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## Reviews

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## REVIEWS

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***The Pleasant Nights***. By Giovan Francesco Straparola, vol. 1. Edited and with an Introduction by Donald Beecher. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012. 764 pp.

*The Pleasant Nights* promises to become an indispensable reference for narrative scholars, a long-hoped-for revised English translation and annotated edition of the *Piacevoli Notti* by Giovan Francesco Straparola (the first since *The Nights of Straparola*, by William George Waters, 1894) with a most informative and comprehensive introduction. Beecher's text is the product of years of research and consultation of primary and secondary sources in more than four languages as well as published and unpublished oral narrative material, foreign editions of the *Notti*, and European collections of tales that were influenced by Straparola's work.

First published between 1550 and 1553 in two volumes (later collected in a single volume in 1558), the *Piacevoli Notti* brings together seventy-five novellas, jests, farces, anecdotes, fables, and wonder tales, varying from fantastic to vulgar and irreverent in tone, with sometimes explicit contents. Underestimated in Italian literature (in favor of Boccaccio and Basile), this collection has come to occupy a pivotal role in folk- and fairy-tale studies, most notably because it includes seventeen texts that are the first ever written records of wonder tales, including the earliest instances of plots such as "Puss in Boots" (ATU 545) (XI.1: Costantino Fortunato).

Aside from the wonder tales, the entire nature of the collection raises fundamental questions about the interrelationships between oral and written texts. The *Notti* are inscribed in a narrative frame inspired by the *Decamerone*: during the Carnival period, on the island of Murano, in Lucrezia Sforza's palace, ten young ladies take turns telling stories to their host and to a company of gentlemen to extend the joy of the evening balls, ending each of the thirteen nights with a riddle. Yet Straparola departs from the Boccaccian model and the tradition of the *novellieri*. We know hardly anything about this man or about his methods in compiling the *Notti*, but we do know that he brings together a variety of genres and elusively refers to them all in the proem as

*favole* (fables) written “not as he wished to write them, but as he heard them from the ladies who told them, neither adding nor taking anything away” (140). Indeed, whereas twenty-seven of Straparola’s seventy-five narratives have direct matches in literary sources, the rest do not (although these contain motifs that are common to stories that precede and follow them); thus most of the tales can be taken to represent the “first ‘hard evidence’ of their existence in the oral culture of the Renaissance” (39).

How much can this collection tell us about the folk scene of its time? Straparola presents these stories with varying styles, including dialects. Were those the styles of the folk? Was Straparola a proto-folklorist? How closely might these texts approximate the ways in which the stories were orally performed? Had Straparola “heard” them in the *salotti*, or did he hear them among the lower strata of the population and then present them to the *salotti* audience for the first time through this book? The *Notti* appears at a turning point in history, and it continues to supply material and to set challenges for the study of the dialogue between high and popular culture.

Beecher’s edition adds an invaluable voice to this dialogue. In his seven-part introduction (I, “The Straparola Dilemma, or the Biography of an Invisible Author”; II, “The Genre, Design, and Conventions of *Le piacevoli notti*”; III, “Polite Society and the Gaming Culture of Renaissance Italy”; IV, “Folk Culture, Wonder Tales, and Fairy Tales”; V, “The Enigmas”; VI, “The Publishing History of *Le piacevoli notti*”; VII, “The Translation and Editorial Procedures”), Beecher weaves a rich and revealing historical, political, literary, and social context around the collection, analyzing the different genres (in particular, the enigmas and wonder tales) as parts of a performance event shaped by the recreational practices of Renaissance society (*veglie* and gaming evenings), where “storytelling had gained a new venue for presentation, further enabling the movement of *favole* from echelon to echelon in a vertical society through the pressures of demand and supply” (37). Beecher’s recreation of the social context surrounding the book is intertwined with his study of the performance event enacted within the narrative frame. This dual approach allows him to authenticate Straparola’s description with historical records of gaming evenings and to confer depth to those records through his analysis of the dynamics of reception and reaction to the *favole* as described by Straparola (who portrays various uses of, and reactions to, a range of shades of humor and vulgarity and who dramatizes the concept of narrative rights). Beecher celebrates the *Notti* as a highly performable book, tailored to the changing tastes and needs of its contemporaries (indeed the success of the *Notti* continued through twenty-nine reprints between 1550 and 1608, despite being listed on the *Index Librorum Prohibitorum* [List of Prohibited Books] more than once). He emphasizes the

