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Reviews

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REVIEWS

Mademoiselle de Lubert: Contes. Edition critique établie par Aurélie Zygel-Basso. Bibliothèque des génies et des fées 14. Paris: Honoré Champion, 2005. 586 pp.

This collection of the tales by Marguerite de Lubert (1702?–1779?) is a long-awaited event in fairy-tale circles. Since Lubert penned her tales in the mid-eighteenth century, there has never been a complete edition of her fairy tales. This edition includes the tales whose attribution is certain: “Tecserion,” “La Princesse Camion,” “La Princesse Couleur-de-rose et Le Prince Céladon,” “La Princesse Lionnette et le Prince Coquerico,” “Le Prince Glacé et la Princesse Etincelante,” the beginning of “La Veillée galante,” “Blancherose,” and “Les Lutins du château de Kernosy.” Lubert’s works are presented in the original French with modernized spelling, capitalization, and punctuation. The texts are accompanied by a sixty-seven-page introduction and annotations of the texts in French by Aurélie Zygel-Basso. In the appendixes are several tales whose attributions are disputed, along with two epistles by Voltaire, excerpts from the *Cabinet des Fées*, a Lubert genealogy, an index of names, and a bibliography (largely restricted to works published in French). The volume has nine illustrations.

Those who are unfamiliar with Lubert’s tales will discover in this volume the exuberant world of eighteenth-century fantasy. In “La Princesse Camion,” one of the best known of Lubert’s tales, the neglect of a fairy opens a world of marvel: a fairy-marmot, a prince who takes half an hour to fall down a well, a half-whale princess, a lake of fire, a fairy who lives in a carbuncle, a boat of mother-of-pearl that takes its travelers to a rock-crystal castle built on stilts and inhabited by men with fish heads. Sylphs, sylphides, and the king of Scythia; a princess born in an egg; magicians, enchanters, centaurs; a raspberry fairy; statues that come to life; knights armored in sugar candy riding on saddles of spice bread; and ostrich ladies in waiting fill the pages of Lubert’s particularly fanciful world. Everything here is excessive. In “Blancherose” Lubert does not give her reader simply an ogre, but the emperor of the ogres, who arrives on top of an ogre pyramid, accompanied by ten thousand of his kind. Characters inhabit worlds that reflect *mondain* eighteenth-century esthetics mixed with fairy-tale fantasy. A rococo grotto worthy of any great nobleman’s park is decorated with

snail shells and bat wings. Objects take on fantastic dimensions: a golden armoire wanders about “Blancherose” under its own power, while the princess living inside it explores an extra-dimensional realm large enough to hold a city and a castle.

Max Milner once remarked on the eighteenth century’s taste for “frivolous books that the public snapped up almost before they could be bound” (*Le Diable dans la littérature française* [Paris: Corti, 1960] 1: 72, my translation). Lubert’s tales were part of that taste for the frivolous. Lubert took much inspiration from earlier fairy tales by writers like Marie-Catherine d’Aulnoy, Marie-Jeanne Lhéritier, and Charlotte-Rose de Caumont La Force, but embroidered the plots and themes into new fantasies that drew from the rich realms of marvel in eighteenth-century European culture. Illuminist philosophers, Freemasons, Rosicrucians, alchemists, charlatan sellers of immortality potions, convulsionaries, ecstasies, hysterics, philosophers who were setting the stage for the Revolution, and dabblers in the esoteric who were trying to make sylphs appear out of bits of buried glass, authors who reinvented the devil but made him comically limping, hunchbacked, one-eyed, or amorous—theirs was the age that Lubert inhabited. It was heading toward the Revolution, and toward Emanuel Swedenborg, Alessandro Cagliostro, and Franz Anton Mesmer simultaneously.

Scholars of the French fairy tale need this edition. Any lover of French fairy tales, scholarly or not, will enjoy Lubert’s fanciful storytelling. The edition’s weakness is in the introduction and annotation by Zygel-Basso, which paint Lubert as a late adherent to a fairy-tale style that had had its heyday in the seventeenth century but was outmoded by the eighteenth. Lubert, throughout this first work by Zygel-Basso, comes across as a writer caught uncomfortably between periods, imitating a genre that had often been done better by others, a sometimes overly serious *conteuse* writing in a style that, in Zygel-Basso’s eyes, was occasionally flawed. The annotations (about one every two pages) suggest useful plot links to other tales, but they barely scratch the surface of the connections that could be made, and Lubert often suffers in Zygel-Basso’s comparisons to earlier writers such as d’Aulnoy and La Force. As this is the only comprehensive edition of Lubert’s tales that exists, and is likely to be the only one for many years to come, it would have been lovely to have had a scholar who enjoyed Lubert’s works better herself, and who might have explored more productively the ways in which Lubert’s work fit into the complex patterns of literary, philosophical, and social uses of marvel in the eighteenth century.

It is for Lubert’s tales that scholars and amateurs of French fairy tales and marvelous literature will buy this volume. In recent years Champion has rendered an enormous service to fairy-tale scholarship by republishing texts that rarely or never saw new editions after their original publication. Champion’s editions of fairy tales have included volumes on Marie-Catherine d’Aulnoy

(2002); Anne Claude Philippe de Pestels de Lévis de Tubières-Grimoard, comte de Caylus (2005); Henriette Julie de Castelnau, comtesse de Murat (2006); and combined volumes including tales by Marie-Jeanne Lhéritier; Catherine Bernard; Charlotte-Rose Caumont de La Force; Catherine Durand; and Louise de Bossigny, comtesse d'Auneuil (2005) and by Charles Perrault, François Fénelon, Jean Chevalier de Mailly, Jean de Préchac, François-Timoléon de Choisy, and others (2005). They have made this corpus of fairy tales once again easily accessible to both scholars and the public, thus making new research far easier than it has been and surely inspiring new generations of readers. Scholars of the French fairy tale should make their way as quickly as possible—with or without dragon-drawn chariots—to their nearest bookseller, for as many editions as they can afford.

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Madame de Murat: Contes. *Edition critique établie par Geneviève Patard. Bibliothèque des génies et des fées 3.* Paris: Honoré Champion, 2006. 478 pp.

This volume of the *Bibliothèque des génies et des fées* presents the texts written by Henriette Julie de Castelnau, comtesse de Murat, considered to be *contes* by the volume's editor, Geneviève Patard. The edition offers a “modernized,” “corrected,” and “actualized” version of these texts, suppressing capital letters and “reorganizing” paragraphs and punctuation in order to make them more “coherent” and “less disturbing” for “modern” use (49–50). Since capital letters, punctuation, and organization of paragraphs are often semantically meaningful, the scholarly reader might object to this editorial decision. The first of de Murat's works reedited is the *Contes de fées: Dédiez à Son Altesse Sérénissime Madame la Princesse Douairière de Conty. Par Mad. La Comtesse de M****, published by Claude Barbin (also Jean La Fontaine's, Marie-Catherine d'Aulnoy's, and Charles Perrault's editor) in 1698. (A photographic reproduction of the original edition is accessible on the Web site of the Bibliothèque Nationale [BN] in Paris). Patard's edition reproduces the dedicatory letter followed by the complete texts of the three unframed tales *Le Parfait Amour*, *Anguilette*, and *Jeune et Belle*.

De Murat's second volume, the *Nouveaux Contes des Fées*, was published in the same year by Barbin. The critical edition reproduces the important dedicatory letter followed by *Le Palais de la Vengeance* and *The Prince des Feuilles*, but omits the third text, *Le Bonheur des moineaux*, explicitly subtitled *Conte* in the original edition (also available on the BN Web site). Arguing that de Murat had “abusively” (49) defined this text as a *conte*, Geneviève Patard transfers it into the “Annexes” suppressing the original subtitle, *Conte*. She thus “corrects” the author's own disposition without taking into consideration that the early French fairy tale came into being through a complex interaction of different

generic forms as the *fable*, the *exemplum*, the *nouvelle*, and other verse and prose forms. In the critical edition, what was originally the fourth tale, *L'Heureuse peine*, thus follows immediately the second, making it difficult to recognize the semantic and metanarrative meaning of the shorter rhymed text significantly placed between them by the author.

The editor's idea of what a *conte* is or should be seems firmly established on the basis of the presuppositions of the folkloristic approach and the classifications proposed by Aarne-Thompson and Propp. This conception of the *conte* informs also the *notices* and the *résumés*, which focus on motifs, themes, and tale types. A reader who is more interested in narrative strategies and problems of reception and canon formation can find precious information and analysis in Elizabeth W. Harries's important book *Twice upon a Time* (2001), a reference missing in Patard's bibliography.

The third section presents the four texts contained in the *Histoires sublimes et allégoriques: Par Madame la Comtesse D***, published by Barbin in 1699 (the original edition is also available on the BN Web site). I have found no information about the fact that the book wears the initial D** (used by Marie-Catherine d'Aulnoy on the title pages of her books) rather than "Madame de M***." Patard's edition reproduces the important dedicatory text *Aux Fées modernes* that has been recently translated by and commented on by Holly Tucker and Melanie R. Siemens in *Marvels & Tales* 19.1 (2005). The first text, *Le Roi Porc*, is explicitly defined by the author as *Histoire*; the second, *L'Isle de la Magnificence ou la princesse Blanchette*, as *Histoire allégorique*; the third and fourth, *Le Sauvage* and *The Turbot*, again as *Histoires*. The generic definition by the author thus differs explicitly from the texts subtitled *Contes* of the two volumes published in 1698. The editor calls them indifferently *contes* in her *résumés* as well as in the *notices* without commenting on the differences explicitly indicated by the author.

