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## Reviews

Marvels & Tales Editors

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## REVIEWS

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*Stars and Keys: Folktales and Creolization in the Indian Ocean.* By Lee Haring with translations by Claude Ricaud and Dawood Auleear. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 2007. xxv + 413 pp., preface, acknowledgments, chronology, 5 maps, photographs, appendix, notes, bibliography, index.

This is not your ordinary collection of folktales. After thirty years of work in the multicultural islands of the Indian Ocean, Lee Haring offers us instead a masterful translation (both linguistic and cultural) of storytelling across traditions, and a manifestation of what may well be called “creolized scholarship.” *Stars and Keys: Folktales and Creolization in the Indian Ocean* is thus a fresh collection of folktales in which traditions from Africa, South Asia, Europe, and the Middle East blend together to produce a corpus of creolized verbal art.

Diverging from standard practice, Haring innovates on the well-known genre of the “folktale collection volume” by joining his voice in a dialogic manner with that of traditional old-time and current storytellers. In the preface, he describes his presentation of the stories as follows, addressing the reader directly: “Some are cited without interruption; a few are translated only in part, or summarized. Into others, I interpolate commentary as if I were reading to you and then looking up to explain something from time to time.”

But more is going on here. Set in non-bold typeface to distinguish them from the bold of the regional storytellers’ narrative, Haring’s comments are not your standard fare of glosses, annotations, or marginal notes; they are woven into the very flow of the stories themselves. To be sure, in many of the stories Haring’s words far outnumber those of the actual tale. And though in the preface he wryly comments that the use of different typefaces allows us to clearly distinguish voices in the text, thereby making it possible for the reader to “skip the boring parts (whichever those are),” I for one discovered in the course of reading that I looked forward as much to what Haring “looked up” to tell me as to what was coming next in the story itself. In this respect, the author’s *performance* of each tale is a new, enlightened version of local narratives (for the first time in English) for an audience of readers beyond the Indian Ocean.

Haring contextualizes and elucidates each tale, providing historical and geographical facts, correspondences with important tale indexes, particulars about the tellers, relevant details of literary and cultural scholarship, and the like. More important, and perhaps more intriguing, however, we learn through the reflections and insights provided by Haring how to think about these stories, how to process them as creole art, how to extrapolate from them to better understand the larger culture, and how to relate them to the broader fields of literature and literary criticism. Only a scholar fully versed and immersed in the culture and narrative tradition of the Southwest Indian Ocean could have attempted this feat with such authority and elegance. Indeed, Haring models for us a form of “creolized” scholarship that uncovers a “creole aesthetic,” requiring nothing less of him than a deep cultural intimacy with the region, a discriminating capacity to both cross and collapse disciplinary boundaries, and a finely honed understanding of the performance styles and poetics of this cultural area.

*Stars and Keys* borrows its title, as Haring explains, from the Latin phrase on the coat of arms of Mauritius: *Stella Clavisque Maris Indici*, The Star and Key of the Indian Ocean. The author then puns on *Stars*, appropriating the word to title a section of the volume that highlights storytellers (pictured in the book) who are star performers. In another of the book’s five sections, titled “Keys,” he plays on that word to identify tales that unlock a creole aesthetic. The opening section of the book, composed primarily of “origin” narratives, takes its title (“Land of the Man-Eating Tree”) from one of the stories. The section “Diaspora” follows, where Haring considers displacements and transpositions, paying important attention to (among other elements) “interperformance,” the role of tricksters, and the dynamics and effects of translation. The collection ends with the section labeled “Postcolonial Seychelles,” which begins with the author’s wondering whether tales whose voices hark back to an ancient past will be treated in contemporary post-emancipation times as “outmoded relics, dull museum objects, quaint anthology pieces, or promising materials for reworking.” About the larger questions facing all folklorists, as well as those specifically concerning the Southwest Indian Ocean, he further inquires: “What will globalizing influence do to inherited traditions? Will these old stories evoke a nostalgic call to return to the inherited past, or will they become tokens in a free play of cultural goods without substance—in other words, in a postmodern Seychelles?”

These and countless other provocative interrogations and reflections make every page of *Stars and Keys* a rich and demanding text. Yet, despite his copious insights and commentary, Haring’s voice at no time overshadows the tradition of the tale at hand; every storyteller and story in this collection of 121 folktales is clearly heard.

The book contains other valuable supporting information (particularly for those less familiar with this part of the world). A seven-page “Chronology of the Southwest Indian Ocean” (from CE 500 to 2002) details the more conventional epochs of the early settlements, European arrival, slavery, colonial period, and independence, but also includes a less easily labeled period (dating from 1835 to 1893) that Haring calls “Abolition, Indenture, Scholarship.” Five maps drawn specifically for this volume situate and orient the reader in the geography and ethnic settlements of the Southwest Indian Ocean. Scholarly notes organized by chapters at the end of the book, followed by nineteen pages of works cited and an index, provide the academic apparatus not included in (and hence not encumbering) the explications within the tales. These and other references, such as the appendix of the “Indian Ocean Versions of the ‘Defiant Girl’ (*La Fille difficile*), Cross Referenced to Numbering in Görög-Karady and Seydou 2001,” make *Stars and Keys* an indispensable resource.

The only thing missing is the music of the songs, which “is left for some future CD,” Haring writes. “As it’s a book of stories,” the author further notes, “[*Stars and Keys*] says little about other forms of folklore still to be researched in the islands: riddles, proverbs, poetry, oratory, song, music, dance, costume, cookery.” Similarly unrepresented are some ethnic and language groups in the islands, such as Chinese in Mauritius and Indians in Réunion. These will have to await future research, he explains, underscoring the more urgent need to attend to the folktale, for “[l]ike the novel of nineteenth-century Europe, the creole folktale is the dominant literary form of the Southwest Indian Ocean” and thus “both reflects and influences how people live.” Moreover, the author feels an urgency to make better known this literary corpus. “Now that capturing and transmitting verbal art is so easy, with cheap recorders and the Internet, ‘literature’ and ‘folklore’ will coalesce,” he notes, acknowledging further: “The broadening of the literary canon requires a massive program of retrieval, to which this book contributes.”

In sum, *Stars and Keys* provides a reassessment (indeed a recalibration) of the status and relationship between folklore and literature, orality and writing, in the world today. It further demonstrates that the “cultural creolization visible in places such as the Southwest Indian Ocean offers a model wherewith to understand the cultural convergences of Europe and the rest of the postmodern world.”

The contributions of *Stars and Keys* (both to the field and to a wider audience) are vast. While the book might appear at first sight to be “very specialized”—to echo the phrase used by a young French woman characterizing Haring’s work in the volume’s opening anecdote, words that leave him feeling “perceived, though not profoundly understood”—this study, in fact, will be of universal interest to all who are engaged in producing “any viable theory of world

culture.” Indeed, by not merely perceiving, but in profoundly understanding this remarkable book, readers will find themselves challenged to revise notions of what literature is and what we as scholars of verbal art do.

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***Cinderella in America: A Book of Folk and Fairy Tales.*** Compiled and edited by William Bernard McCarthy. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2007. xiv + 514 pp., appendix, bibliography, 4 indexes, 18 photographs.

The turn of the millennium signaled a change in the way that scholars and popularizers frame and package the folk narratives of the United States. Twentieth-century “American” folktale collections focused overwhelmingly on discrete traditions limited to a single state (J. Russell Reaver’s *Florida Folktales* [1988]), region (Vance Randolph’s six collections from the Ozark Mountains), ethnicity (Jerome Mintz’s *Legends of the Hasidim* [1968]), or some combination thereof (Jerome M. Carrière’s *Tales from the French Folk-Lore of Missouri* [1937]). The few nationwide anthologies of the 1900s (such as Benjamin Botkin’s *Treasury of American Folklore* [1944] and Kemp P. Battle’s *Great American Folklore* [1986]) titled themselves with the term “folklore” rather than “folktale” and mixed oral narratives with literary spinoffs and non-narrative genres. The published record of the twentieth century implies that there is no real “American” tradition, but rather innumerable mutually isolated traditions shaped by separate values and circumstances.

But since 2000, three large collections have attempted, in very different ways, to embrace the whole sweep of American storytelling, and all identify “folktales” (or, in McCarthy’s case, “folk tales”) in their titles. All, by design or otherwise, display not only the diversity of the nation’s oral narrative traditions but also their interconnectedness. Thomas Green’s *Greenwood Library of American Folktales* (four volumes, 2006), the largest and most expensive, breaks the nation into eight regions and concentrates on written sources published before 1920. In contrast, Carl Lindahl’s *American Folktales from the Collections of the Library of Congress* (two volumes, 2004) draws entirely on audio recordings dating from 1933 to 2001, most previously unpublished, and focuses on the narrators and their relationships with the collectors.

Most recent is William Bernard McCarthy’s *Cinderella in America: A Book of Fairy and Folk Tales*. With 538 pages pressed into one paperback volume, *Cinderella* is easily the shortest and most affordable of the three. But the book’s size is hardly a drawback, because McCarthy packs into it some 144 tales (each followed by a useful discussion), along with a concise introduction explaining the purpose and range of the anthology, a strong introductory statement for

each of the book's six sections, and back matter aimed at general readers and specialists alike.

McCarthy distinguishes American tales from folktales that merely happen to be told in America. He is express in his notion of *e pluribus unum*: "after five hundred years on the continent and two hundred years under the Constitution there is no longer any question that we *are* a distinct and distinctive people with a distinct and distinctive set of . . . folkways . . . not yet wholly shared . . . by the new immigrant" (12). McCarthy bypasses tales told by new arrivals and turns instead to narrative communities that have inhabited the country for generations and adapted their tales to New World environments.