novelty of the work, the experimental nature of its combination of high and low styles and of literary and oral material: “The moment was right for Straparola: the Venetian book culture and its public, the experiments of the novellieri . . . the gaming soirées” (52). He follows Straparola the author, highlighting the “Renaissance mind at work: referential, word oriented, retrospective in its search for materials, intertextual, yet in quest of renewal, novelty” (71). We are presented with Straparola the artist/storyteller, the attentive interpreter of tastes, who leaves us with interesting questions regarding the concept of literary authorship in relation to notions we normally apply to folk narrative, such as transmission, adaptation, and artistic creation.

The comparative and fascinating nature of Beecher’s introduction continues into the extremely informative commentaries on the individual tales. These essays, sometimes as long as thirty-two pages, list direct written sources when possible and seek out motifs, analogues, and parallels in previous *novelle*, *fabliaux*, and *exempla* when direct written sources cannot be found: Beecher “often reach[es] back to ancestral forms and ancient Sanskrit and Persian,” but he also looks “as far forward as the folk tales gathered throughout Italy and other parts of Europe in the nineteenth century,” thus emphasizing the tale’s “membership in a grand continuum of tales” (3). Beecher’s approach is in line with a historical-geographic method that does not pursue comparison in search of prototypes but rather seeks lines of narrative continuity.

Beecher’s revised translation merits special mention; the editor carefully compared Waters’s 1894 text with the original, as published in the 2000 critical edition by Donato Pirovano. Beecher modestly states that “Waters remains substantially present in a text which is still essentially his” and that his own action was limited to altering the text in “microscopic ways in the interest of rendering Straparola’s ‘voices’ with greater diversity and accuracy, while recovering many missing little pieces of significant allusions” (83). The result is a new translation that reads beautifully and succeeds in capturing and maintaining much of the verve and idiomatic language of the Italian original.

This first volume includes appendixes with a selection of illustrations, as well as tables listing genres and tale types. For an index of names and subjects we will have to wait for Volume 2, which will present us with a most valuable reference for comparison and consultation.

Beecher’s *Nights* is a monumental achievement that will become a fundamental resource for folk- and fairy-tale studies, as well as for the study of the boundaries between high and popular culture and for the exploration of the interchange between written and oral narrative.

Licia Masoni  
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*Im Reich der Wünsche*. Edited by Shawn C. Jarvis. Munich: C. H. Beck, 2012. 366 pp.

More than 400 German women writers published fairy tales in the nineteenth century, but today nearly all of their works are out of print and unavailable in most libraries. In *Im Reich der Wünsche*, Shawn C. Jarvis gives these stories new life, bringing them back into print. As she says in the afterword, playing off the common German fairy-tale ending, “Damit sie nicht sterben, sollen sie weiterleben in diesem Band” (“in order for them not to die, they must live on in this volume,” 319). *Im Reich der Wünsche* cannot possibly include all the fairy tales that German women wrote in the nineteenth century, but Jarvis has provided a carefully curated selection of twenty-one stories that demonstrate the wide variety of women who were writing in the period and the significance of their contribution.

Of course it is difficult to talk about *Im Reich der Wünsche* without mentioning *The Queen’s Mirror*, a collection of translations of these rare stories that Jarvis published together with Jeannine Blackwell in 2001. *The Queen’s Mirror* was a much needed volume of new translations of women’s fairy tales, but because the original German stories remained in inaccessible out-of-print sources, many readers were left wishing for a similar collection in German. Even though *Im Reich der Wünsche* is that collection, it is not simply a German version of *The Queen’s Mirror*. A third of the collection is made up of new stories, and its structure is significantly different. Unlike *The Queen’s Mirror*, it has no introduction or preface and the stories are not individually introduced; rather, the biographical and historical information has been shifted to appendixes. This allows one to read tale after tale uninterrupted by secondary information. Lovely illustrations throughout by Isabel Große Holtforth help to bind the diverse stories together into a unified whole.