A fourth section of the edition presents fragments of another still little known and highly interesting work by Henriette Julie de Murat, the *Voyage de campagne*, published by Barbin in 1699. (The complete text is accessible on the Web site of the BN in the edition of the twenty-ninth volume of the *Voyages imaginaires, songes, visions et romans cabalistiques* published in Amsterdam in 1788, 1–198). The critical edition reproduces the *Rondeau*, again dedicated to Madame la Princesse Douarière de Conty, cutting out the description of the conversations of the first-person narrator with the people she meets and the *histoires* they tell each other, but offers the interesting discussion on the use and value of the *contes des fées*, which is illustrated by a *conte*, *Le Père et ses quatre fils*. This tale is told by the main narrator, who defines it as a personal variation of a tale told before in a famous "hôtel," thus alluding to Murat's complex intertextual dialogue with Giovan Francesco Straparola's *Le piacevoli notti*. The importance of Straparola for "France's First Fairy Tales" that has been recently

confirmed by Ruth B. Bottigheimer in *Marvels & Tales* (19.1 [2005]: 17–31) is an important issue for further research, notwithstanding the fact that Patard's *notice* plays down the importance of the intertextual dialogues in order to point out what she considers as de Murat's direct "borrowing" from tale type 653 (453). The reader who is interested in the particular genre of the *Voyage de campagne* will find interesting information and analysis in *Métafictions* (1670–1730) by Jean Sermain (Champion, 2002), an important reference missing in the bibliography of Patard's edition.

Three other texts drawn from an unpublished manuscript dated April 14, 1708, the *Journal for Mlle Menou: L'Aigle au beau bec, La Fée Princesse Peine perdu*, are considered as *contes* and reproduced in the fifth section of Patard's edition. Especially the second and the third texts open up interesting perspectives on the later writing of Henriette Julie de Murat. The analysis of the tales' integration of yet another narrative form, the journal, would be interesting, but must await the publication of the entire manuscript (as far as I can see, it is not available on the BN Web site for the moment). A fourth and a fifth interesting text drawn from the manuscript are placed in the *Annexes*. The first, *L'origine du hérisson*, might be considered as an etiological tale. The *Commencement d'un conte qui n'a point été achevé* illustrates, according to Patard's footnote, "le genre de jeux littéraires auxquels s'adonnaient les mondains" (407), and maybe more than that if we examine its metanarrative function in the context of the *Journal*.

The edition of Henriette Julie de Murat's *contes* in Champion's *Bibliothèque des Génies et des Fées* definitely shows the high interest and variety of her writing. It invites readers to explore the important part she took, I think, in the creative dialogue between Marie-Jeanne Lhéritier, Catherine Bernard, Charles Perrault, and Marie-Catherine d'Aulnoy and in their complex elaboration of different ways to refer to Straparola and Basile. Given the importance of the female writers clearly shown by Joan DeJean, Lewis Seifert, Patricia Hannon, Elizabeth Wanning Harries, Jean Mainil, Christina Jones, Gabrielle Verdier, Jean Sermain, and others, I wonder why the very first sentence of Geneviève Patard's introduction still needs to reactivate the old prejudice: "Mme de Murat fait partie de ces écrivains mineurs" (9). It also seems strange to me that the first eight pages of the introduction repeat the *chronique scandaleuse* proven to be part of the defamation and discrimination directed at the time against women and female writers. Another book by de Murat, the *Mémoires de la Comtesse de M*** avant sa retraite, ou la Défense des dames*, published by Barbin in 1697, deals explicitly with this problem. Joan DeJean, in *Tender Geographies* (Columbia University Press, 1991), dedicates some highly interesting pages (142–45) to the *Mémoires*. She also reveals the part Antoine Adam's influential *Histoire de la littérature française du dix-septième siècle* took in the systematic devaluation of de Murat's work "by reckless claims worthy of tabloid journalism" (142). I think it could

be interesting to analyze Henriette Julie de Murat's *Mémoires* (the original edition is also available on the BN Web site) in relation to the fairy-tale writing in the crucial years of 1697 and 1698. They reveal important elements of the sociopolitical context of these years and clearly formulate the intention that also informs, I believe, de Murat's fairy-tale writing: "J'espère au reste continuer le dessein que j'ay de iustifier les femmes" (395). They also participate in the experimentation of new narrative genres and ways of writing carried on throughout all of her books that make Henriette Julie de Murat much more than "un écrivain mineur."

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The Folk-Stories of Iceland. By Einar Ólafur Sveinsson. Viking Society for Northern Research, Text Series 16. London: University College London, 2003. 318 pp.

The international status of works in folk-narrative scholarship (as in many other fields of studies) largely depends on their availability in one of the major Western languages; indeed, more and more even the existence of German or French versions does not guarantee their widespread usage in the Anglophone academic world. English translations have therefore gradually become fundamental desiderata, if awareness of important advances in folk-narrative research and in adjacent disciplines are to be made possible and their fragmentation or duplication is to be avoided. One of the most striking examples of the delayed impact of a seminal work on folk-narrative scholarship in English is Vladimir Propp's *Morphology of the Folktale*, the original of which was published in Russian as *Morfologija skazki* in 1928; it was, however, not until its translation into English in 1958 and especially a second, revised edition in 1968, that it had any real impact on scholarly thinking in the English-speaking world. Similarly, Kaarle Krohn's *Folklore Methodology*, an augmented edition of his lectures given in German in Oslo in 1924–1925 and published in 1926 under the title *Die folkloristische Arbeitsmethode*, did not see the light of day in English until 1971. The dissemination of the work of the otherwise influential German scholar Kurt Ranke has likewise been severely limited by the absence of English versions of his seminal publications.

It is therefore reassuring that the book under review provides an opportunity to read in English *The Folk-Stories of Iceland*, one of the two major publications from the eminent Icelandic folklorist Einar Ólafur Sveinsson. The history of this welcome translation is a lengthy and complicated one: the original was published in 1940 under the title *Um íslanskar þjóðsögur*, and according to the preface, its first translation was begun by Benedikt S. Benedikz in 1970; in this he was assisted by Jacqueline Simpson, while Sveinsson himself made some revisions in the Icelandic text, to which Einar G. Petursson also contributed up to

1980. Contributions to the translation of part 1 and the first two sections of part 2 were also made by him and Anthony Faulkes; and the final edition was at the hands of the latter. It is therefore truly a cooperative work of scholarship, the additional benefits of which the Icelandic original did not have. The delay of more than sixty years since the publication of the Icelandic original has therefore not been completely wasted, especially as some of the materials Sveinsson deals with received considerable scholarly attention during this period of waiting by such experts as Gwyn Jones, Laurits Bødker, Reimund Kvideland, Hennig K. Sehmsdorf, and especially Alan Boucher, Inger Boberg, and Jacqueline Simpson. However, what has been regrettably lacking since 1940 is a systematic account in English of the Icelandic evidence and its sources, of the allied folk belief and folk legends of the Icelandic wonder tales, and of “The World of Men and the Hidden World” such as the book under review now provides.

Sveinsson had previously compiled a thesis consisting of an “Annotated index of Icelandic folktales,” which was published as Folklore Fellows Communication [FFC] 83 (1928) under the title “Verzeichnis isländischer Märchenvarianten” (List of Icelandic Variants of *Märchen* [Wonder Tales]). His scholarly credentials are impressive: he received his doctorate from the University of Iceland in 1933, became director of the National and University Library of Iceland in 1940, was appointed professor of Icelandic literature in 1945 and the first director of the Icelandic Manuscript Institute from 1962 to 1972. He was a prolific writer and editor. While, of his two book-length folklore studies, the FFC publication was obviously intended mainly for an international academic audience, the original of the book under review addressed chiefly a more popular Icelandic readership and, in an assessment of its primary purpose, should be understood in a 1940 context. In fact, in peculiar and telling contrast to Propp’s and Krohn’s works, much of Sveinsson’s book, especially the “Survey” that constitutes part 1 (9–70), at the time served as an introductory “translation” of concepts and ideas already widely accessible, in German and English, in comparative folk-narrative scholarship, not least in the basic principles of the historical-geographical methodology of the “Finnish School.” The terminological echoes of this transfer still sound through the sometimes parenthetically inserted Icelandic references in the English translation: *þjóðsaga* “folk-story,” *ævintýri* “wonder tale,” *smásögur* “anecdotes,” *fylgjur* “stories of ghosts,” *gerð* “redaction,” *minni* “motifs,” *farandminni* “wandering motifs,” and so on. As Sveinsson himself states, the main aim of part 1 was to offer “a general picture of folk-stories . . . irrespective of nationality” (60), although the illustrating examples are usually from Icelandic tradition.

It cannot be the purpose of this review to reverse the process by retranslating this 1940 procedure into a 2007 one except perhaps to mention that the translators have made some bibliographical attempt at updating the relevant

scholarship published since 1940 by listing several more recent publications (141–48), including Inger Boberg's *Motif Index of Early Icelandic Literature* (Bibliotheca Arnarnagæana 27, 1966) and Sveinsson's own "Celtic Elements in Icelandic Tradition" (*Béaloideas* 25, 1957). The remaining parts 2–4 of the book are much more informative for the English-speaking reader who is not familiar with the Icelandic original. The author himself emphasizes the new direction taken in this portion of the book: "We now turn," he says, "completely to Iceland, and consider in greater detail how Icelandic folk-stories originated, from what materials they were built and in what way they were transmitted" (69–70). His first step in the realization of this plan is appropriately an account of the relevant sources that he describes in chronological order, beginning with poems before the age of writing began in Iceland. In these, material is to be found that relates to later stories and legends. These preliterate poetic sources were followed by manuscripts from the twelfth century onward that also reflected an ongoing oral tradition. Sveinsson prefers, however, to divide this early age roughly into three substantial periods separated by significant events: Period I, from the beginning of settlement in Iceland about A.D. 900; Period II, from the victory of Christianity over paganism about A.D. 1000; and Period III, from the Icelanders' surrender of political independence in 1262–1264 to the beginnings of the Reformation in the sixteenth century (71). With regard to the actual material itself, he suggests the following principal categories for the tenth century: "myth," "heroic legends," "Viking stories," anecdotes and longer accounts of actual events, "folk-legends," "fantastic stories of Celtic origin," and "stories that have motifs in common with international wonder-tales of modern times"; he warns, however, that such clear-cut divisions are hardly sustainable. With regard to contents, there was apparently a large number of stories of ghosts and wizards in pagan Iceland, based on folk belief; these were supplemented by stories of dealings between humans and creatures of the other world. Apparently such creatures, as well as spirits of various kinds, only mattered when they came into contact with human beings, inhabiting their territory with them or intruding into it.