As title references to Cinderella and fairy tales attest, McCarthy focuses on oral fictions of European descent, those most closely cognate with the *märchen* of the Brothers Grimm. The core of this repertoire is the magic tale, with its kings and giants, and its unlikely protagonists who walk into a world of wonders as children and emerge from it as adults. But McCarthy's anthology, like the *Kinder- und Hausmärchen*, also embraces humorous narratives of fools and numskulls (German *schwänke*), adventure tales similar to *märchen* but lacking magical elements (Thompson's *novelle*), animal and formula tales, and texts that blur the boundaries between *märchen* and legend. For all of its surface variety, this is a "unified repertoire" with a shared geographic spread and shared contexts for telling ("adults at a wake . . . men working at fishing or lumbering . . . children at bedtime . . . family and guests whiling away the long hours of winter darkness between sundown and sleep"), occasions presumably "different from the occasion and audience for jokes, legends, tall tales, or personal experience narratives." While other genres possess specific functions (for example, "tall tales are usually competitive, deliberately drawing attention to the performance of the teller," McCarthy's *märchen* "exist primarily for the joy of narrative," "the sake of the story" (6–7).

Furthermore, this corpus is thoroughly Indo-European in nature (although McCarthy does admit that the Muslim world shares these plots). Folklorists could, and should, worry this characterization along its edges (for example, I find the functional arguments and the Eurocentric focus particularly problematic), and it does not fit all of McCarthy's materials equally well, yet lay fairy-tale readers and professional folklorists alike will quickly derive from it a good sense of the book's scope.

One may quibble with the nuances of McCarthy's definition, but few will contest his reason for this close focus: the United States is seldom thought of as a hotbed of magic tales and their closest cousins. Rather, we commonly associate national narrative tradition with tall tales, jokes, and legends, and we tend by contrast to consider magical *märchen* an Old World phenomenon. McCarthy

compiled this book “to present naysayers with irrefutable refutation of their argument that the wonder tale and its kin put down no lasting roots in America” (22). His two other goals have to do with accessibility: “to provide teachers, students, and families with a handy sampling of our folktale heritage,” and “to equip scholars with a convenient book to consult and place alongside the parallel collections from . . . the European world” (22).

Keeping faith with his three goals, McCarthy crafts an important book. Because he wants to reach everyday readers as well as scholars, he speaks openly to all. Although such plain speaking cuts some corners and will sometimes frustrate specialists, McCarthy does not talk down to any of his audiences. The introductions to the various sections and chapters describe with admirable conciseness the historical and cultural forces that carried their tellers to the New World and shaped their tales.

Beginning with the earliest evidence of American *märchen*-telling, McCarthy surveys the almanacs, garlands, and copybooks that attest to the presence of *märchen* from colonial times. Then follow three long sections devoted to the most influential colonial powers: Iberian (Puerto Rico, the U.S. Southwest, Louisiana Isleños, Cape Verdeans from New England), French (Louisiana Creoles and Cajuns, French settlements in Missouri), and British (Lowland South, African American, Gullah, Southern Mountains). The remaining chapters present smaller samplings from Irish Americans, Pennsylvania Germans, Upstate New Yorkers, and people of Polish, Norwegian, Russian Jewish, and Armenian backgrounds; several European-derived *märchen* told by Native Americans; and a concluding essay (provided by James P. Leary), complete with photos, examining a Wisconsin narrator of French Canadian descent and her performance of a family tale.

These are especially well chosen tales. The editor does his best in selecting early published texts that stray little from the oral styles in which they were told (although some, like Calvin Claudel's, are recast in literary style). More important, McCarthy applies his own skills as translator, fieldworker, and transcriber to add many tales. He translates into English six Puerto Rican narratives previously available only in Spanish, transcribes two of his field-collected Cape Verdean tales with Kriolu phrases intact, and transcribes a performance from his ten-year-old daughter. There is much previously unpublished material: of the ten tales from the “Blue Ridge to Ozarks” chapter, for example, five have never been previously published.

The notes to the tales are unfailingly helpful. The few errors are minor: for example, Cajun couscous is a cornmeal mush, not a “stew” (184); Franz Boas did not commission “a linguist at the Field Museum in Chicago” to collect tales in 1915 (71).

I see only one significant problem. By insisting so strongly on the European nature of his repertoire, McCarthy evokes the nineteenth-century folklorists' conviction that origin is essence, a notion that seemed to have died in the 1980s with Richard M. Dorson (who insisted that African American narratives were essentially European) and William Bascom (who spent decades documenting the African provenience of African American tales). To fit his European thesis, McCarthy lumps "Coastal Gullah Tradition" and "African American Tales of Rural South and Urban North" into the section titled "British Tradition in the South." McCarthy's early statement that "these tales may be quite as old in Africa as they are in the Indo-European world" (8) does not quite compensate for labeling them "British" in origin, a gesture that may lead Africanists to charge McCarthy with undervaluing African influences on African American narrative.

This one problem notwithstanding, McCarthy has produced an invaluable book, the most comprehensive one-volume collection of U.S. *märchen*, and of special merit because it strives to reach the families of narrators as well as the community of scholars. McCarthy shares the mission of such great folklorists as Vance Randolph, Leonard Roberts, and James P. Leary: to dissolve the boundaries dividing the folklorist from the reader and the reader from the folk.

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***Haunted Halls: Ghostlore of American College Campuses.*** By Elizabeth Tucker. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2007. ix + 241 pp., notes, bibliography, index of tale types and motifs, general index, illustrations.

This interesting book moves beyond previous book publications on the same topic by being not only an anthology of ghost story texts but also a reasoned discussion of what makes the genre such a widespread and vital part of collegiate culture. Many of the narratives presented are firsthand accounts of events that the tellers present as strong evidence for the paranormal, and Tucker prudently leaves a door cracked on the possibility that they may well be accurate accounts of genuinely mysterious phenomena. However, the main intent of her discussion is to define motifs and patterns that are present in campus legends from many geographical locations. These, she suggests, are common to many performances because they encode stages in the psychological development of young people that occurs as part of their move from adolescence to early adulthood.

Tucker served for many years as a "Faculty Master," or resident faculty adviser, in one of the dormitories at Binghamton University, making her analysis especially perceptive in identifying the ways in which ghostly phenomena are embedded in the context of everyday college life. She includes not only verbal

texts from archival sources, but also materials distributed in computer-mediated form through websites, e-mail, and, most interestingly, in “texted” versions sent, a line or phrase at a time, through AOL’s Instant Messenger. She is careful to provide necessary context, both by noting the wider distribution of motifs and tale types in noncollegiate folklore and also by filling out passing emic references to student culture that would be unfamiliar to outsiders.

Most of the specific narratives presented are not migratory in nature but are very specific to a particular campus or even building. Often they are unique expressions of personal experiences, supported with photographic evidence. Nevertheless, Tucker shows, they represent narrative structural patterns that are widely distributed. When adolescents arrive at college, she argues, they enter a cultural environment in which these patterns already exist. Rather than contacting *stories*, in the traditional folkloristic perspective, they instead observe a process of *storytelling*, as modeled by the older students they meet. The patterns exemplified by these (usually unique) narratives may not be visibly apparent to the new students, but they provide a platform through which new stories “come to the surface with subtle variations” (97).

The implicit patterns, not surprisingly, inspire stories that are subversive in more than one way. Most obviously, they suggest realms of physical experience—sights, sounds, feelings, and smells—that cannot be explained through science or common sense. More fundamentally, she suggests, following Jeffrey Andrew Weinstock (2004), that these narratives pass on “untold stories” that question accepted accounts of the history of the college or of the experiences of students. An especially interesting chapter discusses the common presence of Native American spirits in college legends (particularly the common belief that a “haunted” building was erected on an “Indian burial ground”). Tucker surveys the sad and little-known role historically played by colleges in the pacification of tribal nations and their often insensitive role in excavating sacred mounds, and she reasonably suggests that such narratives prompt their audiences to “question mainstream history” (181) in much the same way that revisionist historians are doing in the academic works they are reading (see Jeffrey Andrew Weinstock’s *Spectral America: Phantoms and the National Imagination*, 2004). Similarly, common ghost stories that feature the screaming revenants of female rape/murder victims, Tucker suggests, embody the actual experiences of women, whose fates demand that “current students understand what happened to [them]” (135).

It is instructive to note that surveys show that the college experience seems to make students more likely to believe in the reality of ghosts than to be skeptical, and Tucker is not surprised by this trend. In this regard, she is similar to Andrew Greeley, who found a similar statistical link between higher education and belief in the paranormal three decades ago; he in fact suggested that the latter might represent “a superior mode of adjusting to the cosmos”

(*Sociology of the Paranormal: A Reconnaissance*, 1975: 32). Tucker likewise finds that questioning consensus definitions of reality is and ought to be an integral part of the college experience, for it “helps the initiate understand a new environment and a new stage of life” (50).

Although many readers may regret that specific ghost stories familiar from their own institutions were not referenced, Tucker’s illustrations are well chosen from colleges that serve a variety of geographical areas and ethnic subcultures. She also represents a diversity of narrative formats, ranging from quasi-historical accounts in official college sources to closely described oral performances by undergraduates and colleagues. The book’s nice balance between text and analysis keeps it from becoming either an anthology or a purely abstract book, and, supplemented with the author’s recent *Campus Legends* (2005), it makes a fine entry-level undergraduate introduction to practical folklore. The frequent illustrations, often provided by the author’s talented husband, also keep the book accessible to students.

One only regrets that the book lacks a stronger conclusion that pulls together her provocative suggestions. While the first chapter provides a good advance road map for the topics to be discussed, the book ends abruptly with a mainly descriptive chapter on legend-tripping. One would have liked a fuller statement of how ghost stories attempt to construct a “shadow-self” of the hopes and fears of students and, indeed, a subversive “dark history” of the college world itself. To that extent, the book might have made, as did Simon Bronner’s earlier discussion of college folklore (*Piled Higher and Deeper: The Folklore of Student Life*, 1995), a stronger case for folklore as not only commonplace, but socially and psychologically essential to the undergraduate experience. That, in turn, might help make the case for the study of folklore as likewise central to the undergraduate curriculum.

