mentioned—C. S. Lewis, Tolkien, J. K. Rowling—is taken care of in a paragraph. Grand masters of the macabre in children’s literature such as Maurice Sendak and Chris Van

Allsburg are ignored entirely (well, she did find that Sendak liked Hoffmann's original illustrations). The terrible violence of the Holocaust and the literature for children that deals with it are outside her concerns. How one can purport to bring *Struwwelpeter* up into the twenty-first century without being aware of such wider presentations of violence—indirect, allusive, or graphic—or even in as limited a range as in *Jumanji* or *The Z Was Zapped*, is beyond me. Violent video games do not exist in Chalou's world, probably because they have not apparently replicated Shockheaded Peter iconically. But perhaps this is unfair. Her territory is, after all, supposed to be only Struwwelpeter clones and knockoffs, and she does indeed identify a number of them in chapter 5, though she does not demonstrate that she has read or examined many of them.

Chalou's final Conclusion (there are other **Conclusions**, all helpfully bolded), gives us a view of the book's efforts toward probity: "Every good story has a conflict to be resolved—or not—for it is the conflict and how it is handled by and affects the protagonist that captures the reader's attention. Violence is often an integral component of this and fortunately authors have moved away from the superfluous violence of the nineteenth-century children's cautionary tales toward a much richer literary tradition wherein violence, if present at all, is an integral part of the text and is used judiciously to reveal the universal conflict of good and evil" (77). I guess that pretty much covers it—or not.

Frankly, reading *Struwwelpeter: Humor or Horror? 160 Years Later* insulted and angered me. I was insulted by the simplistic, naïve reductionism of the synoptic historicizing, and I was angered that any legitimate press (Lexington Books is a subsidiary of Rowman and Littlefield) would have such disregard for quality as to bring this "book" to print.

Stephen Canham
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

Ponyo on the Cliff by the Sea (Gake No Ue no Ponyo). Directed by Hayao Miyazaki. Voiced by Yuria Nara, Hiroki Doi, Jōji Tokoro, Tomoko Yamaguchi, Yūki Amami, Kazushige Nagashima (Japanese version); Noah Cyrus, Frankie Jonas, Tina Fey, Matt Damon, Liam Neeson, Cate Blanchett (English version). Studio Ghibli, 2008.

The latest animation by Japanese master Hayao Miyazaki was released on August 15, 2009, in North America. Miyazaki's best-known works include *Princess Mononoke* (*Mononoke-hime* 1997), which holds Japan's highest-grossing film record, and *Spirited Away* (*Sen to Chihiro no kamikakushi* 2001), the first anime film to be nominated for and win an Academy Award. Miyazaki, however, refused to collect the award at the ceremony, explaining later that he "didn't want to visit a country that was bombing Iraq." In 2004 Miyazaki adapted the fantasy novel *Howl's Moving Castle* by Dianne Wynne Jones; this movie (*Hauru*

no Ugoku Shiro) also an instant success, was nominated for an Academy Award for Best Animated Feature in 2005. *Ponyo* won the esteemed Japanese Academy Award for Best Animation for 2009.

Compared to multilayered films by Miyazaki such as *Spirited Away* and *Howl's Moving Castle*, *Ponyo* has a simpler plot. The film tells the story of a goldfish who wants to be human. Brunhilde, daughter of sea goddess Gran Mamare and wizard Fujimoto, lives with her numerous sisters and her father in a submarine. Curious about the world above the sea, she lands on a jellyfish and starts her journey for the unknown world. She is stranded on shore and rescued by Sosuke, a five-year-old boy who lives in a house on the cliff. He names the goldfish "Ponyo" and promises to protect her forever. In the meantime, Fujimoto realizes that Brunhilde/Ponyo is gone. Eventually he finds her and takes her back under the sea. However, it is too late: when Sosuke cuts his finger on broken glass, Ponyo heals his wound by licking it, and the taste of human blood has made her yearn to be human. Back in the ocean, Ponyo defies her father, and she uses his magic to transform herself into a human and escape to the surface. This use of uncontrolled power, however, unleashes a heavy storm, causing a tsunami. Riding the waves, Ponyo searches for Sosuke, and they eventually reunite. The tsunami scene is the climax of the film; dark waves with eyes leap over one another and eventually submerge the town. Ponyo's wish to become human and to be with Sosuke has disrupted the harmony of nature; as a result, prehistoric sea creatures start to swim above the flooded village, the moon leaves its orbit, and satellites fall from the sky like shooting stars. In the end, Ponyo's mother, Gran Mamare, intervenes and announces that if Sosuke passes a test, Ponyo can live with him as a human, but if he fails, she will turn into sea foam. Sosuke is then asked if he still loves Ponyo even though she is a fish. When Sosuke assures Granmamare that he loves Ponyo no matter what her form is, Ponyo's magical powers are taken away and she is allowed to remain with Sosuke and his mother as a human being.