And this is a worthy task, for the authors and tales vary widely. If these stories were left to die, as Jarvis phrased it, in the few archives that still held them, with them would die the unique perspectives of their authors and their important contributions to fairy-tale history. For instance, Elisabeth Ebeling’s “Schwarz und Weiß” (“Black and White,” 1869) takes on race relations and comes to a surprising conclusion for the nineteenth century: “Dass die Farbe der Haut Nebensache ist und dass nichts darauf ankommt, ob man weiß oder schwarz aussieht, wenn man nur weise ist” (“The color of skin is secondary, and it does not matter if one is white or black, if one is only wise,” 262). One of the new stories in the collection, Friederike Helene Unger’s “Prinzessin Gracula” (1804), is a kind of *Bildungsmärchen*, in which a princess must pass through a magical world of metaphoric trials. Another new tale in this collection is Charlotte von Ahlefeld’s “Die Nympe des Rheins” (1812), in which an

Undine recounts “den kurzen Traum des meines vergangenen Glücks” (“the short dream of my long-lost joy,” 63) in her own words just a year after Friedrich de la Motte Fouqué’s *Undine* was published. Jarvis also includes several of the Grimms’ informants’ stories that were deemed unfit for *Kinder- und Hausmärchen*. Take Ludovica Brentano Jordis des Bordes’s “Der Löwe und der Frosch” (“The Lion and the Frog,” 1814), which tells of a young woman who saves her brother in an active and transgressive manner by cutting off her master the lion’s head. When it turns out that her brother was in fact the lion himself, enchanted until “eine Mädchenhand aus Liebe zu mir dem Löwen den Kopf abhauen würde” (“a girl’s hand would cut off the head of the lion out of love for me,” 89), it is clear that she released both her brother from the role of oppressor and herself from his rule. “Der Löwe und der Frosch” originally appeared in the second volume of the Grimms’ collection in 1815 but was removed from subsequent editions. Although Jarvis can give us only a taste of the hundreds of tales women wrote in the period, her collection foregrounds the incomplete picture that is painted when we fail to include women writers in the study of German literature.

Following the tales is an afterword with a wide historical overview that reaches back centuries to relate the long history of European women and fairy tales. Without overgeneralizing, Jarvis discusses how women writers have used fairy-tale motifs and characters differently and how the tales were received in their own time. Following the afterword are short biographies, accompanied by rare portraits and photographs of the authors. These images are the result of intensive archival research by Jarvis, with assistance from Roland Specht Jarvis. This research also led to new details in the biographies, such as the revelation that Elisabeth Ebeling was a pseudonym for Christa Ling. Marie Timme’s biography, for example, includes new information on her upbringing, schooling, and life as a young widow and mother, whereas in *The Queen’s Mirror* her biography read, “Almost nothing is known about the life of Marie Timme” (225). For such authors as Ebeling and Timme, who were popular in their own time but are almost completely unknown today, such details are significant.

Following the biographies is another valuable addition to *Im Reich der Wünsche*: a bibliography of available sources for further reading, many of them online. Since *The Queen’s Mirror* was published in 2001, many more works have become available online, but they are distributed throughout the web at libraries and sites such as Google Books, Project Gutenberg, and Wikisource; and their digitization has been anything but systematic. This makes Jarvis’s list a wonderful resource for students, academics, and fairy-tale fans.

This is both the strength and weakness of *Im Reich der Wünsche*. The book’s structure allows the reader to enjoy the fairy tales as an uninterrupted

whole while still providing historical context, biographical information, and further reading in the appendixes. There is little direction, however, for those interested in more history or analysis, and, with the exception of the biographical sources, there is no bibliography of secondary literature. Students and readers will find the collection engaging and easy to enjoy, but a researcher would wish for more resources. This being taken into account, *Im Reich der Wünsche* is a well-organized and curated collection of some of the best fairy tales by German women in the nineteenth century. Jarvis's specific selections demonstrate not only the variety but also the quality of these tales and their important place in the literary landscape of German fairy tales.

Julie Koehler

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*The Donkey Lady and Other Tales from the Arabian Gulf*. Edited by Patty Paine, Jesse Ulmer, and Michael Hersrud. Highclere, UK: Berkshire Academic Press, 2013. 264 pp.

This charming, well-produced large-format book is a group project conceived by students and faculty at the Virginia Commonwealth University of Qatar. Mostly female students, with the assistance of faculty members whose first language is English, collected and translated fifteen oral stories, which were then illustrated by College of Arts students. An intelligent short preface aptly invokes the collaborative fluidity of oral tradition to support attributing these stories to Qatari sources without making claims to exclusivity. The stories are both visually and textually accessible for young readers or listeners and aesthetically appealing to adult readers.