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***Haunting Experiences: Ghosts in Contemporary Folklore.*** By Diane E. Goldstein, Sylvia Ann Grider, and Jeannie Banks Thomas. Logan: Utah State University Press, 2007. 270 pp., photographs.

Seeking spectral sites from haunted houses to haunted toilets, and examining genres from contemporary legends and jokes to cinema and television, *Haunting Experiences* places its subject matter at the intersection between folklore and popular culture, belief and fiction, asking the question: What is new in contemporary ghostlore, and what is appropriation and recontextualization of the old? The opening metaphor of the book captures the range of its subject matter. It begins with the image of a bottle-tree wind chime set, available for sale in the gift shop of San Jose, California’s Winchester Mystery House. The

collectible is modeled on the southern African American tradition of hanging empty bottles from defoliated branches in order to distract—or perhaps capture—evil spirits before they can enter the house. But like so much of the book's subject matter, it is a tradition transformed—abstracted and made sculptural as a metal tree, hung with colorful, decorative drink receptacles that have never actually been filled. The wind chimes retain some of their cultural resonance, some of the ghosts of their past. But they are simultaneously remade anew, repurposed as art, even as they are distanced from belief.

Like the bottle-tree wind chimes, the discussion of ghostlore in *Haunting Experiences* oftentimes revolves around transformations through commodification. In the chapter titled “Commodification and Belief,” authored by Diane Goldstein, there is discussion of the influence of ghostlore on real estate and tourism, and the transformation of that lore as a result of the context in which it has been put to use. Goldstein discusses the impact of spectral belief—stigmatization, as realtors might say—on the property market. She examines its influence, writing that in some cases, the presence of ghosts might be a selling point, while in others, knowledge of death associated with a property might keep buyers away. And she speaks similarly of hotels where haunted rooms and hallways, a history of violence and death, often draw a certain kind of tourist. In these cases, a transformation in the nature of haunting narratives occurs as they are written into pamphlets and brochures and either toned down or further dramatized for popular audiences.

Commerce is not the only locus for these sorts of transformations. In her examinations of children's ghostlore and haunted houses, Sylvia Ann Grider shows readers the intersection between ghostlore and popular culture, as well as the ambiguity of genre between haunting as belief narrative and folk fiction. The latter is the case especially in her discussion of children. Grider outlines several genres of children's folklore, including games, jokes, and anecdotes, that utilize ghostly characters without relying on belief. They are, she writes, strategies by which children deal with their peculiar circumstances and learn the art of narrative. The former—the nexus of folklore and popular culture—Grider illustrates using haunted houses. She writes that our image of the haunted house—the Victorian manse, isolated on a hillside and capped by turrets or towers—is literary in origin, though it owes its ubiquity to popular representations like the Addams' Family house. But it is folklore as well: though domiciles from castles to suburban split levels can have haunted reputations, this image has become the American de facto standard; it has gained traditionality, marking everything from the telling of stories to the creation of amateur Halloween haunted houses.

The book's purpose is not simply to demarcate the boundaries of contemporary ghostlore, however. It suggests that perhaps folklorists have paid inadequate attention to contemporary hauntings, and that these phenomena de-

serve more and better attention. The problem here is that even as the book's authors make this argument, they cite other scholars who are currently doing the very thing the authors suggest. They rely heavily on Gillian Bennett, whose 1999 *Alas, Poor Ghost!* looks seriously at experiences of the paranormal. They draw on scholars like Peter Narváez and Mikel Koven, who both address the meeting point of folklore and popular culture in the supernatural. And in the more theoretically oriented sections of the book, they build upon the experience-centered approaches that David Hufford pioneered in his 1982 *Terror That Comes in the Night*, and has continued to develop since.

This is not to say that the message of the book is unimportant. *Haunting Experiences* does an excellent job of laying out some of the main problems in the study of its subject matter. Specifically, it addresses the nature of belief, looking at the seeming conflict between the rational and technical orientations of contemporary American society and the seemingly irrational belief in supernatural forces. And it does an admirable job of reiterating and developing a theoretical orientation informed by Hufford's experience-centered folkloristics. It calls for the careful contextualization of belief, and for an examination not only of what kinds of supernatural narratives influence people but also of how those narratives are actively and creatively used.

As a book with three authors, each responsible for their own chapters, *Haunting Experiences* falls somewhere between an anthology and a monograph. The book is singular in its goals but seems at times to be disjointed in its specifics, repeating ideas from chapter to chapter and exhibiting different levels of theoretical engagement in different parts. Nonetheless, the book as a whole is effective, acting, like the bottle-tree wind chime from the Winchester House, as a sort of cultural collage—an appropriation and transformation of various ideas, styles, and influences. The book's preface suggests that its goal is “to explore contemporary ghost tradition . . . with traditional forms deeply integrated and interwoven with new media, new technologies, new contexts, and new functions,” and through its use of its different approaches—through theoretical discussions mixed with examinations of ghostlore's various transformations—it certainly does that (22). As the authors themselves repeat throughout the volume, it turns out to be an examination of the process of placing “old spirits in new bottles and new spirits in old” (22).

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***Red Riding Hood and the Wolf in Bed: Modernism's Fairy Tales.*** By Ann Martin. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007. 199 pp., bibliography, index.

*Modernism's Fairy Tales*, the subtitle of Ann Martin's book, raises expectations of critique. Many of the artists and writers commonly associated with

European modernism were attracted to what we could call fairy-tale thinking—in particular, faith in a happily ever after. On the one hand there's the polemical new beginnings of the likes of futurism and imagism, the credos of which posit a slate wiped clean of the accumulated works of recent history; on the other, the projected ever afters of the more radically conservative modernists, for whom the recently literate and urbanized masses needed herding—or worse—in the interests of a new order of the elite. That these very masses might be reading fairy tales, and so perpetuating the threat of a tide of popular culture, is only one of the many ironies of modernism's dangerously utopian tendencies.

*Red Riding Hood and the Wolf in Bed* doesn't quite follow this line, but it's an indication of the richness of the conjunction of modernism and fairy tale that it should give rise to a host of interpretative possibilities. The conjunction itself is wonderfully unexpected, leading this reader to imagine a series of similarly counterintuitive meetings: Romanticism and the Circus? The Nouveau Roman and the Folktale? Myth is a far more common pairing for modernism, stemming from T. S. Eliot's infamously tendentious essay on the "mythical method" employed in Joyce's *Ulysses*. Martin rather sidesteps this dominant paradigm, but again, her attention is directed elsewhere. The central three chapters of the book chart allusions to and dealings with specific canonical fairy tales in the work of three modernist writers: James Joyce, Virginia Woolf, and Djuna Barnes. The rationale and justification for such a project is made at various points in the course of a long and wide-ranging first chapter dealing with the history of the fairy tale—in particular, during the nineteenth century, and so with the genre as it was inherited by modernist artists. Martin suggests that the fairy tale is more than simply one of the many worldly objects swept up in the net of the encyclopedic modernist text. The fairy tale is more than just another of modernism's intertexts. In terms of content, the central tales discussed—"Sleeping Beauty," "Little Red Riding Hood," "Cinderella," "Beauty and the Beast," "The Fisherman and His Wife," and "Snow White"—"explore the individual's role in a modern urban society. They are predicated upon the dynamics of consumerism and the subject's performance of a gendered, classed identity . . . texts that reflect and convey modern attitudes towards sexuality, social mobility, urbanity, and commodity culture" (17). That is, the genre of the fairy tale, together with its constituent dramas, is singularly entangled in the very discourses of modernity with which modernist writers were engaged, from commerce and the market to fashion and the commodity, together with the conflicting attractions of tradition and innovation. For Martin, "Fairy tales come to reflect . . . the fluctuating experience of modernity . . . and most importantly, the agency of the subject in a modern consumer society" (40).

In addition to these social and historical matters, Martin also makes a general claim for the genre of the fairy tale as peculiarly related to modernism. Beginning

with reference to “the multiple interpretative possibilities that the texts represent for modernist writers” (8), she goes on to offer a significant proposal: “It is the fairy tale’s involvement in multiple contexts that marks its potential as a system of reference in the work of Joyce, Woolf, and Barnes. In their instability and variety, fairy tales open up a space for the reader in the text. . . . [F]airy tales are used by Joyce, Woolf, and Barnes as modernist works; that is, as texts that reflect the instability and the variability that is the experience of modernity” (12). This is quite some claim, amounting to nothing less than a challenge to the aforementioned dominant paradigm of modernism as constitutively mythic in orientation and aspiration. It also sounds suspiciously similar to claims made on behalf of the fairy tale as a quintessentially *postmodernist* genre. Quite how much critical mileage there is in Martin’s claim is too early to say, but it’s a mark of the originality of her study that it should raise such genuinely significant questions.