One cannot help wondering whether modern Icelandic scholars still hold the same views about the infiltration of Celtic stories into, among others, the Icelandic *fornaldar sögur*, the "sagas of ancient times," but nobody would, of course, deny their presence and the close connections of Iceland with the Hebrides, which were fought for and settled by north incomers shortly before, and during, the Scandinavianization of Iceland. It is also only to be expected that some early local and historical legends, place-name anecdotes, and wonder tales were woven into the written sagas and even into the *Landnámabók*, the "historical" record of the Norse settlement of Iceland, and the sagas of the bishops. Sveinsson's account of the sources from which a great variety of folk stories

may be recovered bears witness to his extensive and detailed knowledge of their full range, and he informs us about their characteristics and usefulness from the late Middle Ages right to the early nineteenth century, ending part 2 of his book with special sections on Jón Árnason and Magnús Grímsson, the two influential Icelandic folklore collectors, on inventories of "Collections of Folk-stories and Folklore" (141–46), "A selective list of works largely derived from oral tradition" (146–47), and a "Bibliography of Scholarly Study" (147–48). The inventory is an expanded version of Sveinsson's own much shorter list of 1940, since, as the editors point out, "in the latter part of the twentieth century an enormous amount of scholarly and popular work appeared" (149). English-speaking readers will therefore now enjoy the benefit of a guide that may not have been available in this extended form to an Icelandic audience, for whom this book was originally intended. Although, more often than not, ultimately from oral tradition, the versions of folk narratives teased from early sources are, of course, in written form, and it is therefore very useful for us to have a separate list of works directly derived from oral/aural originals, as well as the sections on their conduits Jón Árnason and Magnús Grímsson. For Icelanders, probably even more than for foreigners, Sveinsson's presentation of the impressive number of sources for folk stories is bound to have been at the time gratifying in their richness and variety, perhaps even unsuspected, and part 2 of the book fulfilled a special mission in that respect.

In parts 3 and 4 Sveinsson arrows in on two particular folk-narrative genres, legends and wonder tales. As the title of part 3, "Folk-Belief and Folk-Legends," shows, he insists on an intimate connection between legends and belief systems, a link that has continued to be made in general legend research to the present day (see most recently Linda Dégh's book *Legend and Belief* [Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001]). Deriving his information about Icelandic folk beliefs underlying the stories from Paula Catherine Maria Sluijter's *Ijslands volksge loaf* (1936), Sveinsson presents the earliest legends against the background of a natural landscape, inhabited by nonhuman, supernatural creatures, such as trolls, giants, elves, ghosts, and revenants, as well as being hospitable to magic powers and instances of second sight. Separate subsections are devoted to the large group of legends about the exploits of legendary outlaws and to accounts of historical events; in connection with the latter he raises the question of their historicity, a problem associated with this genre wherever it receives scholarly attention. Legends are also told about particular places in Iceland where accidents occurred or to which ancient beliefs have become attached. It is one of the essential characteristics of legends that a degree of believability is an important part of their telling, indeed of their entertainment value and challenge to the audience. One of the devices that shores up this credibility, if not their veracity, is their supposed setting in a verifiable and accessible place in the not too distant neighbor-

hood. While this is a general feature of legend-making anywhere, it seems to be especially abundant in the Icelandic legend inventory; even when they are concerned with named persons and historical events.

One would have been surprised if this locational quality were to be present to the same extent in the so-called wonder tales of part 4 (226–64) of the book. Sveinsson helps (English-speaking) readers by reminding them that the term *ævintýr*, used in Icelandic to depict such stories, is derived from Old French *aventure* (Latin *adventura*), and has come to refer to a strange or romantic event, or a story of such an event (226). English speakers know it, of course, as such offspring as “adventure” and “event” itself. It reached Iceland via Norway in the late thirteenth century and was used of fairly short, mostly fictional stories of realistic or supernatural subject matter. The term was used by Jón Árnason in 1860 to translate the German word *märchen*. In this he followed the example of Jón Sigurðsson, who, together with Jón Árnason, used *Alþýsusaga*, “story of the common people,” and with Guðbrandur Vigfússon, *þjóðsaga* for “folk-legend,” the latter a direct transfer of German *Volkssage*. I am including this synopsis of Sveinsson’s choice of term and the history behind it to illustrate how a concept in one language, German, had to be accommodated in another, Icelandic, something that has never been successfully accomplished in English, where *märchen* continues as a loan word (and loan concept) in scholarly jargon, is sometimes rendered “wonder tale” or magic tale, but has its popular reflex in “fairy tale” although there are hardly any fairies in the stories concerned, especially if they are derived from the Grimms. In the context of the book under review, we are in essence confronted with an English version of an Icelandic translation of a German term and concept.

In Sveinsson’s detailed description and interpretation of wonder tales in Iceland (part 4), there is a strong emphasis on the importation of stories from outside the country, frequently from Norway, which also served as a staging post for narratives from other, often faraway, parts of the world, although it is sometimes difficult to determine where analogues are to be found. Among the sources considered are the Celtic and classical cultures, and Sveinsson puts much stress on the fact that Icelanders were great travelers. In order to determine the length of time, from ancient times to quite recent periods, that wonder tales have been in Iceland, he uses a variety of criteria, including stylistic and linguistic features, contents and tones, as well as personal names. The likelihood that foreign stories entered Icelandic oral tradition is strong. A brief section of this portion of the book is devoted to saints’ legends, *Novellen*, and comic stories.

The final part of the book (part 5) bears the appropriate title “The World of Man and the Hidden World,” for it reflects on the landscape shared by human beings and supernatural creatures, and destined for interaction, both conflict

and more friendly encounter. In a sense it is a fuller display of the function of belief elements in Icelandic folk narrative, allowing Sveinsson to pass judgment on attitudes expressed in the sentence: “The inclination of this nation toward commonsense rationalism was an antidote to the chaos of the imagination” (313). Mingling actual narrative texts with interpretative commentaries, he draws attention to the sightings and sounds of elves, supernatural phenomena as the basis of folk stories, the cultivation of mutual gifts and of the second sight, the invention of stories to account for unusual actual occurrences, prophetic dreams, stories as wish fulfillment or as reactions to desires and fears or the effect of curses. Regarding folk stories as mirrors of rural life, the author puts it thus, not without a little element of pride: “The picture of Icelandic peasant life given by folk-stories is enormously varied and entertaining, and there is no other source richer in such material” (278).

Such a conclusion is presumably intended for both an Icelandic and an English-speaking readership, for in constructing (not just translating) an English version parallel to the Icelandic original, Sveinsson successfully reaches both the domestic audience and, especially in the later parts of the task, the foreigners. The result is a reminder of their heritage to his fellow countrymen and -women, and a revelation to the outsider. As somebody expressed it to me privately: “A great book by a great scholar.”

Reviewer’s acknowledgments: Heartfelt thanks are due to Benedikt Benedikz, Valdimar Tr. Hafstein, and Jacqueline Simpson, who provided me with important details about Sveinsson’s scholarly career and the making of the book under review. I apologize for not putting all of their information to good use.

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Types of the Folktale in the Arab World: A Demographically Oriented Tale-Type Index. By Hasan M. El-Shamy. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004. xxvii + 1,255 pp.

Popular Stories of Ancient Egypt. Edited by Gaston Maspero. Introduction by Hasan El-Shamy. ABC-CLIO Classic Folk and Fairy Tales. Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2002. div + 275 pp.

Once in a blue moon, a reviewer is privileged to receive for evaluation a work that in its sheer erudition and comprehensiveness is clearly destined immediately to become the major source text in its field. The name of Hasan El-Shamy is, of course, already well known in the field of folklore studies, but with this particular tome (and with its 1,255 pages and tiny print, it deserves that designation)—coupled with his previous and already much utilized two-volume

study, *Folk Traditions of the Arab World: A Guide to Motif Classification* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995)—he has now presented the field of Arabic studies in general and folklore studies in particular with a major source that will remain the primary resort of scholars for years to come. And in a persuasive demonstration of the inevitably continuing nature of the huge project represented by this wealth of information, he even includes an “addendum” (1254–55) in which he details an “additional tale-type” to add to the enormous list that he has already compiled.

The starting point for the research reflected in this volume and the huge collection of data that it contains is the well-known categorization of folktales, the Aarne-Thompson type index (as contained in *The Types of the Folktale: A Classification and Bibliography*, 1964). El-Shamy prints those categories on page xxv of the reviewed volume and then goes on to note that “the absence of numerous subdivisions from the table of contents reduces a researcher’s ability to locate the narrative category relevant to the data treated.” Pages xxvi and xxvii proceed to provide such a subdivided listing of the same categories. It is at the very bottom of page xxvii that El-Shamy comes to a crucial point in his research agenda, namely the Euro-centric nature of the data, which, as a result, is not “always successful in relating Middle Eastern and Arabic tales to the proper tale-type.” Whence, needless to say, the importance of his research that has resulted in this set of volumes.

The listing of tales and tale types follows the prefatory material that has just been described. It uses the basic categories of the Aarne-Thompson system: animal tales, ordinary folktales, jokes and anecdotes, formula tales, and unclassified tales. However, within each category, tales of Middle Eastern provenance are categorized by the region from which they come. There are no fewer than 2,412 separate entries (1–977). The list of categories is followed by a truly comprehensive bibliography, including manuscript and archival materials. However, what makes this volume such an essential reference work is that in addition to the wealth of information within each entry, the entire contents are further referenced by no less than six separate indexes: register of tale types (995–1034), a list of changed tale-type numbers (that is, changed from both their numbering in the Aarne-Thompson index and El-Shamy’s earlier work, *The Types of the Folktale*, pg. 1035), register of motifs (1037–1202), index of authors and sources (1203–14), register by (Middle Eastern) country (1215–18), and tale-type subject index (1219–53).