Miyazaki's latest work can be considered a loose adaptation of Hans Christian Andersen's fairy tale "The Little Mermaid." But for producer Toshio Suzuki, the only similarity is that both narratives feature a female ocean creature that wants to be human. Suzuki specifies that Miyazaki's story is not about abjection and Christian self-sacrifice. The little mermaid's quest for an immortal soul has become a quest for love and companionship. Miyazaki's *Ponyo* is a film about love and joy. In this sense, it is also quite different from Disney's *The Little Mermaid* film, in which conventional gender roles and patriarchal ideology are strongly reaffirmed.

In *Ponyo* there are no deep and complicated villains or protagonists. Fujimoto, with his long hair, earrings, and dandy look, is an older version of the wizard Howl of *Howl's Moving Castle*. He may appear like a villain at the begin-

ning, but later we learn he is an eccentric misanthrope whose only concern is protecting the fragile balance of nature from humankind. In this sense, he is quite different from the stereotypical female “wicked witch” figure. As in other Miyazaki films, female characters have the upper hand. The adorable Ponyo, a redhead with a broad smile, is different from her sisters, who are much smaller and move together as a school of fish. She is inquisitive, strong-minded, and stubborn. When Ponyo embarks upon the journey to become human, she likes everything that is new to her, whether it is ham, a cup of honeyed tea, or a warm towel. Her verbal communication consists of single words, but she displays her emotions with intense, long hugs and kisses. Unlike Andersen’s little mermaid, who “treads on sharp knives and pricking gimlets” when she walks, Ponyo does not experience pain when she turns into a human. Rather, as an outsider who is different from her siblings and from humans as well, Ponyo crosses boundaries and faces the consequences of her transgressions without letting others define her. Sosuke, on the other hand, is a serious, responsible, and compassionate boy. Since his father is a sea captain and away most nights, Sosuke has a strong bond with his mother, Lisa. As in other Miyazaki films, *Ponyo* does not represent a conventional family: while family plays an essential part in the plot, parents are mostly absent.

Lisa is another strong female character—impulsive, powerful, and daring. At times she is portrayed as childish, but she nonetheless displays a nurturing and healing side. To put it differently, Lisa is not a stereotypical mother; she is depicted as a human being who gets angry and can be quite stubborn. As we expect from Miyazaki’s earlier films, every age group is given a part in *Ponyo*, from Sosuke’s schoolmates in the nursery school to the grannies in the senior house. These four old ladies in particular perform the function of a Greek chorus, supplying background information and common sense. Although some feminist critics and viewers may be troubled by the representation of Ponyo’s mother, Gran Mamare, as an essentialist Mother Goddess, generally the film’s female characters appear as unique and powerful beings.

Miyazaki’s films do not operate on Hollywood logic, and his storytelling style may seem strange, even frustrating to a Western audience brought up on Disney. In forums it can be observed that American viewers seem concerned with the plausibility of *Ponyo*’s plot; for instance, some are seriously offended by two five-year-olds sailing, without supervision, in a boat powered by a candle. And when Lisa leaves the two kids at home alone, one critic asked, “Could she be the most neglectful mother ever?” Moreover, the romance between Ponyo and Sosuke is not readily accepted as “appropriate.” A comparison with American animated films such as *Cars* and the *Ice Age* series shows fundamental differences in storytelling and filmmaking techniques between Hollywood productions and those of Studio Ghibli. This phenomenon can be explained

by the fact that the fantastic is more accepted in Japanese culture than it is in the Western world, which still carries the heritage of the Enlightenment in its psyche.

Miyazaki refers to *Elta the Frog* by Japanese author Rieko Nakagawa and to Natsume Soseki's *The Gate* as his inspirations. In addition, one cannot help noticing a Wagnerian influence on the film and its haunting score by Joe Hisaishi. Fujimoto insists on calling his daughter Brunhilde. A famous figure of Norse mythology, Brunhilde is one of the daughters of Odin (Wotan) and earth goddess Erda. She is imprisoned for defying her father, and she becomes human for the love of the man who rescued her, only to be betrayed by him, which leads her to take her own life. Brunhilde and her story have a major place in Wagner's operas comprising the *Der Ring des Nibelungen* cycle. Unlike Wagner's tragic story, Miyazaki's *Ponyo* is an optimistic tale of hope for survival and renewal.

While Miyazaki used computerized animation to enhance hand-drawn images in *Princess Mononoke* and *Howl's Moving Castle*, *Ponyo* is produced with traditional 2-D animation techniques. *Ponyo*'s U.S. release was made in partnership with Disney and Pixar (bought by Disney in 2006). Cate Blanchett, Tina Fey, and Liam Neeson contribute to the A-list cast of voices in the English version. Frankie Jonas, the youngest of the popular Jonas Brothers, is Sosuke's voice, and *Ponyo*'s is Noah Cyrus, the sister of Disney's *Hannah Montana* star Miley Cyrus. It is clear that the American child and teen market is being targeted. This marketing strategy can be seen as part of Disney and Pixar's efforts to "tame" the movie for a Western audience and imagination.

In essence, *Ponyo* is a tale of love, devotion, reciprocal acceptance, and transformations. Miyazaki's exceptional skill and wisdom in the art of storytelling make watching *Ponyo* an experience to be treasured.

Funda Başak Baskan
Middle East Technical University