W. B. Yeats appears early on in the chapter on Joyce, but Martin is quick to distinguish between forms of engagement with traditional narrative material: contrary to Yeats’s harnessing of the past in the interests of the present and future, Joyce uses fairy tales “not as nationalist texts, escapist fantasies, or chronicles of an essential humanity, but as powerful and pervasive narratives of turn-of-the-century capitalism” (43). Joyce’s modernism still seems prescient as opposed to ironically anachronistic, never less so than in his skepticism regarding the Celtic Revival and its attendant discourses of tradition and authenticity; and again, his interest in the European fairy tale, as opposed to specifically Irish folklore, is one mark of the particular strain of modernism with which Martin is concerned. The book rightly spends time on these subjects, even if they take the discussion some distance from the fairy tale itself, distance that is difficult to avoid when working with such a diverse and complex set of materials. The reading of *Ulysses* concentrates on “characters who attempt to imitate certain gendered and classed identities” (59), in particular Stephen Dedalus, linked with Cinderella, and Gerty MacDowell, linked with Snow White. I think it’s fair to say that the links are a little tenuous at times, or if not tenuous, rather loosely speculative. Martin’s account of Woolf’s *Mrs. Dalloway*, for example, reads Peter Walsh’s visit to Clarissa as a series of variations on “Sleeping Beauty,” something noted by other critics. The fairy tale serves as a multivalent intertext, with Clarissa as both objectified commodity (Princess) viewed by Prince Peter, and combative, questioning participant. Martin considers Woolf’s experience of pantomime as a possible source for her conception of the fairy tale as a fluid narrative, open to interpretation and strategic redeployment, not least in terms of the provisional positioning of Sally Seton as a prince for the modern age. Interesting as this is, the reliance on a strategy of suggested comparison—Clarissa Dalloway is *like* Sleeping Beauty—results in a reading that says far more about the novel than the tale, and indeed runs the risk of making the tale seem a little superfluous.

This is far from true of all the individual readings in the book, however, particularly those devoted to the work of Djuna Barnes, the author who supplies the book's title. Barnes is a fascinating writer, someone whose work—*Nightwood* aside—is yet to receive the level of attention lavished on the likes of Joyce and Woolf. Martin acknowledges as much and does well to situate her reading within the context of Barnes criticism. Her fairy-tale-oriented engagement with a range of the work continues to play with a small number of key topics: the active negotiation of inherited social and cultural codes—in particular, norms of gender and sexuality, as played out via the interpretative instability of the fairy tale and the concomitant possibilities for readerly empowerment. The account of *Nightwood* focuses in part on the figure of Matthew O'Connor and the tale of Little Red Riding Hood, and on ideas of consumption, and of the correlation between bodies and clothes, selves and appearances. The sight of Matthew in female clothing is a wolf-as-grandmother moment, but even more so than with Clarissa and Peter, Barnes's text uses the fairy tale to frustrate and complicate gender positions: "Matthew is not a female impersonator; rather, he is exploiting the potential of fashion to produce a certain pleasure, though it remains uncertain whether his role is to be the Wolf who will consume an awaited object of desire, or, like Red Riding Hood and the Grandmother, to be the character who will be consumed" (125). At stake here, again, is a character who Martin believes has been able "to purchase and produce and perform [his] own [identity]," a series of acts for which the fairy tale is a singularly suitable vehicle (125).

*Red Riding Hood and the Wolf in Bed* includes more readings of individual texts than I have space to consider here. Yet it also suggests a companion study of modernism and the fairy tale, one focused less on the politics of gender and sexuality, more on the production by modernist artists of fairy-tale art. How interesting it would be to see a ragbag study of such works by, among others, Klee, Rilke, Schwitters, Debussy, Apollinaire, Matisse, and how different the work of Joyce, Woolf, and Barnes would appear when placed in this company. It is a testament to Martin's wide-ranging and engaging study that it should give rise to thoughts of such a sequel. The book asks us to look at the life of the fairy tale in an unexpected and seemingly uncondusive environment, and thereby to rethink aspects of our understanding of modernist art and of the history of the fairy tale.

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***The Postmodern Fairy Tale: Folkloric Intertexts in Contemporary Fiction.*** By Kevin Paul Smith. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007. 198 pp., bibliography, index.

This scholarly book develops Terry Pratchett's point in *Hogfather*: "All right,' said Susan. 'I'm not stupid. You're saying humans need *fantasies* to make life bearable.' . . . NO. HUMANS NEED FANTASY TO BE HUMAN" (Pratchett

270; italics in original). The back cover of Kevin Paul Smith's *The Postmodern Fairy Tale: Folkloric Intertexts in Contemporary Fiction* describes the book as a study that "attempts to explain why fairy tales keep popping up in the most unexpected places." This attempt takes the shape of an exciting stroll through the different ways that fairy tales are used in postmodern fiction. It looks at how autobiography might be told through a fairy-tale mode, and the repercussions of such a telling. Further, it discovers hidden connections between magic realism and fairy tale through select readings of works by contemporary authors such as Salman Rushdie, Angela Carter, Kate Atkinson, and Terry Pratchett. Altogether, Kevin Paul Smith's contribution to fairy-tale studies constitutes a highly innovative, profound, and serious work.

Starting from the premise that "the history of popular fiction . . . is suffused with fairytales" (1), Smith sets out to examine "why the fairytale has become so important" in the last three decades. The answer to this question walks the seductive, at times convoluted, path of intertextuality in its plurality of meanings and for "ends which can be called 'postmodern'" (1). Before plunging deep into a somewhat structuralist analysis of fairy tale and intertextuality, however, Smith starts by facing the problem of finding what he calls a "working definition of fairytale" (2) by resorting to the work of the specialists on the field: J. R. R. Tolkien, Tzvetan Todorov, Bruno Bettelheim, and Maria Tatar. All of these, incidentally, seem to pose in their definitions of fairy tales a fundamental problem for the author: they place magical events in an entirely other world, thus aligning fairy tales with fictions of a utopian nature. Here, precisely, is one of the most revealing contributions of Smith's study: in their many variations and regional versions, fairy tales become particularly historically determined texts and, therefore, far from universal. Within Smith's innovative proposal, fairy tales are regarded at once as a product of their time and still relevant today because of their formulaic nature.

Smith devotes quite a lengthy section of the book's introduction to the critical approaches to the intertextual use of fairy tales, where he finds many interesting variations, thus suggesting the vigor of this type of literary criticism. His line of action, however, is somewhat detached from that of his predecessors. His interests are, he claims, "more to do with the use of the fairytale as a genre" (7), thus walking away from studies on particular tales (Casie Hermansson's 2001 *Reading Feminist Intertextuality through Bluebeard Stories*; Cristina Bacchilega's 1997 *Postmodern Fairy Tales: Gender and Narrative Strategies*), considerations on individual authors (Sharon Rose Wilson's 1993 *Margaret Atwood's Fairy-Tale Sexual Politics*), examinations of fairy-tale intertexts in postcolonial works and feminist works (Jack Zipes's 1986 *Don't Bet on the Prince: Contemporary Feminist Fairy Tales in North America and England*), and other more historical/chronological approaches. The next four chapters into

which the study is divided detail Smith's original way of looking for or finding fairy-tale tropes in contemporary fiction.

Chapter 1, "The Eight Elements of Intertextual Use of Fairytales," proposes a thorough investigation of the issue of intertextuality through the use of the theories of Gérard Genette and Mikhail Bakhtin. Readers find a very detailed compendium of the eight different elements of intertextuality that provides examples for each category and underlines those that might be more useful for Smith's study.

Chapter 2, "Architextual/Chronotopic Intertextuality and Magic Realism in Kate Atkinson's *Human Croquet*," proposes a line of approach to magic realism that proves not only creative and ingenious, but also seductive in so far as it discusses the similarities this subgenre may have with that of the fairy tale. Again, Smith provides here a groundbreaking view of fairy tales by starting from the premise that these are always grounded in the real and address the real concerns of their audiences.

Chapter 3, "Metafictive Intertextuality: Defining the 'Storyteller' Chronotope," utilizes the frame story of the *Thousand and One Nights* to address a narrative situation that Smith terms "the storyteller." The attempt here is to define "the storyteller" through examples of texts where one can find this storytelling frame, to conclude that "the storyteller" is a postmodern trope. Smith proves how storytelling is an essential human activity, and evocatively highlights the importance of storytelling as a way of understanding one's life and place in the world.

Chapter 4, "Battling the Nightmare of Myth, Terry Pratchett's Fairytale Inversions," shows how the fairy tale can also operate as what Roland Barthes called "myth," thus becoming a somewhat repressive mechanism. Through a close analysis of the use of fairy tale in Terry Pratchett's *Witches Abroad*, Smith proves how fantasy literature actually works to shape and structure our understanding of the world. This stands as one of the most powerful chapters of the study insofar as it theorizes the importance of narrativity and links it to postmodernism. The fairy tale is proposed here as the ideal representative of fiction itself, albeit not necessarily through a positive criticism, particularly in the exploration of how fairy tale may turn into myth.

The conclusions to the study could not be more accurate and, at least for this reader, more persuasive: "Fantasy and imagination are important parts of being human, and we need stories to understand our place in the world" (165), Smith claims, thus cleverly showing how some postmodern fictions' use of the fairy tale as an intertext demonstrates our fundamental desire for stories. According to the author, as a primary oral narrative in late capitalist societies, fairy tales continue to have a hold over the imagination when subjects attempt to tell their stories, not because fairy tales are universal, as some tend to think,

but because storytelling is. In this respect, the conclusion to the work seems to echo the words of Roland Barthes in his "Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narrative": "Narrative is present in every age, in every place, in every society; it begins with the story of mankind. . . . It is simply there, like life itself!" (251–52). In other words, as homo fabulans that we are, "humans need fantasy" simply "to be human."

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**Fairy Tale Review. The Violet Issue.** Edited by Kate Bernheimer. Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 2007. 160 pp.

This third issue of *Fairy Tale Review* is the first to be published in conjunction with The University of Alabama Press. The Blue and the Green issues both preceded the current Violet Issue, and the color-coding of the issues inevitably recalls Andrew Lang's fairy books, but editor Kate Bernheimer takes a more liberal approach to the fairy-tale genre than Lang did, eschewing straight retellings and filling the issue with a literary mix in both prose and poetry. *Fairy Tale Review's* website ([www.fairytalereview.com/index.html](http://www.fairytalereview.com/index.html)) features a quotation from Max Lüthi, asserting that the fairy tale "gives not only pleasure, it gives form and inspiration." This inspiration is clearer in some cases than in others.