This massive undertaking is preceded by an introduction (ix–xix), which is given the significant subtitle “Rationale for this demographically oriented tale-type index” (subsequently abbreviated as “DOTTI-A”). The author-compiler begins by identifying the principal features of the folktale and of its study; he emphasizes the nature of folklore as behavior and goes on to note that a work

such as the one he is undertaking “must allow for interdisciplinary interpretations of the myriad of folkloric phenomena manifested in the tales” (ix). As if one needed any evidence of how that list of agenda is carried out, the section “Note on Data Presentation” (xx-xxiv) should suffice to demonstrate the richness of these “interpretations.” A further subsection of this introduction discusses previous scholarship in the field, including the now incredible notion advanced by earlier scholars that Arabs and other Semites had no magic tales, because they “lacked the intellectual and artistic talents necessary to create and retain *Märchen*” (xii). The author goes on to point out how little attention was paid to Middle Eastern sources within the scholarly community of folklorists in the Western world and how little cross-cultural analysis was involved. For the remainder of this insightful introduction the author gives specific details about his methodology and systems of classification. In a word, this introduction is not only extremely informative on both the diachronic and synchronic levels, but is also essential as a guide to the uses of the wealth of information that follows.

The sheer breadth and depth of the tale-type index itself defies summarization, and I do not intend to attempt such a task. I merely conclude by urging all scholars who are interested in the Middle East—whatever their discipline—to make full use of this enormous contribution to scholarship as a means of gaining insight into a tradition of long standing and enormous regional variety, one that has had and continues to have a major impact on the lives of all the inhabitants of the Middle East region and thus to affect the ways in which research in all disciplines is conducted. It only remains to note that the preparation of this volume is in every way excellent; as noted above, the print is very small, but the amount of information contained within the two covers clearly demands such economy in a one-volume work.

El-Shamy has also applied his expertise in categorizing tales to a collection of ancient Egyptian narratives collected by the renowned Egyptologist Gaston Camille Charles Maspero (1846–1916), who served as director of the Boulaq (now Egyptian) Museum in Cairo from some twenty years off and on, starting in 1881. This anthology first appeared in 1882, and in response to public demand there were three further French editions and an English translation in 1915. The current English version consists of twenty-four narratives, including complete cycles and other fragmentary tales. With his habitual thoroughness, El-Shamy provides readers of this new edition of the 1915 English translation by A. S. Johns with a history of Maspero’s text, a discussion of the genres of narrative, and then a register of the tale types according, once again, to the Aarne-Thompson system (xxxiii-lxxxvii).

Here too we have a successful wedding of the folkloric tradition of a Middle Eastern country, in this case with the additional dimension of extreme antiquity, and of the rigorously theoretical system of analysis developed within

the contemporary field of folklore studies. This study is published in what is obviously a series (edited by Jack Zipes) with the very highest artistic standards of production. The volume is handsome from every point of view, matching thereby the quality of the scholarship contained within its covers.

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Return to Culture: Oral Tradition and Society in the Southern Cook Islands.
By Anna-Leena Siikala and Jukka Siikala. *FF Communications Vol. 136, No. 287.*
Helsinki: Academia Scientiarum Fennica, 2005. 327 pp.

What is the significance of oral tradition in Pacific Islands culture? How integrated is oral tradition into life in the Cook Islands? To what extent does a theoretical understanding of oral tradition practices enable an analytic understanding of social action, political structure, narrative practices, and the cultural milieu of the southern Cook Islanders? In this book the collaborative approach between a folklorist (Anna-Leena Siikala) and an anthropologist (Jukka Siikala) situates these questions in an empirical analysis of the processes of identity formation of the people of Ma'uke and Ātiu through customary discursive practices.

Not satisfied to regard the past as past, but implicitly recognizing that “folklore” is a non-omnibus discipline suffering an epistemological crisis, the Siikalas adopt something equivalent to a European philological approach combining it with a multilocal, multivocal anthropological methodology. Both authors recognize that the process of cultural representation is now inescapably contingent, historical, and contestable and that social actors are in constantly changing social situations. Building on the Siikalas’ deep-rooted field experience in the Cook Islands, their extensive archival research at the National Archives in Rarotonga and in Australia, and their knowledge of the academic debates in New Zealand and Hawai‘i, this book is the compendium of a number of articles and papers earlier published by the authors since the 1990s (13).

At first glance, the soft cover and title page lead one to believe that this is a communication edited for the folklore fellows. Similarly, somehow misleading is the photo on the dust jacket taken by the author (Jukka Siikala), whose caption reads: “Local produce for sale in Rarotonga.” Nevertheless, this compendium translates into a properly structured scholarly work, whose objective is forthrightly stated by the authors in the introduction: “[We] both aim at analyzing the underlying cultural patterns that generate oral traditions and inform the dynamics of the society” (19). This interdisciplinary effort allows Anna-Leena Siikala to attend the nature of oral traditions and the related problems of performance and interpretation, while Jukka Siikala analyzes the issues of the Cook Islands’ social organization and their dynamics.

Believing that the binary and ubiquitous opposition of “We” and “the Other” shows internal inconsistency, Jukka Siikala argues that the ethnographic discussion presented in the book “attempts to highlight the two-sidedness of the project of defining culture and how images of the self are produced on the basis of a multiplicity of imageries derived through encounters with others” (23). His argument proceeds to note that the dialogic process of folklore documentation “was not based on distantiating and exoticism” (25), as he could evince from the islanders’ early interest in an epistemological understanding of their own genealogical traditions and practices. Echoing Franz Boas’s methodology and the examples conserved in the Finnish folklore archives, the genealogical materials collected are presented as avulse of any ethnographic distortions. The result, Jukka Siikala explains, “is not a textualisation of a single speech event, but ‘*are vananga*, ‘the house of talk,’ which contains the *summa totius cosmologiae* of the culture, in other words, literature, whatever physical form it takes” (36).

Anna-Leena Siikala’s engaging writing reformulates Jukka Siikala’s introductory argument that in one sense all culture is tradition and all cultural activities are creative and inventive (18), specifying that this “creating” or “inventing” tradition concerns both the outsiders’ intellectual and political work and the insiders’ efforts toward a renewal of the traditional elements of their own culture and identity (41). In other words, traditions may be constructions, selections, or inventions, but not just *any* construction. Traditions selected for revival are cultural phenomena that have ideological value in the negotiation of identity. Traditions, she explains, are legitimated and authenticated by the process of their use.

Why is it so difficult to understand the narratives of other cultures? (51). Anna-Leena Siikala, after Michael Silverstein and Greg Urban, responds to the questions of textualization and entextualization showing how the natives recontextualize some of their knowledge to create a shareable, transmittable culture. In the Cook Islands the *korero* tradition represents people’s understanding of their history (49), “the speech of the ancestors” (52), where oral narratives maintain a role that is totally different from the Western concept of heritage. Each tribe or lineage had its own specialist for traditions (*tumu korero*), whose main responsibility was the preservation of tribal genealogical histories, historical narratives, and mythical traditions, as in other Pacific Islands’ cultures.

Through an analysis of nineteenth-century archival material (including works from Stephen Savage, William Wyatt Gill, Isiraela Tama, and Te Ariki-Tara-Are) and cosmogonic genealogies, the Siikalas show how *korero* is metadiscursively defined mainly as discourse about origins. In this sense, genealogies represent a metonymic relationship “where past and present, in turn, emphasize the analogical relations between certain events of the past and certain

events of the present” (61). The *korero* forms a field of discourse with political, economic, social, and religious values, where understanding a narrative is a multidimensional process of interpretation.

In the second part of the book the Siikalas guide the reader into the horizontal dimension of the habitus of the *tumu korero* and their relationship to tradition, performative skills, spatial memory, and the importance of naming and transforming sacred places and cult sites into landmarks in time and space, real “monuments of island history” (131). The most relevant narratives appear to be those occupying the Maussian space of reciprocal social relations, where food often becomes a metaphor of position and rank.

The long-lasting fieldwork of Anna-Leena and Jukka Siikala in the southern Cook Islands emphasizes how variation should be examined in a wider perspective by illustrating all the factors influencing the life of oral discourse. After James Clifford’s *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century*, the authors remind the reader that the fieldworker has to move and the field site could be found in a “hotel lobby, urban café, ship or bus” (264). Both authors skillfully contextualize philosophical borders and horizons within the indigenous narratives and sensual geography (cf. Mau’ke’s “navel of the world”). The book advances the goals of contemporary ethnography in the Pacific in several ways. A topic like *korero* penetrates deeply into the ethnographic reality being studied, and at the same time it reduces the distance between the reader’s world and that being described.

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La Fiaba di Tradizione Orale. By Giuseppe Gatto. Milan: Edizioni Universitarie di Lettere Economia Diritto, 2006. 230 pp.

Giuseppe Gatto’s compact but thorough exploration of how scholars have tried to wrest meaning from the magical subgroup of ordinary folktales, ATU 300–749, also suggests why these stories are so central to many European, African, and Asian cultures, and now to global mass-mediated culture—a “why” bound inextricably to the intuitive brilliance and imaginative failures of those scholars.

Gatto divides his book into “Aspects of the Tale,” “The Tale: Documentation and Study,” and “Texts.” None of these sections is exhaustive, but they are convincingly representative. Gatto first introduces Venetian, Scottish, Russian, Sicilian, Emilian, and Sardinian versions of ATU 709 (“Snow White”), and then he introduces the concept of tale type with a critical reminder: “The terms we are using —type, motif—are neither generic nor neutral, but rather have a precise history and methodological connotation” [*I termini che stiamo usando—tipo,*

motivo—non sono generici e nemmeno neutri, ma hanno una storia e una connotazione metodologica precisa (21)]. He follows with four Italian versions of ATU 300 (“The Dragon Slayer”), like “Snow White” one of global popular culture’s favorite folktale commodifications. These two tales echo explicitly and implicitly through Gatto’s study, from considerations specific to their gendered protagonists, to formal issues, to matters of performance.