Each story is offered by a different student teller/writer and a different illustrator. Styles of illustration vary widely; all are effective and lively. Interestingly, the most conservative ("folkloric") styles belong to the only two illustrators with European names. The Arab students' techniques vary from lively pen and ink, to pastels (apparently), scratch work, felt pen, wash brushwork, and what appear to be paper cutout silhouettes. Their styles range from rather conservative literalist to anime, various cartoon styles, and abstract.

The stories vary by genre. There are two different variants of "The Kind and Unkind Girls" (AT 480) and a "Cinderella" variant (AT 410). Another magic tale's core array of motifs, familiar in regional oral tradition and the *1001 Nights*, has a young male hero carried off to the jewel-filled mountain aerie of a great bird, whence he escapes to a magic castle and opens a forbidden door, winning (temporarily) a supernatural bride. Among nonmagical tales, a legend of named male and female rivals explains the invention of sail technology among Gulf pearl fishers. There is one anecdote of Jouha, the Arab trickster/fool. Among admonitory tales are a version of "The Boy Who Cried Wolf";

another tale of two young boys, best friends, with an aphoristic finish; an animal chain tale about eventual retribution for a goat who tries to harm her sister; and a tale of the comeuppance of a tailor who tries magic to make a young woman fall in love with him but attracts a goat instead (her little brother switches the lock of her hair that the tailor would bewitch, with the goat's hair). Among the most interesting to this reader were two legends of supernatural female predators. A tale attributed to Korea concerns a female fox spirit, a Gumiho, with a preliminary episode in which a young Qatari in Korea rejects the spirit's requests and escapes; a young Korean male is more vulnerable. We learn in passing that cell phones cease to work in proximity of a fox spirit. A second legend presents the shape-changing Donkey Lady (Om Hamar), who preys on children and adults. It is cleverly structured: the Donkey Lady ensnares some children by telling scary tales of her own predations. They escape and call the police, but she disappears. A coda has her attacking foreigners traveling the desert in an SUV.

This lively, beautifully produced collection could serve as a model for student projects elsewhere. The book's production was supported by the Qatar National Research Foundation's Undergraduate Research Experience Program.

Margaret Mills  
Ohio State University

***Folklore and Nationalism in Europe During the Long Nineteenth Century.***  
Edited by Timothy Baycroft and David Hopkin. Leiden: Brill, 2012. 423 pp.

For anyone interested in the role that nationalism played in the development of nineteenth-century folklore (or vice versa, the role that folklore played in the rise of nationalism and transnationalism), this is the book for you. In addition to nationalism and folklore, the contributors touch on issues related to orality and literature, and they provide valuable historical information about the intersections of the dominant high culture with artisan and vernacular culture on a national and transnational level that suggests we cannot grasp any genre of the nineteenth century, such as the literary fairy tale, unless we have a holistic interdisciplinary approach that encompasses the intersections.

There are seventeen essays in this "fabulous" book edited by Timothy Baycroft and David Hopkin—fabulous because the essays are all gems and contain an incredible treasure of insights into neglected topics that need more attention by researchers from different fields. For instance, some of the subjects covered are the oral epic (Joep Leersen), the opera (Krisztina Lajosi), visual culture (Ilia Roubanis), European architecture (Peter Blundell Jones), world's fairs (Angela Schwarz), museums (Daniel DeGroof and Anne Dymond), folklore as a weapon in Alsace (Detmar Klein), Irish antiquaries (Clare O'Halloran), ballad revival (David Atkinson), national drama in Iceland (Terry Gunnell),

England allegedly as a land without folklore (Jonathan Roper), the establishment of the Folklore Society in England and imperialism (Chris Wingfield and Chris Gosden), oral traditions in Finland (Pertti Anttonen), and the sorrowful folk song in Finland (Vesa Kurkela). The contributors are professors and scholars of folklore, history, archeology, architecture, English literature, art history, music, modern European literature, comparative folklore, and public administration. They have different backgrounds and methodological approaches, but they are all dedicated to understanding how the voices and artwork of the folk merge from below in exciting and diverse ways with the rising bourgeois culture to form or resist what might be called national culture or nationalist movements.