These pieces are not strictly tied to particular tales; many adopt imagery associated with fairy tales, or an air of magic realism. The issue's most potent contribution, the first chapter of Espido Freire's novel *Irlanda* (translated by Toshiya Kamei), evokes no specific tale but rather the dreamlike landscape of fairy tales, empty of any incident or element beyond the seemingly arbitrary demands of the tale. Similarly, the protagonist's life has been suddenly emptied, by the death of one sister and by her parents' need to protect another; Natalia, middle of three sisters, is sent away into the dreaming landscape, the overgrown garden. Perhaps she is on a quest. Perhaps she is the princess. Freire's first chapter unfolds to the threshold of fairy tale.

Tracey Daugherty's "The Sailor Who Drowned in the Desert" tells of a miraculous incident outside a small church, when several men descend a rope from the sky, much like Jack on his beanstalk—although neither Jack nor beanstalks are mentioned. With slightly more specificity, in Lucy Corin's "A Woman with a Gardener," a server hired for the evening performs in a seamless, almost magical ballet of perfect service, doling out hors d'oeuvres and glasses of champagne, dancing at the ball but not as a guest. At the end of the evening, still in a fugue state, the server is chosen by the hostess as her sexual partner. The parallels to "Cinderella" are obvious if not explicit. Julie Marie Wade's "Maidenhead" takes the opposite path, her stream-of-consciousness narration invoking Red Riding Hood, Rapunzel, and the Miller's daughter in

turn, as well as the Little Mermaid, Maria von Trapp, the three Billy Goats Gruff, and finally the Virgin Mary refusing the angel Gabriel from a dusty farmhouse in Iowa. The story is tightly packed with intertextual and pop-cultural references, all in service of the girl-narrator's sexual awakening.

Only a few pieces revise specific tales—all are poems; all state their inspiration in their titles: Kim Addonizio's "Snow White: The Huntsman's Story," Don Mee Choi's "The Tower," Lee Upton's "Beastly Beast," and Anna Marie Hong's "Cin City" with its "see-through slipper" (59). The remainder of the collection of twenty-two prose and poetic pieces skirts specific reference, not so much retellings or revisions as they are pastiche or even, in some cases, distant echoes. For instance, Lisa Olstein's poem "Unsated Sallow" is made up of some elegant imagery bracketing some that is awkward; overall it bears only the faintest relationship to the fairy-tale genre, found perhaps in the evocation of magic in the first lines or in the philosophical suggestion of the last line—that it is possible to contain a larger space inside a smaller, recalling Emma Donoghue's nesting-dolls approach to the revision of tales in *Kissing the Witch*, or even C. S. Lewis's final vision of the Narnia within Narnia. This is indeed only a remote relationship to the genre. While the prose pieces remain grounded in the exploration or invocation of tales and their themes, some of the other poems, whether literally climbing through briars or seemingly tangled in their own imagery, remind us that mere fantastic imagery does not a fairy tale make.

The generosity of Bernheimer's definition of the fairy tale embraces a wide range of pieces, and although not strictly folkloristic, it gives both writers and readers the opportunity to explore the liminal edges of the form. David Petruzelli contributes an exploration of storytelling at its most fundamental: "You heard it so many times / you began to believe you were there / and of course you were there," he begins, making experience explicit. Petruzelli doesn't need to tell us what tale is being absorbed in this way; his poem is a meta-tale, the story of telling a tale. "*Brand new*, you said later / trying, on your own, to add to it."

Kieran Suckling's disquisition on the magical properties of toads, "Frogs," is the only nonfiction entry; although unaccompanied, it is as intriguing as any two other pieces, redeploing the familiar frog motif in the service of his environmental message. Ranging from Elizabethan witch trials to present-day drug busts, Suckling surveys these amphibians' place in life and literature, comparing their abuse in fairy tales (being thrown against a wall, beheaded, burned, etc.) to their abuse throughout history. But toad and frog stories are also, Suckling points out, about the transformation from animal to human and thus the permeable boundaries between species. He offers an ecological perspective on this relationship, warning readers that toads are increasingly endangered near human habitation, limiting the potential for interaction, the chance of magic.

The Violet Issue is dedicated to poet Sarah Hannah, whose work has appeared in both previous issues, and whose three poems all evoke the dream-like quality and rich imagery of fairy tales. “Progressive Dreaming” actually narrates a reverie:

*On your left is a steep, slatted staircase,  
On your right, a grove of enormous zinnias  
Made of embroidery thread and fenced in with rickrack.  
Above them, a blue crepe dress hangs on a nail.  
It is teeming with finches and pearls;  
When it moves you hear the faint sound of flapping . . .  
You know the dress will fit you but it cannot be removed. (44)*

Bernheimer invokes Hannah’s poems in the editor’s note, recalling that Hannah had likened the words *violet* and *violent* in “Diana, Hunting Words” and that the theme of this issue, as it emerged, seemed to be violence. It could be said, however, that violence is a theme in many if not most fairy tales, and in no way particular to these renditions. Instead I would like to offer the suggestion that dreaming is the most prominent theme in this collection: Natalia dreaming of her lost sister, Sagrario; the trancelike ball with its balletic servers; a dazed narrator escaping into white mist; the prevalence of abandoned houses and empty windows; impossible gardens, thickets, and briars.

This issue presents an exceptionally interesting collection of writing inspired by fairy tales. In a period saturated with popular retellings of fairy tales, from Walt Disney’s animation to Ellen Datlow’s anthologies, it is refreshing to read a self-consciously literary collection, reminding us that the popular may also be artful. The fairy tale’s remarkable vitality as a form and as an aesthetic is demonstrated not just in the range this collection presents, but also in the pleasure it evokes.

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***Enchanted.*** Directed by Kevin Lima. Performed by Amy Adams, Patrick Dempsey, James Marsden, Timothy Spall, and Susan Sarandon. DVD. Walt Disney Pictures. 2007.

*Enchanted*, Disney’s latest foray into the fairy-tale market, marks not only the studio’s first animation/live-action hybrid, but also its first attempt to create an original fairy tale tangentially related to its “princess” line marketed to girls ages two to six.

The film chronicles the animated adventures of Giselle, a naïve young woman who sings to her animal friends of how much she wants to find her

true love and share true love's kiss, only to literally fall into the charming Prince Edward's lap minutes later. The two empty-headed heroes immediately burst into duet and decide to marry. Edward's evil stepmother, Queen Narissa, aghast at the possibility of losing her crown to the new bride, transforms herself into an old hag, à la *Snow White*, and tricks the exuberant Giselle into falling into a wishing well, through a vortex, and into a hellish exile in live-action New York. When Pip, the talking chipmunk who is Giselle's best friend, tells Edward what has happened and he too leaps into the well in order to find and rescue her, Narissa assigns her henchman to follow and poison Giselle rather than let the couple reunite.

Giselle experiences various misadventures but is rescued from the streets by Robert, a handsome divorce attorney, and Morgan, his fairy-tale-obsessed young daughter. Robert scoffs at Giselle's idealistic belief that Edward will come for her and that true love is the most powerful force on earth, but at the same time he finds himself touched by her optimism and charm. Giselle ignores Robert's cynicism about love, but takes to heart his dictum that real love grows through getting to know the other person's likes and dislikes rather than simply following a story line. By the time Edward shows up, Giselle and Robert have fallen for each other; however, they do what's expected of them and return to their respective partners—Giselle to Edward and Robert to Nancy.

In keeping with Robert's lessons on love, Giselle asks Edward to take her on a date before they return to Andalusia. Meanwhile, Robert attempts to make up for his recent distraction with his girlfriend by taking her out. Both couples thus end up at a fancy-dress ball just as Narissa shows up in person.

Giselle, susceptible to Narissa's machinations because of her grief at leaving Robert, bites into a poison apple and falls into a coma. Robert, no longer a cynic, figures out that only true love's kiss can awaken her. When Edward's kiss doesn't do the trick, Robert himself kisses Giselle, with Nancy's unexpected blessing. Giselle awakens, and the two declare their love while Edward and Nancy look on with bittersweet relief.

In a final, somewhat nonsensical twist, Narissa transforms herself into a dragon, à la *Sleeping Beauty*, and kidnaps Robert in order to punish Giselle. Though one may read this rather odd scene as an attempt at gender inversion, ultimately Pip the chipmunk, not Giselle, is responsible for the evil queen's fall to her death. Nancy takes Giselle's place as Edward's bride, and Giselle stays with Robert and Morgan in New York. They all presumably live happily ever after.

Though the film references a variety of traditional and nontraditional fairy tales, the references are generally allusions to previous Disney productions rather

than their folklore antecedents. For example, Giselle, lost in New York City, has a brief encounter with a very short, very angry man in a business suit who gets trapped by the skirt of her unwieldy wedding dress. When the man snaps at her, Giselle clasps her hands and cries out in happiness, "Grumpy!" referencing a specific character from Disney's *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*. Visual references to previous Disney features and productions, and even, in the closing credits, to upcoming animated productions such as *The Princess and the Frog*, might provoke the cynic to wonder if the film is simply product placement narrativized as never before. However, sly references to non-Disney properties such as *The Sound of Music* and *Shrek*, as well as to tangentially related properties such as lyricist Stephen Schwartz's Broadway smash *Wicked*, rescue the film from straightforward feature-length commercial status and instead reposition the film's allusive qualities within the long-standing Hollywood tradition of homage.

This is not to suggest that the film is anything less than consumer-minded overall. The most striking example of explicit consumerism is, not unexpectedly, aimed at children, and occurs when Giselle and Edward decide to go to the fancy-dress ball. Giselle goes to Morgan for help finding a suitable gown to wear. Morgan, presumably six years old, takes on the fairy godmother's role by retrieving her father's "emergency only" credit card, and leading Giselle on a shopping spree that includes the full spa treatment and purchase of a couture dress. In case this wish-fulfillment fantasy is too subtle, the number of boxes the two women carry out of the stores, combined with Morgan's wistful musing as to whether this is what shopping with your mother feels like, visually and narratively reinforce the understanding that shopping is central to the mother-daughter bonding experience.