Subsequent chapters in this section define broad concerns surrounding narrator-audience, narrator-text, formal characteristics, and transcription. Citing recent work by Bernadette Bricout (1987) and Maurizio Bettini (1998) as the latest elaborations on Milman Parry and Albert Lord’s pioneering oral formulaic theory and Richard Bauman’s performance theory, Gatto arrives at this eloquent summary: “One can speak of a theatricality of narrative, of a narration that is in reality a complex act, not simply a verbal one; an act, and not a performance, because a fundamental aspect of performance is missing, and that is the distinction between actors and spectators: here the spectators do not watch, but participate” [*Si può parlare di una teatralità del narrare, di una narrazione che in realtà è fatto complesso, non puro atto verbale; fatto, e non spettacolo, perché è assente un elemento fondamentale dello spettacolo, appunto la distinzione tra attori e spettatori: qui gli spettatori non assistono, ma partecipano.* (35)]

The chapter on narrator-text notes that the narrator’s technique or “particolare tecnica combinatoria” (37) resembles Claude Levi-Strauss’s concept of bricolage in mythic thought. Gatto offers Fabiano Mugnaini’s recent fieldwork in Umbria (1999) as evidence for considering a particular narrator’s repertoire as hypertext. Nicole Belmont’s twenty-first-century reconsideration of the much-maligned tale type from a narrator’s perspective as a “narrative space, the area of admissible oscillation of a scenario” (38, paraphrasing Belmont, 2001) returns Gatto to that space’s first elaborated set of rules, Axel Olrik’s 1908 *Epic Laws of Oral Tradition*, which bulwarks the elaborate structural exploration to come.

A short chapter on formal issues places opening and closing formulas into their performance setting, noting the worldwide predominance of late evening for tale telling, formulaic opening exchanges between narrator and audience, and the impossible aspect of many openings (e.g., “Back when animals talked . . .”). Folklorists, however, have so focused on the folktale’s “negation of good sense” that they have systematically ignored the profound “tale truth” shielded by the opening formula’s disavowal of reality, Gatto argues (46). As for transcription, Gatto reminds us how much material still awaits (Mugnaini’s Tuscan fieldwork is a recent example), adding, however, that “narration as a collective act belongs to the past, and the descriptions we have are often fruit of a reconstruction along the thread of memory” [*la narrazione come fatto collettivo appartiene al passato, e le descrizioni che abbiamo sono spesso frutto di una ricostruzione sul filo della memoria*” (51)].

The book's central section, culminating in Vladimir Propp's intuitive prioritizing of function over type and his successors' elaborations and renunciations of structuralism, reveals what a dramatic tale is that of folkloristics itself. Even discredited theory still merits review for understanding how we have defined tales, it seems. The Grimms believed in their texts' "absolute faithfulness," for example, because they were driven by Herder's distinction between *Kunstpoesie* (artistic, individual poetry) and *Naturpoesie* (natural, communal poetry); so long as the true folktale was not clothed in the former, it was legitimate. Surely some contemporary storytellers on the folk revival circuit are still influenced by this distinction as they strive to define authenticity. Pierre Saintry's ritual theory, which, following on Andrew Lang's theory of ancient "survivals," asserted that these tales were ritual exegeses, like Max Müller's solar theory and Theodor Benfey's Indianism, looks laughably rigid now, its content analysis irrelevant thanks to its disregard for worldwide variants and performance context—but the crazy grandeur of these theories reflects the tales' own seeming universality.

Gatto helps readers consider consequences of large choices folklore study has made, a little like rash choices made in tales. What if it had not fallen into Linnaean step in the nineteenth century, attracting classifiers? More imaginably, what if it had not lagged thirty years in embracing an obscure, self-taught language of professor's intuitions that *functions*—actions considered from the viewpoint of their significance to the tale's plot—and not motifs are the tale's "true narrative atom" (135)? Sometimes Gatto states these choices explicitly, as in the first case; sometimes he leaves the question unanswered, as in the second. In that sense he does not push the cutting edge of folklore dialogue, but rather inspires students to apply some of that recent dialogue to their own studies.

Ironically, Propp the visionary is introduced via his later and more problematic *Historical Roots of Magical Tales*, a "fascinating" book in Gatto's opinion, marred like the English anthropological survivalists' work by its "rigid evolutionary nineteenth-century imprint" [*rigida impostazione evoluzionistica di stampo ottocentesco*] (96). Gatto saves his harshest indictment for Bruno Bettelheim, a favored whipping boy of contemporary folklorists. I find the case overstated. Bettelheim's illogic in asserting tales are products of infancy while acknowledging they were only marketed as such since the mid-nineteenth century seems not worse than Propp's illogic in the *Historical Roots*, where he fills his ostensibly scientific origins study of tales with "schematic and obviously arbitrary evolutionary series" [*serie evolutive schematiche e ovviamente arbitrarie*] (97). As for ignoring everything but the Grimms' collection, Bettelheim was in good contemporary company there, too.

Gatto conveys the drama of Propp's discovery of thirty-one functions and four types of tales in his groundbreaking 1928 *Morphology of the Folk*

Tale (those with only “combat-victory,” those with only “difficult task-execution of difficult task,” those with both, those with neither): “If we thus analyze the four types of tales, examining their functions we see they array along a single axis common to all, with two alternative blocks constructed from the two aforementioned pairs, which are both present in two-sequence tales. We must conclude from this the absolute uniformity of all tales; this, says Propp, is a completely unforeseen result” [“*Se cioè analizziamo le quattro specie di fiaba, esaminando le loro funzioni vediamo che si dispongono su un unico asse comune a tutte, con due blocche alternativi costituiti dalle due coppie suddette, che sono tutt’e due presente nella fiaba a due sequenze. Se ne deve concludere l’uniformità assoluta di tutte le fiabe; e questo è, dice Propp, un risultato del tutto inatteso*” (125)]. Propp’s most criticized idea was this “identical structure theory.” Gatto returns the reader to his initial variants of ATU 300 and 709 to test it, noting how the Russian Formalist distinction between “story” and “plot” does not really cover the fuzziness of Propp’s insistence on function order immutability in what he insisted on calling *plot*.

More dramatically, Propp’s formalism was indicted by his first cheerleader, Claude Lévi-Strauss, who charged Propp with concentrating on syntagmatic (i.e., chronological) analysis while ignoring the underlying paradigm. Gatto summarizes Bengt Holbek’s analysis of the almost tragic misunderstanding between Lévi-Strauss and Propp over whether the latter’s model was so abstract as to offer no insight into individual tale variants, a misunderstanding arising from the fact that “the former studies myths, which create our perception of the world, while the latter studies tales, which presuppose a preexisting and . . . incontestable world order” [“*il primo studia i miti, che creano la nostra percezione del mondo, mentre il secondo studia le fiabe, che presuppongono un ordine del mondo già esistente e . . . incontestabile*” (131)].

So much in folkloristics today grows from Propp’s insights, even his arguably faulty ones. Gatto explores how Claude Bremond (1964, 1966, 1977) problematized those insights, separating, for example, “the logical requirement that a function presumes its precedent (victory presumes a battle) from the cultural stereotype by which a function implies the succeeding one (in Russian tales battle implies victory)” [“*l’esigenza logica per cui una funzione presuppone la precedente (la vittoria presuppone la lotta) dallo stereotipo culturale per cui una funzione implica la successiva (nelle fiabe russe la lotta implica la vittoria)*” (136)]. Then he proceeds to Algirdas Greimas’s (1977) profound semiotic reduction of the tale’s syntagmatic structure to three “semic” function categories (contract, communication, test), in which only the third lacks a negative equivalent, making it the tale’s “irreducible diachronic nucleus” [“*nucleo diacronico irreducibile*” (141)].

Structuralism's modifications, narrative analysis based on real performance settings, and psychoanalytic insights all converge in Bengt Holbek's *Interpretation of Fairy Tales* (1987) imprimatured here and by Alan Dundes (1991) as the starting point for any new magical tale theory. Turning from Holbek's "grammar" of the tale to its "lexicon," Gatto maps the field's current hard ground: "The basic thesis is that symbolic elements . . . refer to the concrete reality of the narrator's and audience's direct experience; that these express affective reactions toward beings, objects, and events of the real world, organized in narrative sequences that allow narrators to treat community problems, hopes, and ideals in a veiled manner." [*La tesi fondamentale è che gli elementi simbolici . . . rinviano alla realtà concreta dell'esperienza diretta del narratore e del suo uditorio; che essi esprimono reazioni affettive agli esseri, oggetti, avvenimenti del mondo reale, organizzate in sequenze narrative che permettono ai narratori di trattare in modo velato problemi, speranze, ideali della comunità*] (158).]

Strikingly, Gatto does not identify the twenty-seven texts in part 3 by tale type, though an anchoring majority cluster around ATU 300 and 709, with nods to ATU 325 and 425, "The Sorcerer's Apprentice" and "Beauty and the Beast." One side effect of such an arrangement, this reviewer noticed, was to make structuralist and post-structuralist approaches to folktales more accessible: the student reader is required to consider narrative functions and axes especially in stories like ancient Egypt's "Story of Two Brothers," which threshed merely for tale types is an uninformative hodgepodge of ATU 302B ("Life Hangs from a Sword"), 303 ("The Two Brothers"), and 318 ("The Unfaithful Wife"), with a foreshadowing of ATU 410 ("Sleeping Beauty") and 530 ("The Princess on the Glass Mountain").

Also, an anchoring majority of texts in the first and last sections is Italian, mostly from nineteenth- and early twentieth-century regional collections, with a preponderance of contemporary Italian and other European fieldwork cited in the book's analytic sections. This does not seem to me a problem. Gatto never makes the mistake—as Propp did—of mistaking cultural stereotype for true tale function, but perhaps that is because he largely leaves the reader to try applying theory to these texts.

Some might find Gatto's big gaps in theory tracking less excusable than he does in his conclusion's summary of what he has ignored: thematic analyses, cross-cultural transcriptions, studies of feminist rewrites and other ideological or artistic uses of magical tales, and more. He has, however, fully explained the mechanisms of structural, performance-oriented, and psychological analysis that many would agree are the most meaningful vehicles for exploring these tales' magical terrain.

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The Arabian Nights and Orientalism: Perspectives from East and West. Edited by Yuriko Yamanaka and Tetsuo Nishio. With an introduction by Robert Irwin. London: I. B. Taurus, 2006. 269 pp.

This collection of essays is the product of one of the many conferences held in 2004 in commemoration of the three-hundredth anniversary of the publication of the first volume of Antoine Galland's translation. The conference was held in Osaka, Japan, and six of the essays were written by Japanese scholars, which makes this collection especially interesting; as Robert Irwin notes in his preface, the history of the *Nights* in Japanese culture complicates the notion of "Orientalism."