Despite the film's allusive and nostalgic appeal, as well as an enjoyable performance by Amy Adams (Giselle), *Enchanted* is particularly troubling in its ham-fisted postfeminism. While nominally providing a message of female self-actualization and empowerment through Robert's attempts to provide his daughter with strong female role models such as Marie Curie, as well as through his paternalistic, if well-meaning, attempts to educate Giselle about the importance of getting to know a prospective partner as a person rather than relying on fairy-tale plot lines involving Prince Charming and the perfect kiss, the film cues viewers to the undesirability of these same messages. Morgan disdains her father's suggested role models in favor of Giselle, a real live fairy-tale princess, and Robert himself is forced to realize that he is wrong about the impossibility of fairy-tale romance when true love's kiss saves Giselle from death.

*Enchanted's* commercial success and troubling social mores will undoubtedly make it a fruitful object for critical inquiry by fairy-tale scholars interested

in intertexts, film studies, and gender studies. However, the film's cultural impact and longevity in comparison to past and future Disney adaptations of classic fairy tales is yet to be determined.

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***Grimm Pictures: Fairy Tale Archetypes in Eight Horror and Suspense Films.***  
By Walter Rankin. Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Company, 2007. 217 pp., photos, notes, bibliography, index.

Walter Rankin's work represents an accessible, affectionate account of a variety of horror films in which, despite their lack of overt fairy-tale plot, he traces parallels to fairy-tale motifs and structures. He is centrally concerned with the common violence he finds in modern horror films and in fairy tales by the Brothers Grimm, and argues, "This violence coupled with a strong moral ties the Grimm tales to our modern horror and suspense films in provocative and profound ways" (13). This discussion appears to be rooted in the author's own fondness for fairy tales and for the horror film, and the somewhat anecdotal introduction both characterizes horror in terms of Rankin's own enjoyment of fear and attempts to account for its profound effect. The book's analysis is rooted in popular culture, responding to films that speak to a wide audience rather than to art-house productions, but the work's assumptions about fairy tale or film as folk-cultural capital remain largely unexamined.

The dual nature of Rankin's project as both horror film and fairy-tale analysis, as well as its partial address to the film fan as much as the critic, tends to diversify the book's critical weight, and its critical framework suggests that the author is ultimately less concerned with fairy tale than with film itself. Fairy-tale criticism is present mainly in the oft-cited works of Maria Tatar and Jack Zipes, with minor references to a far from representative sample of other fairy-tale critics. Such references are rather fragmented, used to support the argument at hand rather than offering any sustained engagement with the critics' own arguments. They are often outweighed by the work's rather broader invocation of film criticism and by its tendency to pad the direct comparison of film and fairy tale with detailed discussion of related texts over a broad range of times and genres.

Each of the eight chapters offers direct parallels between particular fairy-tale narratives and horror films ranging from *Rosemary's Baby* (1968) to the far more recent *What Lies Beneath* (2000) and *The Ring* (2002). This represents a choice of films that do not attempt to explicitly retell a fairy tale, but whose plots Rankin proceeds to link, occasionally somewhat tenuously, to fairy-tale structures and archetypes. While each film is associated with a single, primary

fairy tale, comparisons are far more wide-ranging, encompassing related and variant tales as well as popular texts, other films, legend, and mythology. This makes for rich and rather satisfying reading, but the effect is also a bit scattered: fairy tale operates as a unifying theme, not the sole concern of analysis, and the discussion at times strays into a simple listing of related fairy tales rather than sustained analysis.

The various chapters represent an interesting and not always obvious choice of horror films. The first chapter is on *The Silence of the Lambs* (1991), which gives rise to an intriguing discussion of cannibalism as a fairy-tale motif, as well as a survey of Little Red Riding Hood allusions and versions in the popular media. Rankin's points about literal and psychological forests, the voyage of discovery and the fascination with the monster at the heart of the journey are cogent and satisfying, as is the following chapter, which links *Scream* (1996) to "Brier Rose." Here he investigates the implications of the passive female heroine and the destruction of her suitors, and the sleep/death parallels he finds are interesting and well sustained. The film's self-consciousness about narrative expectation also links well to fairy tale's instantly recognizable structures. The third chapter explores *The Ring* as "Rapunzel," a somewhat counter-intuitive equation that works surprisingly well. The chapter relies appropriately enough on Japanese folkloric versions of "Rapunzel" as well as adaptations of Western folklore and a discussion of changeling children. Rankin fascinatingly illuminates the film by equating the movie's long-haired girl trapped in the bottom of the well with the fairy tale's long-haired girl trapped at the top of the tower; the resonance is given strength by his analysis of absent/problematical parent figures and the motif of the child abandoned by her mother after the mother's failure of control.

The second half of the book offers some more problematical discussions; the fourth chapter's exploration of *The Talented Mr. Ripley* (1999) in terms of "Snow White" also includes a slightly tangential exploration of vampire motifs, relying heavily on modern "Snow White"/vampire crossover texts such as those by Neil Gaiman and Tanith Lee. While these share with the film a common interest in the motifs of blood and the mirror, Rankin's linkage seems a bit tenuous, and in his discussion the film works better and more demonstrably as a text invoking vampire symbolism than it does as fairy tale. A similar tenuousness flaws the next few chapters, which respectively link *Aliens* (1986) with "Cinderella," *Rosemary's Baby* with "Rumpelstiltskin," and *What Lies Beneath* with "Hansel and Gretel." Although the discussion of *Aliens* offers valid parallels in motifs of monstrous mothers who protect their own family to the detriment of the heroine, it is somewhat distracted by its exploration of *Frankenstein* and man-made monsters whose relationship to "Cinderella" is not immediately clear.

*Rosemary's Baby* is a clearer parallel with "Rumpelstiltskin," with an interesting analysis of child-sacrifice folklore, devil's bargain motifs, and the folkloric importance of true names as well as its discussion of the various *Faust* narratives. In equating "Hansel and Gretel" with *What Lies Beneath*, however, Rankin offers only tenuous parallels, although his relocation of symbolic starvation and gingerbread-house motifs is ingenious and interesting. Finally, the comparison of *Misery* (1990) with "Mother Holle" is a stretched and slightly misguided reading in which tale motifs are seen as reflecting the Grimms' process of borrowing and editing, and the literary and film versions of a text are seen as the daughter and stepdaughter figures to the writer. Rankin's reference to Stephen King's analysis of fairy-tale structures in film is more than somewhat belated, given the similarity of King's approach to his own.

It is evident that a response to this text solely as a work of fairy-tale criticism would be inaccurate: Rankin's project here is clearly broader and less rigorous, and on its own terms the project succeeds very well in conveying both the author's affection for these horror films and the potentially powerful operation of the fairy-tale patterns they apparently invoke. Most disappointingly, however, the study is apparently not interested in any overarching justification of the parallels it discovers—it generally fails to make clear whether these filmmakers are consciously adapting fairy-tale motifs or if Rankin is making a broader argument about the centrality of fairy-tale archetypes and structures to contemporary culture. This perhaps accounts for why, despite the interesting parallels discovered in symbols and events, some of the comparisons seem stretched at times, and the tale/film comparison cannot always be sustained. This is a readable, entertaining, and frequently illuminating discussion, but it does not entirely succeed in making a striking or fundamental argument about the intersections of fairy tale and horror with which it is so pleasurably concerned.

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***Misfit Sisters: Screen Horror as Female Rites of Passage.*** By Sue Short. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006. xi + 196 pp., bibliography, filmography, index.

In *Misfit Sisters*, Sue Short argues that contemporary horror films share several elements with fairy tales, most notably fear, fantasy, and initiation rites. She suggests that "contemporary horror can be best understood as a means of revisiting, and at times refuting, many of the assumptions contained in fairy tales" (6). Short's study focuses on contemporary horror films with female protagonists in coming-of-age stories. The female protagonists discussed are noteworthy because like Little Red Riding Hood, one of Short's primary fairy-tale references (the other being Cinderella), they "stray from the path," which allows them to "assume narrative agency and learn valuable lessons in self-

reliance" (ix). Short's focus is on the development of agency, what must happen to achieve agency, and the ramifications of that agency. Aligning contemporary horror films to fairy tales that follow the maturation of an adolescent heroine, Short sets out to demonstrate "how many female protagonists . . . are forced to prove themselves in horror; evaluating what risks they take, what roles they play, and what such stories tell us about changing gender roles and expectations" (ix). Additionally, she examines the influence of feminism on the horror genre and female characters in light of a female audience.

As a foundational premise, Short argues against Carol Clover's 1992 *Men, Women, and Chainsaws* and Barbara Creed's 1993 *The Monstrous Feminine*, which denote a male audience for horror films and argue that the genre reflects male fears of female sexuality and power (2). Short asserts that contemporary horror has a prominent female audience, as evident by the increasingly common female protagonists and the "sympathetic" portrayal of a variety of female figures in the films (2). Her assumption of a female audience allows Short to explore a relatively new focus in the field—the appeal of the horror film to women and what the horror genre provides for women that traditionally "female" genres cannot. She argues that female journeys to adulthood are "virtually ignored" in film and that this journey is a crucial subtext to the horror genre (4).