The essays are presented under three headings: "Motifs and Formulas," "Sources and Influences," and "Text and Image." Under the first heading are essays by Ulrich Marzolph, Hasan El-Shamy, Kathrin Muller, and Etsuko Aoyagi. Marzolph's essay, "The Arabian Nights in Comparative Folk Narrative Research," describes the influence of the *Nights* on "folk narrative research," and concludes with an eight-page index of the tale types in the major European translations. "Mythological Constituents of *Alf laylah wa laylah*," by Hasan El-Shamy, explores "some of the quasi-sacred (religious) and the quasi-historical components" found in a recent Arabic edition, which are again categorized according to the Aarne-Thompson indexes. Kathrin Muller's essay, "Formulas and Formulaic Pictures: Elements of Oral Literature in the *Thousand and One Nights*," describes three sorts of formulas: introductory, concluding, and transitional. The next essay, "Repetitiveness in the *Arabian Nights*: Openness as Self Foundation," by Etsuko Aoyagi, treats the same general issue but from a decidedly different perspective, a Derridean perspective on the relations between repetition and singularity.

The second part of the book, "Sources and Influences," begins with Yuriko Yamanaka's essay "Alexander in the *Thousand and One Nights* and the Ghazali Connection," which examines the often overlooked didactic tales in the *Nights*. Chapter 6, by Hideaki Sugita, reviews the history of Japanese translations of the *Nights*, all of them until recent years made from European editions. In the next chapter Tetsuo Nishio builds on this to examine Orientalism in Japan coming to the paradoxical conclusion that Japan took the *Nights* to be "a constituent part of European civilization."

The final section of the book is devoted to illustration of the *Nights*. In chapter 8 Kazue Kobayashi writes a survey of the entire history of *Nights*' illustration. He provides a chronological list of all the major illustrated editions of the *Nights* prior to World War II. Akiko Motoyoshi Sumi and Claus Cluver discuss how the frame tale is illustrated in three twentieth-century editions of the work, two of them French and one Japanese. The final chapter by Margaret Sironval considers the changing image of Shahrazad from Antoine Galland's

translation through the major nineteenth-century editions of Richard Burton and Edward Lane. Sironval discusses illustrations and musical representations; she argues that Shahrazad was not nearly as prominent as heroine in the first century of translations, and we may conclude that the changing status of women in European society had much to do with this.

As this summary should make clear, the book's title indicates only some of the topics covered by the ten essays, and as one might expect in such a volume, the essays not only take a number of different approaches but also have different aims. The essays by Marzolph, El-Shamy, Hideaki, and Kobayashi are surveys; that is, they aim less at breaking new ground than at summarizing past work, much of which will, nevertheless, be new to many or most readers. Each of these essays will be a useful tool for further research into their topics, and even as surveys they still contribute new insights into the multifarious literary phenomenon of the *Nights*. Marzolph, for example, points out that out of a total of some 550 tales in the major Arabic versions and European translations, less than a quarter "enjoy an international diffusion" according to Stith Thompson's *Motif-Index of Folk-Literature*. In other words, three quarters of the tales are unique to the medieval Arabic tradition—a fact that will only increase our esteem for the *Nights*. Though the essays by Hasan El-Shamy and Yuriko Yamanaka have quite different aims, they nevertheless help us to appreciate the disparate sources that the storytellers have mined to tell their tales. El-Shamy discusses tales that have ancestors in ancient Egyptian literature, while Yuriko traces the career of an anecdote about Alexander from classical Greek sources through the Alexander Romance into rabbinic literature then into Abu Hamid al-Ghazali, and finally into the *Nights*. Hideaki's account of Japanese translations of the *Nights* and their reception and influence also touches upon another remarkable aspect of the *Nights*, that the same work has been transformed so easily into both children's tales and pornography. Kobayashi, in his historical survey of the *Nights*' illustration, has some interesting things to say about the interaction and differences between these illustrations and Orientalist art. The various tables and chronologies no doubt took considerable labor to assemble, but in my own experience they are the sorts of tools that scholars will find useful for many years, constituting, as it were, maps for the vast geography of the *Nights*.

Besides lovers of the *Nights*, this book may be of interest to at least three other types of people: those with an interest in comparative folklore, those with an interest in illustration, and those with an interest in Orientalism—the ironies of Orientalism in Japan are particularly interesting. More than that, the accounts of the *Nights* in Japan and the engagement of Japanese scholars with this work demonstrate again the vast appeal of the *Nights*: in his preface Robert Irwin speaks of "Orientalism and globalization." Certainly the rapidity with

which Galland's translation made its way first throughout Europe, and soon enough around the world, as well as the ease with which it was transformed into versions as various as cheap Grub Street editions, children's literature and pornography show how the career of *Nights* is also emblematic of that latter phenomenon. Long before Coca-Cola or Clint Eastwood movies, the *Nights* proved to be a commodity that could be adapted to almost any taste.

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Recycling Red Riding Hood. By Sandra L. Beckett. New York: Routledge, 2002. xxii + 362 pp.

Sandra L. Beckett's *Recycling Red Riding Hood* is a study of intertextuality in children's literature. Working from her personal collection of "well over two hundred retellings from twenty countries in twelve languages" (xix), and focusing on "the narrative strategies" used by contemporary authors and illustrators to retell "Little Red Riding Hood" for children and young adults (xx), Beckett describes in detail an impressive international array of books that textually or pictorially evoke, reinterpret, recontextualize, and retell "Little Red Riding Hood." For this book, Beckett has limited her study to "retellings of Perrault's and the Grimms' literary tales," specifically, to books published since 1970, which is good because, even within this frame, she works with a dizzyingly rich array of texts, most of which have not been translated into English and are thus, as she explains, generally "unknown in the English-speaking world" (xviii-xix).

Most children in Europe or European-derived cultures know some version of "Little Red Riding Hood," though, as Beckett notes, it is "often a sanitized version that frequently combines elements from both [Perrault's and the Grimms'] tales" (xvii). Thus, as "part of the literary heritage of almost every child in the Western world," "Little Red Riding Hood" allows authors and illustrators of children's books to pursue forms of postmodern aesthetic experimentation that are more often reserved for adult literature (xx). "Contemporary retellings of *Little Red Riding Hood*," as Beckett initially explains and then illustrates throughout her study, "often use complex narrative structures and techniques, such as polyfocalization, genre blending, metafiction, parody, irony, *mise en abyme*, fragmentation, gaps, anticlosure, and the carnivalesque" (xx). In the process, authors and illustrators have created a running dialogue about the process of storytelling while recycling the tale to address topics ranging from "contemporary preoccupations" with "technology, ecology, animal rights, physical fitness and well-being, seniors, the physically challenged, and gender issues" to "sexuality and violence" (xx).

Beckett divides her description and analysis into eight chapters ("Reminiscence and Allusion," "Retelling Images," "Fractured Fairy-Tale Games,"

“Upside Down, Inside Out, and Backwards,” “Continuations and Post-LRRH Stories,” “Metafictive Play,” “Fairy-Tale Salads,” and “Expansion”). Her study begins with books that make brief allusions to “Little Red Riding Hood” and then moves toward and concludes with books that are “lengthy expansions” of the tale “in novel form” (xx). For example, in chapter 1, “Reminiscence and Allusion,” she explores a wide range of books in which “Little Red Riding Hood” as pre-text “never become[s] entirely transparent and certainly never approach[es] direct citation,” but is nonetheless playfully evoked: Philippe Coretin’s *L’ogre, le loup, la petite fille et le gâteau* (1995), Christian Bruel and Didier Jouault’s *Rouge, bien rouge* (1986), Tord Nygen’s *Den röda tråden* (1978), Mitsumasa Anno’s *Tabi no ehon* (1977), Elsa Devernois’s *Grosse peur pour Bébé-Loup* (1997), Sharon Jennings’s *Jeremiah and Mrs. Ming* (1990), Fam Ekman’s *Lommetørkleet* (1999), Anthony Browne’s *The Tunnel* (1980), Rascal Nicolas de Crécy’s *La nuit du grand méchant loup* (1998), Hervé Debry’s *Rock ’n loup* (1999), Monique Bermond’s *Pouchi, Poucha et le gros loup du bois* (1976), and Jostein Gaarder’s *Sofies verden* (1991). The book’s description and analysis then builds toward its final focus (in chapter 8, “Expansion”) on two novel-length treatments of the tale, which, among other things, “deal with the themes of terrorism and freedom” (300): Gillian Cross’s *Wolf* (1990) and Carmen Martín Gaité’s *Caperucita en Manhattan* (1990).

Between the first and last chapters, Beckett, in response to Jack Zipes’s call for “a complete reexamination of the illustrations” associated with retellings of “Little Red Riding Hood” (29), analyzes the various ways in which illustrators and author-illustrators (for example, John Goodall, Kelek, Warja Lavater, James Marshall, Beni Montresor, Sarah Moon, O’KIF, Tony Ross, and William Wegman) have visually retold the story using a wide range of media: “oil, water-colour, pencil, ink, charcoal, pastel, crayon, photography, collage, textile, cut silhouettes, and varying combinations of these” (29). Particularly interesting are her discussions of how contemporary illustrators have playfully evoked the images of earlier illustrators (those of Gustave Doré and Walter Crane) as well as those of other contemporary illustrators and of the extent to which a quite different story may be told in the illustrations than is told in the verbal text.

Additionally, Beckett draws heavily on Gianni Rodari’s *Grammatica della fantasia* (*The Grammar of Fantasy*, 1973) in order to analyze the various ways authors have written and illustrated new versions of the tale so as to “stimulate children’s creativity and imagination” (69). For example, Beckett discusses a number of books in which authors substitute alternative colors (little blue, green, yellow, or black riding hood) for the color “red” that is normally associated with the story and, thus, deliberately mistell the story as a means of opening the child’s imagination to further subversive, textual play. To much the same purpose, others invert gender roles (for example, Little Red Riding Hood may

be bad, and the wolf may be good). Some authors begin their stories with one of the traditional endings for the tale and proceed to narrate what happened after that, in the process not only telling new or revised versions of the tale, but also calling into question the very idea of narrative closure. Others explore reflexivity by writing tales in which “the characters are familiar with their own stories and quite conscious of the roles they are playing” (216). And yet others create stories that are a bricolage of fairy-tale characters, plots, and motifs reworked into a new, coherent whole. To name just some of the authors whose books Beckett discusses, one might note Janet and Allan Ahlberg, Allan Baillie and Jonathan Bentley, Chico Buarque, Carles Cano, Jean Claverie, Roald Dahl, Fam Ekman, José Luis García Sánchez and Miguel Fernández-Pacheco, Pierre Gripari, Janosch, Patricia Joiret, Boris Moissard, Bruno Munari, Finn Øglænd, Geoffroy de Pennart, Yvan Pommaux, John Prater, Martie Preller, Antonio Robles, Grégoire Solotareff, Tomi Ungerer, and Ivo de Wijs.

Recycling Red Riding Hood records the exuberance with which an international array of contemporary authors and illustrators of children’s books have retold “Little Red Riding Hood.” As Beckett notes, “Little Red Riding Hood [is] an inveterate globetrotter, . . . inspiring intriguing new retellings not only throughout Europe, but from Australia to Japan and Columbia to Canada” (xviii). My reaction, upon having finished reading the book, was overwhelmingly, “Wow, I had no idea!” I had no idea of the breadth of children’s books that allude to or retell “Little Red Riding Hood,” and I had no idea that intertextual play was so common or could be so complicated in children’s literature. Beckett’s book is a welcome addition not only to fairy-tale scholarship, but also to the study of intertextuality and postmodernist play, whether that play is textual or pictorial.

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Diario di un gatto con gli stivali. By Roberto Vecchioni. Torino: Einaudi, 2006. 166 pp.

The “Diary of a Puss in Boots” is the latest, only partially successful play by an Italian author using story elements from fairy tales and popular romance. Roberto Vecchioni, born in 1943 in Milan, is known to the Italian public as a *cantautore*, a writer and singer of songs (*canzoni*) musically arranged and performed by himself. His *canzoni d'autore* are first and foremost engagements with the complicated—and frequently dramatic—political, social, and cultural history of Italy since the 1970s; on the one hand close to genuine folksongs, the study of which was reinvigorated in this period by intellectuals and anthropologists, they are, on the other hand, related to the commercial *canzoni* showcased in particular by the Sanremo Festival. Both narrative types have

seismically registered and accompanied the ongoing changes of the Italian way of life. Thus, Vecchioni is part of a small group of scholarly *cantautori* whose lyrics often interweave literary quotations, making the texts at their best (as with Fabrizio de André) genuine poetry, or literature, respectively.

Educated in the classics and then teaching Greek and Latin at various schools in Milan, Vecchioni began his literary career in 1983 with a Milan publishing house. Since 1996 his works have been edited by Einaudi, the prominent Turin publisher that has also produced his latest book. Emerging in connection with his musical work, the latter contains, on the one hand, fifteen stories or tales that are partly rewritings of well-known fairy stories, and, on the other, an extended spy or detective story about the death of Cinderella. Five of the fifteen fairy texts were published in 2005 on a CD, together with a booklet (*Il contastorie* [The (fairy-)tale teller]). He has recited them live in concert as a frame to his songs.

In the prologue Vecchioni expounds his literary ambitions, which he then, however, only partially fulfills: in re-creating and rewriting the fairy tales, he attempts to question these well-known stories in order to foreground that since every tale supposedly always includes its opposite, “Nothing appears as it is” (3). This also makes for the title of the first story from the first section, which together with the last story (with a slightly altered title) forms a kind of frame. In “Niente è come appare” (“Nothing is what it appears to be”) the main character is a fairy-tale teller, appearing one winter afternoon in the light cone of a streetlamp—just like a singer on the stage of a darkened theater; soon gathering around him is a group of children who have been playing outside and are eager to hear his tales. These, however, do not always speak the truth, as the protagonist affirms, because the first one to recount the tales told them as he thought best, and no one since had dared to alter them (8). To confirm this claim, he retells the story of Little Red Riding Hood (adapting the Grimms’ version). He changes its logic in order to account for animal-rights activists, environmentalists, and dramatic daily-news coverage (*cronaca nera*). “Who really killed the grandmother?” Vecchioni’s storyteller asks. No longer the wolf, a docile animal possessing riches and here made out to be the victim of a tyrannical, attention-seeking girl always dressed in red. Together with her friend, a hunter (a poacher), she plans to kill the grandmother and blame the murder on the wolf, hence killing two birds with one stone: to gain the wolf’s riches as well as the inheritance of the old woman, who is represented as miserly.

The narrator explicitly omits how the children responded to the new version of the fairy tale. Their not participating in the next round of storytelling, however—as the final story reveals (“Niente appare com’è” [“Nothing appears the way it is”])—is a clear indication of their skepticism toward such experiments. This might be attributed in part also to the narrator’s physical appear-

ance. With his coat collar open and hood pulled down to his eyes, without completely hiding his hairy face, the narrator awaits the arrival of the children in vain, but nonetheless seems totally content with his lack of success. Removing his wolf mask, he reveals his true face: the Bertoldo trickster scam penned by the Italian Giulio Cesare Croce smiles gladly at “the children living only off of fairy tales without believing in the world’s lies” (96).

Although the reader will be irritated with whether the rewritings offered here aren’t confoundingly similar to the aforementioned “lies of the world,” the narrative machine has been set in motion, thus evoking suspenseful anticipation of new, if not credible, then at least fascinating truths to be unveiled from these well-known tales. Unfortunately, these reworked narratives—despite their eminently readable, sometimes even poetic style—fail to investigate the truth of the fairy tales or to lend their characters a historical profile, thereby giving them a fresh lease on life. The redistribution of good and evil is unconvincing. What principles govern these refashionings of the fairy stories? An altered, unexpected ending, for instance, is meant to provide new form and content to three of the best known of Hans Christian Andersen’s tales. In “Beyond the Courtyard” (“Oltre il cortile”; cf. Hans Christian Andersen’s “The Ugly Duckling”) the duckling finally is not transformed into a swan, but learns to accept itself the way it is. In “Distant Love” (“Amore da lontano;” cf. “The Tin Soldier”), the dancer does not dive into the oven, where a child’s hand has thrown the tin soldier. The latter, however, is convinced of her whispered vows of love. In “Matches and Candles” (“Fiammiferi e candele”; cf. Hans Christian Andersen’s “The Little Match Girl”), the dukedom of Wunterbürg is governed by a despotic grand duke where the poor grow poorer and the rich richer. The first strikes among the proletariat fail to improve the social situation. The small, poor match girl—a terrorist anarchist—finally offers a “candle” to the grand duke riding in his coach, thereby blowing up him and his entourage.

The provocative technique of the altered, surprising ending completes the other modifications. The effect, though, is seldom ironic or witty, but mostly disappointing and banal. In “After Snow White” (“Dopo Biancaneve”), concerned with what happens after the wedding of Snow White and her prince, the latter declares to a friend, Gustav, his homosexual love, while the tale’s heroine is portrayed as a dull and frigid bride. In “Diary of a Puss in Boots” (“Diario di un gatto con gli stivali”), the tomcat narrates from his journal a week in June 1317 when he helped his hero to gain a fortune. Here, however, it is not the youngest son marrying the princess, but the second-born, who usurps his younger brother’s place after the latter drowns while bathing just as the king and his retinue are passing by. In “The Fairest of the Realm” (“La più bella del reame”), Grimhilde, grown bitter about her lost beauty and the forlorn love of her Leopold, seeks to take Snow White’s life in order to protect her from the

ravages of time and a fate similar to her own. But Leopold returns to Grimhilde, whom he had never stopped loving. A positive ending seems imminent, with the evil queen coming to terms with growing old and time and beauty passing. But ultimately her sole interest is in her beauty, which she wants back. With a dagger in hand and evil intentions, she enters Snow White's chamber, and so on and so forth.

The narrator continues playing with fairy-tale characters and stories in the book's extensive detective story as well. Here we are told about the murder of Cinderella, long after she had married her prince. Again, the reader's expectations are meant to be shattered—the murderer is the detective—or maybe not, after all?

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***Spinning Straw into Gold: What Fairy Tales Reveal about the Transformations in a Woman's Life.* By Joan Gould. New York: Random House, 2006. 342 pp.**

Gould's book is a praiseworthy contribution to the manner in which fairy tales provide us with an understanding of women from both an existential and a developmental perspective. In addition to a discussion on fairy tales and myths, the book presents a wide variety of characters—heroines from modern literature, movies, and television programs, as well as real women, both famous and anonymous. All of these come together to form a corpus of rich and diverse narratives through which Gould presents the transformative nature of women. The in-depth treatment of women's daily experiences is integrated with an expansive knowledge of the fairy-tale genre.

One of the book's central arguments maintains that women's developmental path is essentially different from that of men's. Therefore, fairy tales with female protagonists differ from those that focus on the hero's narrative. For example, the discussion of "Snow White" emphasizes separation from the mother. Whereas heroes leave home for adventure's sake, when the heroine leaves home one central developmental challenge is related to attachment issues. In these cases, it is the evil mother who serves as a trigger that encourages the heroine to achieve the next stage of sexual development.

In the discussion of "Sleeping Beauty" Gould presents the different functions of *sleep*. While for men, being asleep represents a potential danger, for women, sleep, like pregnancy, represents quality time, which replenishes the heroine and allows her to go on. Regarding continuous sleep, Gould rejects feminist claims that it symbolizes passivity and rather describes it as part of women's multifaceted existence. This claim is a connecting thread, which runs through the entire book. Moreover, Gould rejects the idea that marriage, as the ultimate solution, is a purely masculine claim. She suggests viewing marriage

the way one views heaven: we cannot be sure that it truly exists, and yet we must believe that it can.

By presenting examples from daily life and related to women's experiences, Gould maps out the complex process of the development of the feminine consciousness. She avoids the trap of perceiving fairy-tale characters as if they were simply characters. Instead, she invites us to perceive them as also representing different aspects of the heroine's psyche, thereby accurately conveying the symbolic nature of fairy tales.