The 1976 film *Carrie* is at the center of Short's study, establishing a framework from which she develops her analysis of films created in *Carrie's* wake. The analysis of *Carrie*, both in the chapter dedicated to the film and woven throughout the text, builds the interesting argument that rather than an antifeminist doctrine, the film shows the power of women and the failure of patriarchal-approved models of female behavior to help women reach maturity. Like *Carrie*, many of the heroines in the discussed films do not "fit in," and attempts to make them fit in (often falling into the wear-makeup-and-attend-prom variety) do not work, with the female guides or heroines dying in the process. Short makes an intriguing and compelling argument about how the contemporary horror film that has at its center a female protagonist consistently and continually points to the failings of patriarchy in providing young women productive models of maturity. Short argues that *Carrie's* legacy is an "interrogation of the failures of patriarchal myths (including religion and romance), inaugurating a mode of questioning that has endured in horror's subsequent interest in misfit females attempting to negotiate their place in the world" (15). She demonstrates that though there are many misogynist elements in contemporary teen horror (and she cites all of the common criticisms), the genre itself is more nuanced and reflective than a simple anti- or pro-woman label can provide. Rather than viewing horror films as a way to work out male anxieties about women, she argues that contemporary horror

examines the possibilities for female identity and agency (both patriarchally approved models and those that are not).

Short's work contributes very little that is new to the field of fairy-tale studies, and her discussion of fairy tales is a survey of readily available information that should be recognizable to fairy-tale scholars. Her book would be primarily useful for those studying horror, as that is where she makes her most compelling and unique claims. Fairy tales are invoked as a framework for her analysis of female-centered horror films, and although this does provide an interesting context to the themes she discusses, she does not discuss the films as fairy-tale films or explore the fairy-tale elements of the films in depth. Rather, the fairy-tale motifs and studies mentioned provide a starting point for her main argument about the roles of women in horror. While it is clear how fairy tales can aid studies of the horror genre, it is less clear what fairy-tale scholars can take from horror to apply to the study of fairy tales.

Missing from Short's study is the mention of other types of contemporary horror. The popular trend in torture-focused horror films is ignored, as are other thrillers that do not fit with her argument. While there is no room in her already overpacked work for a discussion of other films, a brief explanation of why this torture-porn trend in contemporary horror is irrelevant to her discussion would help situate within other subgenres of contemporary horror the female-centered trend she analyzes. Her not recognizing the other trends implies that the female-centered film is contemporary horror rather than being *one* type of contemporary horror.

Short's individual analysis of the films shows her mastery of the material and immense familiarity with her texts. The text is divided into six chapters in addition to the introduction and conclusion. Chapter 1, "Telling Tales: Fairy Tales and Female Rites of Passage Narratives," uses the work of Cristina Bacchilega, Elizabeth Wanning Harries, Maria Tatar, Marina Warner, and Jack Zipes to connect the horror genre to fairy tales, establishing a similarity in the emphasis on female rites of passage and drawing on a tradition of female storytellers and audience. In chapter 2, "Sex and the Final Girl: Surviving the Slasher," Short analyzes the development of the slasher cycle in horror and the evolution of the Final Girl into a single mother. She focuses on *Halloween*, *A Nightmare on Elm Street*, the *Scream* trilogy, *Wes Craven's New Nightmare*, and *Halloween H2O*. In chapter 3, "Maternal Monsters and Motherly Mentors: Failed Initiations in *Carrie* and *Carrie II*," Short counter reads the *Carrie* films for their sympathetic and feminist inclinations. The fourth chapter, "Misfit Sisters: Female Kinship and Rivalry in *The Craft* and *Ginger Snaps*," examines the use of witch and werewolf lore to explore female relationships. In the only chapter to discuss a television series, chapter 5, "Fighting Demons: *Buffy*, *Faith*, *Willow*, and the Forces of Good and Evil," examines the roles of the

three most powerful women in *Buffy: The Vampire Slayer* in terms of mother-daughter relationships and the complexity of the line between heroine and villain. Chapter 6, “Demeter’s Daughters: Wronged Girls and the Mother Avenger,” examines the role of adult women as heroines (all of the other chapters look at teens) as an interrogation of what constitutes a “good” mother in the films *What Lies Beneath*, *The Gift*, *The Ring*, and *The Ring Two*. The book’s conclusion, which presents the most succinct argument about the possibilities for women in horror, also analyzes *Dark Water* as a horror film that fails to demonstrate the potential of female power.

Short’s clear prose and steady method of building her argument level by level results in a more nuanced and controlled conclusion than her introduction suggests. Her arguments are easy to follow as she carefully connects each chapter to the next, and the book would work well in an introductory course exploring the topic. Ultimately, Short attempts to reclaim horror films for women, and her study makes great strides in doing just that. *Misfit Sisters* complicates the dominant understanding of women in horror films by arguing that the genre illustrates far more varied and nuanced depictions of female power and maturity than most other genres allow.

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***Le conte en ses paroles: La figuration de l’oralité dans le conte merveilleux du Classicisme aux Lumières.*** Edited by Anne Defrance and Jean-François Perrin. Paris: Editions Desjonquères-L’Esprit des Lettres, 2007. 504 pp.

The volume under review presents the proceedings of the second conference titled *Le conte en ses paroles: le dire et le dit dans le conte merveilleux de l’âge Classique (XVIIe-XVIIIe siècles)*, which took place at the University of Grenoble 3–Stendhal, September 22–24, 2005. The thirty-two presentations, put together by Anne Defrance and Jean-François Perrin, join a larger group project directed by Perrin and focused on the subject of “The Fairy Tale in the Seventeenth Century: The Wonder Tale and the Baroque Culture of the Voice” (Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, LIRE, University Grenoble 3, 2002–2006). Perrin opens his preface to the volume by quoting the initial challenge for this original research: “At a time . . . when the notion of ‘oral literature’ was widely circulating and especially attached to the mighty revival of tale-telling as a social practice, it seems necessary to re-think this notion in a critical way, by reviewing the overpowering of speech by writing and the special capacity of literature to produce ‘fictions of presence.’” Orality and literature are thus perceived as complementary notions.

The studies present in this volume cover the period from the end of the seventeenth century to the end of eighteenth century. These two centuries in France

represent the golden era when fairies became fashionable among the members of a social elite who attended the “salons.” This elite was often presided over by women, who maintained an important role as tale-tellers. Combined with the art of conversation, this tale-telling drew its themes and techniques from three distinct sources: oral tradition, literary tradition, and translated oriental tales. The volume’s objective, as Perrin defines it in his preface, is to investigate the representations of orality in wonder tales (fairy tales and oriental tales) by employing a resolute literary perspective. In other words, the volume purports to examine language and style, since literary fairy tales were written in order to be read.

The volume is organized into three large sections: (1) *Fictions de voix* (Voice fictions), (2) *Co-énonciation et mise en scène* (Co-enunciation and staging), and (3) *Le corps des mots, le jeu des récits* (The body of words, the playful ways of narration). The volume also combines several approaches, which all focus on the transformations of orality and literary enunciation, with an emphasis on the connection between classical fairy tales and dramaturgy or staging.

The first part (*Fictions de voix*) brings to the foreground the tale’s and the classic tale-teller’s polyphony. In their focus, numerous papers straddle orality and literature, as they examine the convergences with and divergences from other literary genres of the fairy tale as a (sub)genre; for instance, several papers compare fairy tales with theater, which also derives from oral discourse.

Lewis C. Seifert opens the volume with an important essay on the history of literary critics, from seventeenth-century tale-tellers to twentieth-century historians, philologists, and anthropologists, who have concerned themselves with classic fairy tales. The essential point of this retrospection is to depict the evolution of orality itself as a concept, and to comment on its complexity and polysemy.

Jean-Paul Sermain approaches the fairy tale as a subgenre of the wider genre of the novel and examines the features that connect it with orality by looking at three synchronic models of writing—those of Charles Perrault, Antoine Galland, and Anthony Hamilton. Christine Noille-Clauzade follows the same interconnecting direction in her paper and relates fairy tales to historic and chivalric novellas. Françoise Gevrey associates parodic tales with a typology of comedy through a detailed presentation of the use of the terms *bavard* (talkative) and *babillard* (babbling), introduced into the fairy tales’ vocabulary from the domain of the oral. Julie Boch explores the same subtle interconnection through the example of the Comte de Caylus. Raymonde Robert examines the rare cases of French fairy-tale collections of the eighteenth century that apply a judicial rhetoric as a frame narrative. The importance of frame narratives is also illustrated by Anne Defrance, who explores how the initiating function of the frame complements the tale’s latent plot.

Christelle Bahier-Porte analyzes a counterexample of popular success through the “modalisation” of a normative discourse. Sophie Reynard focuses on

the poetic allegory and the social status of the scholarly woman tale-teller in the Parisian salons of the seventeenth century. Jean Mainil explores the polymorphy of wonder speech in seventeenth-century fairy tales, which he classifies into three types: the popular speech in accordance with its oral origin; male heroic speech in contrast with female silence; and the socialite discourse of talkative women tale-tellers. Ruth B. Bottigheimer revisits in a vivid way the works of Charles Perrault and contests previous assumptions formulated during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries about the oral origins of some of his famous fairy tales. She demonstrates through a subtle comparison with the works of Basile and Straparola that fairy-tale discourse can also constitute a “contemporary literary reformulation.”

The second part (*Co-énonciation et mise en scène*) stresses the dramatic dynamics and stage transformations of literary tale-telling. Manuel Couvreur displays an elaborate comparison between *contes de fées* and “poetic art”—in the sense of drama, even mimetic—and demonstrates the esthetic contribution that Galland brought into French classicism with his translation and adaptation of the *Arabian Nights*. Jean-François Perrin undertakes a comparison between Galland’s *Nights* and Hamilton’s tales in order to demonstrate a paradoxical interchangeability between silence and speech, and its correspondence to a fluid relationship among the tale-teller, the listener, and the commentator. Those traits, concludes Perrin, invest Hamilton’s tales with a new dramatic function. Aurelia Gaillard brings to the foreground the narrative similarities of two tales by Denis Diderot, “Loiseau blanc” and “Les bijoux indiscrets”; according to this interesting reading of Diderot’s tales, this discourse acquires a metaphorical function of sensuality, thus tale-telling can be considered as a sensual *mise-en-scène*. Michele Bokobza Kahan investigates the “scenography” of libertine tales, exploring the state of enunciation beyond parody. Marie-Françoise Bosquet, through an exploration of the feminine speech in *Les Mille et Une Heures* by Thomas-Simon Gueulette, perceives a *mise-en-scène* of orality that conforms to the social reality of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Another text by Gueulette is treated by Carmen Ramirez, who comments on the tale-teller’s art and on the narrative dynamics of his dialogue. Catherine Ramond investigates fairy-tale adaptations in theater that follow the imperatives of the theatrical genres to which fairy tales may adapt, thus leading to a deconstruction of the wonder tale’s symbolism. Her revelatory conclusion summarizes this procedure: “the more the fairytale’s meaning is lost, the more it is necessary to quote it endlessly.” Martial Poirson presents the example of *Petit Poucet*, in which Carmon-telle was inspired by Perrault, and investigates the theatricality of the dramatic tale by comparing it to dramatic proverbs. He thus demonstrates the ambivalent theatrical transposition of oral wonder tales according to a triple operation: literary, dramatic, and scenic. Nathalie Rizzoni examines verbal transformations of fantasy into spectacular action in eighteenth-century theater. In a similar

direction, Régine Jomand-Baudry explores speech transformations from libertine tales into spectacular effect and “bouffe” parody in vaudeville comedies. Benjamin Pintiaux explores the links between wonder tales and opera ballet, a dramatic genre contemporary with the revival of tale-telling. He examines the transformations of the fantastic element into libretto and choreography, using illustrative examples from the third entry of *Fêtes de Polymnie*.

The third part of the text (*Le corps des mots, le jeu des récits*) brings to the foreground formal aspects of fairy tales, such as vocabulary, language, and style. Philippe Hourcade investigates the influence of fantasy and the contribution of the historical context to this vocabulary as well as the peculiarities and neologisms applied by Madame d'Aulnoy in her *Contes*. Vincent Verselle explores “the power of speech to construct characters,” as per Tzvetan Todorov's definition. Through the use of extraordinary characters in *L'Oranger et l'abeille*, by Madame d'Aulnoy, he illustrates the “semiotic function” of reported speech. Beyond fairy tales and parody of the 1740s, Aurélie Basso undertakes a detailed presentation of the subversive effects of discourse. Noémie Courtès demonstrates that “fairy lore” (*féerie*) provides a pretext for a society's conversation. Henri Coulet takes as an example Nicolas Rétif and his *Contes Bleus* in order to demonstrate the links and exchanges between orality and literature in the language and style of his tales. Nadine Decourt, both a comparatist and an anthropologist, proposes a double “reading/hearing” of *Veillées de Thessalie* by Madame de Lussan. Sophie Latapie approaches the tales by Madame Leprince de Beaumont in terms of their pedagogical and Christian aspects. Richard Gossin, as a theologian and a storyteller, subtly revisits the question of religious connotations and offers a systematic comparison of biblical texts, Christian apocryphal texts, and contemporary tales, which all bring into the foreground the Christmas miracle. In order to demonstrate the passage from orality into literature, Marie-Agnès Thirard undertakes a comparative approach to two African oral tales and a literary version of the same tale “told” by Madame d'Aulnoy.

Henri Touati closes the volume with a return to the present and to the revival of storytelling today, which started in the 1970s. He dynamically associates the art and social function of modern storytellers with the collections of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and that period's great works of classification.

*Le conte en ses paroles*, principally of literary, historical, and stylistic interest, brings together a range of highly illustrative and well-argued scholarly papers. It is an essential contribution to the study of literary tales in association with their oral substratum.

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*Early Yiddish Texts, 1100–1750*. Edited by Jerold C. Frakes. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004. lxxvii + 889 pp.

*Un beau livre d'histoires: Eyn shōn mayse bukh; Fac-similé de l'editio princeps de Bâle (1602)*. Edited, introduced, and translated by Astrid Starck-Adler. Basel: Schwabe Verlag, 2004. Two volumes: cxxxiii + 875 pp.

For the better part of a thousand years, the majority of European Jews dreamed, thought, worked, and loved in Yiddish; and though the multilingualism that characterized European Jewish life generated a correspondingly complex literary system, it seems fair to suggest that when fables, epics, wonder tales, and other stories reached the vast majority of Jewish eyes and ears, they did so in the culture's working vernacular, not the high-status Hebrew that was the lingua franca of all elite, sacred productions.

The critical study of Yiddish life and literature in general, and particularly in the premodern period (roughly before 1750), was tragically interrupted in the twentieth century by the Holocaust and by Stalinist repression; among the vast roll of victims to Nazism and Communism were many of the brightest lights of Yiddish scholarship. In recent years, the field has only just begun to recover some of its momentum—aided immeasurably by the widespread acceptance of Jewish studies on campuses in North America, Europe, and of course Israel—though with certain notable exceptions, the vast majority of that scholarship has focused on either linguistic matters of the elite productions of a newly secularized, cosmopolitan, engaged group of writers who flourished from the 1880s to the outbreak of the Second World War. As a result, some of the most basic research in the field of early modern Yiddish literature (critical editions, bibliographic spadework, basic analysis) remains a desideratum.

This is beginning to change, thanks in no small part to the scholars whose work is reviewed here. Jerold Frakes's earlier work on alterity and ideology in Old Yiddish studies showed him to be a subtle and theoretically sophisticated detective of the dizzyingly and dazzlingly complex agendas behind the scholarship on premodern Yiddish over the last several centuries. In recent years, however, he has turned to immeasurably assisting the work of others in studying the period's literary output. With this mammoth anthology of early Yiddish texts, along with his careful translation and revision of Jean Baumgarten's seminal *Introduction to Old Yiddish Literature*, Frakes has done more to revitalize the study of Yiddish before the modern period in English-speaking countries than any other scholar.

Frakes's purpose in compiling *Early Yiddish Texts* is not, primarily, for the uninitiated; the texts themselves remain untranslated (though the herculean efforts in rendering difficult-to-read manuscripts and no-longer-familiar typographies should not go unnoted), and many of the entries are excerpts from longer works. Surrounded as they are, however, by introductory notes,

substantive bibliographies of extant criticism and research, and a useful index that categorizes the works by genre as well as by chronology, the anthology will remain the essential starting point for all research in the field for decades, if not indeed longer.

Frakes's careful choices remind readers, scholars, and casual skimmers of some of the cornerstones of new (and, in some cases, old) research on pre-modern Yiddish literature; space allows us to focus primarily on three here. First and foremost is the wide variety of genres that composed that literature, which allow it to speak to scholars in as many fields as there are disciplines that study the age. Frakes includes (among other genres) Bible translations and paraphrases, private letters, books of customs, dramas, medical texts, epics, morality books, travel guides, legal texts, fables, glossaries, and newspapers. Almost all of these works (and others like them; Frakes makes no claims for the exhaustiveness of the anthology) are grossly understudied and have much to offer the scholar of Jewish studies.

They are also of value to scholars of non-Jewish studies, which is the second point. Yiddish texts, sacred and secular alike, had authors and readers subject to vicissitudes of a minority culture in a larger literary society, and certain efforts at cultural insularity notwithstanding, the Yiddish texts represented in the anthology provide testament to the rich and complex cultural interchange between Jewish and surrounding societies in the form of adapted chivalric epics such as the *Bovo-bukh*, or works like the *Shmuel-bukh* or *Doniel-bukh*, whose retellings of the biblical stories in Kings and Daniel sup both from internal rabbinic tradition and the topoi of medieval narrative. This is to say nothing of Yiddish versions of Arthurian tales, Aesopian fables, and other works whose external origins, depending on context and case, were widely known, deliberately occluded, or forgotten over the centuries.

The cultural interchange exemplified by this Yiddish literature—and that literature itself—became the substance of heated debate, particularly with the rapid progress of print and the concomitant spread of literacy in the early modern period. Rabbinic leaders, particularly toward the end of the sixteenth century and the beginning of the seventeenth century, became concerned about Yiddish printers' success with chivalric adaptations of undoubted entertainment value and doubtful moral worth, yielding a "counter-revolution" of edifying entertainments in the decades to come. The *Mayse-bukh*, whose 1602 Basel *editio princeps* has now been masterfully presented in a facsimile edition with French translation and notes by Astrid Starck-Adler, was one of that revolution's broadest shots across the bow.

This book, which is vital to the history of Yiddish literature (it was one of the most reprinted books in Yiddish literary history until the modern period), consists of more than two hundred stories, largely culled from Talmudic sources,

medieval pietistic tales, and contemporary manuscript story collections. Starck-Adler, following on a comparatively rich seam of German and Israeli scholarship over the last centuries, has done wonderful work in not only providing the most definitive sourcing and structuring of the book's stories, but also, in a seminal introductory essay, giving a great deal of background about the book's compiler, its place of publication, and its place in the contemporary literary landscape. The translation does its readers the service of restoring the silent omissions of Moses Gaster's earlier bowdlerized English translation, thus allowing the text to speak vibrantly and occasionally surprisingly on its own.

This leads me to the third point: the sophisticated and surprising relationship between "sacred" and "secular" texts in the early modern Yiddish literary landscape. It is, of course, a commonplace that these categories had very different meanings, if indeed any meaning at all, than those they have today, but modern readers are nonetheless often surprised at the words, topics, themes, and behaviors that appear in ostensibly moralistic books or in the mouths of characters that have been refined and domesticated through centuries of history and hagiography. Starck-Adler, through her translation, allows the *Mayse-bukh* to speak for itself, and scholars in the fields of both Jewish literature and European studies can be glad to have a major new text in an accessible and approachable format.

Overall, then, one can hope that these major works of scholarship launch the articles, theses, and general reconceptualization of Jewish, and even European, life and literature that they deserve to; certainly, if the field continues to grow, as it gives every evidence of doing, many present and future scholars will be grateful to Frakes and Starck-Adler as a result.

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