Gould's work effectively integrates literary, gender-oriented, and psychological as well as historical approaches to fairy tales, taking into account the existence of stepmothers during a time when women were married off at a young age to older, widowed men. This results in a compelling integration that touches upon the great relevance of fairy tales in the real lives of actual women.

Certain feminists see Cinderella, like Snow White, as being a passive heroine who fails to take charge of her own life and expects to be saved by a prince. According to Gould, quite the opposite is true—Cinderella is much more independent than her stepsisters. It is not the prince who saves her, but rather the way in which she becomes aware of her own femininity, with the help of her fairy godmother.

Gould incorporates the approaches of prominent psychoanalysts, such as Bruno Bettelheim and Erich Neumann, takes them one step further, and refers to insights that arise from the stories within the framework of modern reality by relating the stories to the personal narratives of various women, both fictional and real. For example, in the discussion of "Sleeping Beauty," Gould presents variations of sleep in modern society—addictions, eating disorders, and depression—and discusses them through the lens of the real-life stories of different women. This blend of old stories, ancient myths, and modern daily experiences emphasizes the validity of messages hidden in fairy tales and creates a living bond between women's experiences, past and present. Although some of these ideas are not new, the way they are interwoven with concrete reality provides us with an illuminating and refreshing reading.

An especially important part of the book is the one that addresses motherhood. In the discussion of "The White Bride and the Black Bride" Gould relates to the feminine aspects undermining a woman's role as wife and mother and her striving to express other parts of herself. This part of a woman is often expressed by negative, aggressive, and conflicting attitudes toward motherhood. Here, too, Gould compares fairy-tale characters to women existing outside the world of fairy tales—from the Talmudic Lilith to career women from everyday life. This section is a significant contribution to the ongoing discussion on feminism and motherhood. The discussion of "The Seal Wife" describes the longing of a mother for her past life and, more importantly, attempts to

illustrate women's ability to live a double life and undergo transformation—not as a masculine fantasy, but rather as a feminine existential state.

The last part of the book, which deals with the aging process, presents an interesting treatment of "Hansel and Gretel," by adopting the point of view of the witch, who represents death. In contrast to Bettelheim's approach, which tells the story from the child's point of view, Gould focuses on the feminine viewpoint. Although for the most part Gould accepts Bettelheim's ideas, she doesn't try to romanticize women's developmental journey. Quite to the contrary, she painstakingly illustrates the difficulties, conflicts, and threats encountered at different points along the path to womanhood. However, she also makes it clear that the goal is not merely to achieve happiness or pleasure, but rather growth and development. In this, the book is an important contribution to how women and femininity are perceived in fairy tales. Women, in all of their differences, are perceived not as objects, drawn according to masculine wishes and desires, but rather as subjects who experience and understand from a feminine perspective. One of the most important experiences is the transformational nature of women at different periods throughout their lives.

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Diana Wynne Jones: Children's Literature and the Fantastic Tradition. By Farah Mendlesohn. New York: Routledge, 2005. 240 pp.

Farah Mendlesohn's book is the first thorough study of Diana Wynne Jones's criticism and fantasy fiction for young readers. Mendlesohn's readings are aimed at presenting "not so much what Jones writes about . . . but *how* she writes about it" (xiii). Such a focus does enable Mendlesohn to avoid the entanglement in the thematic multiplicity of possible interpretations of Jones's works and to reveal instead a far more fascinating dimension of her output as a consistent critical response to fantasy, which makes this "writer of fiction for children . . . so important to critics of the fantastic" (xiv).

In the introductory part of her study, Mendlesohn contextualizes Jones among other English and American fantasy authors, both classical and contemporary. She also characterizes main metafictional strands that are recurrent in Jones's work, such as the author's concept of heroism and the female hero, her approach to myth, or her awareness of constant effacement of the border between fantasy and science fiction. Already at this point Mendlesohn's argument convincingly shows that for Jones "fantasy is less the subject matter than the tool" (xxix). Well reasoned, in my view, is also Mendlesohn's discussion of her own concept of fantasy and its generic variations. Equally persuasive in their clarity are the interpretative criteria proposed by Mendlesohn: the manner in which a text emerges as fantastic, the implications this process has for the

reader's role in this text, and how this quality affects the political significance of the very act of telling the story.

Mendlesohn begins her discussion of specific texts rather unexpectedly, but nevertheless justifiably, with *Wilkins' Tooth*, Jones's first, and generally regarded as unsuccessful, book for young readers. Still, as Mendlesohn proves, it is worth considering as "a precursor text" (2) foreshadowing "the emergence of a profoundly self-conscious and critical author" (17). Indeed, Mendlesohn draws attention to such writerly strategies and tropes that later became landmarks of Jones's "alternative cartography of fantasy" (7) as the revised concept of heroism or the tension between the mimetic and the fabulous and its influence on the characters' inner development. The focus of chapter 2 is Jones's evolving vision of maturation and adulthood. The author very effectively begins by positioning Jones among other fantasy writers for children, and cogently argues that whereas, for example, in the Harry Potter series the predetermined adventures of the characters deny them any awareness of their progression toward adulthood, for Jones it comes through agency—that is, "the ability to make conscious choices" (21). Of particular interest is Mendlesohn's in-depth analysis of how Jones's protagonists mature by acquiring "the ability to both comprehend and challenge apparently rigid [societal and cultural] structures" (51), an undeniable merit in times of increasing ethical relativism. As Mendlesohn signals, Jones consistently expresses her vision of maturation by transforming specific stereotypical conventions of fantasy, such as the reduction of the role of magic, typically a marker of power, to a mere tool, or the questioning of "inevitability and progress inherited in fantasy from the Campbellian monomyth" (40). Comprehensive as Mendlesohn's readings are in this chapter, the reader may occasionally become confused by the chaos of the argument caused by sudden transitions from one text to another and by the fragmentary plot summaries. Perhaps these problems can function as an encouragement for the reader to resort to the books themselves. Disturbing also is Mendlesohn's rather enigmatic term "the Rabelaisian properties of the fantastic" (23), whose meaning is never fully explained.

"Time Games" is the first of Mendlesohn's chapters on Jones's "arguments with the ossified nature of much fantasy fiction" (51). In her dense and subtle readings Mendlesohn examines how masterfully the writer plays with readerly expectations concerning time, including the reader's personal sense of time, through employing several scientific, metaphysical, and philosophical theories of time travel. Still, one cannot find any indication, supported by appropriate references, of whether Jones consciously applied any of the specific approaches mentioned by Mendlesohn. Undoubtedly, her original analysis of Jones's texts is very challenging, and one wishes that she had felt compelled to provide (perhaps in notes) a few more explanatory comments on the theories she uses,

which would certainly be helpful to scholars of children's literature, a considerable part of Mendlesohn's readership. (Mendlesohn does give a link to lectures on time travels and mentions several sources on the nature of time and time travel, but it would also be advisable to refer readers to books such as Stephen Hawking's readable *Illustrated Brief History of Time*.) Finally, this engaging chapter would benefit from at least short concluding remarks from the author.

In the three subsequent chapters, Mendlesohn considers ways in which Jones positions her protagonist with regard to fantastic worlds and convincingly presents the author's polemics with standard fantasy conventions and her relish for defying the reader's expectations. The first mode Mendlesohn analyzes is the portal-quest fantasy (chapter 4). Of special interest therein is her discussion of the political nature of portal fantasies. As she aptly explains, by making readers think that the character's interpretation of the fantastic is valid, this mode imposes on readers "a monosemic understanding of the world and . . . the nature of good and evil" (87). However, and Jones often forces her readers to do so, it is enough to recall that "the protagonist . . . is a tourist in the world" (88), and his or her insights are limited. Thus this "monosemic understanding" becomes untenable, and readers are forced to assume responsibility for how they understand a given text. As chapter 4 shows, Mendlesohn is at her best when she dedicates more space to just one text (seven pages) instead of jumping from one title to another: her reading of "The True State of Affairs" is most lucid and persuasive. This is also evident in chapter 5, in Mendlesohn's extended discussion of Jones's use of the immersive fantasy in four books of the Dalemark series: Mendlesohn exhaustively examines the writer's techniques of immersing her protagonists in fantastic worlds, such as rhetorical and grammatical manipulation of descriptions, or "the casualization of the fantastic" (103). These strategies allow the achievement of the complete "social ecology" (106)—that is, a social, political and economic system—of secondary worlds. Fascinating as Jones's tactics are, Mendlesohn is right to stress that the immersive fantasy is also about the ideology of reading: although Jones's protagonists hardly ever question their worlds, "for the reader, this very acceptance creates a space for interrogation" (109). Even more superb is Mendlesohn's chapter 6, with her analysis of liminal fantasy, one more mode used by Jones to problematize the relationships between the mundane and the fantastic and the interplay of the protagonists' and readers' interpretations of either. Mendlesohn's argument is particularly nuanced and compelling when she uncovers Jones's logic behind her complex overlay of the ordinary and the magical, which in turn offers interesting insights not only into fantasy but also into realist fiction.

Mendlesohn's final chapter provides an overall perspective on metafictional aspects of Jones's work, such as her recurrent preoccupation with the coercive use of words or the relationship between fiction and reality. Mendlesohn effec-

tively argues with critics for whom fantasy in Jones's books functions only as metaphorical representation of, for example, maturation, whereas, as Mendlesohn proves, first of all it has the metonymic function of intensifying the perception of the real. The only caveat one may have here is that again she does not bother to explain her terminology ("the instauration fantasy," 167).

Mendlesohn's consideration of Jones as a writer whose fiction is "a critical process" (191) ties in with her presentation of the fantasist as an author involved in the processes of becoming a reader: Jones's books are intended not for the unresponsive and uncritical "Child Reader," but for the "Reading Child" (193–94), who enjoys, for example, the challenges of intertextuality. Hence, as Mendlesohn persuasively explains in her "Epilogue," Jones may be seen as a demanding "teacher" instructing readers on "how to read and how to write" (xxxiii). In this light, Mendlesohn's thought-provoking and critically informed work itself is a valuable source not only for those interested in fantasy or in Jones's output, but also for educators concerned with fostering children's intellectual capacities.

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