Almost all the essays seek to dismiss easy dichotomous interpretations of folkloristic art, exhibitions, and literature that link bourgeois museum curators, administrators, and folklorists to ideologies that rationalize nationalist or colonialist intentions and that betray the needs of the people. As Hopkin notes, “Folklore was not national, or even regional, it was simultaneously more generalised and more particular. It was this fact that late nineteenth-century folklorists set out to explain. Consequently, rather than being, as Barry Reay alleges, in ‘absolute denial about the complexity of cultural interaction, the hybridity of orality and literacy, tradition and modernity,’ folklorists were pioneer investigators of these topics, from whom cultural historians could still profitably learn” (391).

Baycroft makes a similar point in his introduction by emphasizing how much of the work done on folklore in the nineteenth century was “not overtly political in intent at all, and was undertaken because of a romantic interest in the people, or as part of wider scientific investigations by those interested in sociology or anthropology such as they could be understood through the study of folklore, folk customs, and tradition. In this sense the quest for authenticity was not primarily about political legitimacy, but about scientific accuracy, although the lines were often blurred between these two, as the individuals concerned had mixed motives” (8).

Regrettably, Baycroft and Hopkin do not include—and this is a minor quibble—a comprehensive essay that deals with the interaction between the oral folktale and the literary fairy tale, one that investigates how this interaction relates to the rise of nationalism, the appropriation of oral folktales, and the “authenticity” of popular literature. However, two excellent essays do touch on these topics and might serve as touchstones for further research about the relationship between oral and literary texts and nationalism: Sarah Hines’s “Narrating Scotland: Andrew Lang’s Coloured Fairy Book Collection, *The Gold of Fairnilee*, and ‘A Creellfull of Celtic Stories’” and Pertti Anttonen’s “Oral Traditions and the Making of the Finnish Nation.” Hines’s essay provides

an unusual perspective on Lang, who, following the anthropological work of Edward Tylor, argued for the universality of folklore and displayed a preoccupation with Scotland in his own literary fairy tales and other imaginative writings. Lang remained a traditional Scot as a writer and a modern internationalist as an anthropological scholar. It is this paradox—how nationalism and/or regionalism fostered transnationalism—that is at the heart of most of the essays in this book.

Anttonen's essay opens a discussion about oral and literary texts that pertains to the development of the literary fairy tale. Here the proximity of oral and literary is at issue. Anttonen claims that "to textualise also means to 'literalise,' that is, to transform oral utterances into literary representations that are to be read, interpreted and analyzed through reading, and by extension, to be preserved as textual documents that call for further reading as well as cultivation as specimens of cultural history and heritage" (325). In other words, the distinction between oral and literary must be studied with great discrimination. Although Anttonen is concerned with how folklore serves as the basis for national culture, his general theoretical notions enable us to see that the divide between oral and literary tales is actually minimal because "unwritten literature" must be written to be known, and it can be shaped to produce nationalist if not transnationalist representations. As he states, "Oral traditions do not become nationally significant and symbolic merely by existing somewhere, but through their transformation into literature and literary collections, through their adaptation and entextualisation into material objects of documentation and display preserved in sites that are nationally and nationalistically relevant and significant, such as archives, museums, and universities" (330).

It is unusual to read a collection of essays that are all thought provoking and depict the rise of folklore studies in nineteenth-century Europe in such a comprehensive manner. Paradoxically, they show how we have become more internationally linked through folklore the more institutions have sought to make folklore nationalistic. It is through this paradox that Baycroft, Hopkin, and their colleagues open new vistas about the relationship between oral and literary culture and explore folklore in other cultural fields that raises questions about national identity.

Jack Zipes  
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*Transgressive Tales: Queering the Grimms.* Edited by Kay Turner and Pauline Greenhill. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2012. 358 pp.

Leafing through *Transgressive Tales*, one is first struck by the unassuming, quite wonderful illustrations by Bettina Hutschek. They guide one aesthetically into yet another, albeit timely, set of analyses of—not only—Grimm

fairy tales. “Queering the Grimms” is such an appealing subtitle that one understands the choice. The tales from Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm’s paradigmatic collection have had a tremendous influence on readers worldwide, other tale collectors, and—as amply attended to in this volume—literary authors, as is evident, for instance, in Jennifer Orme’s analysis of Jeanette Winterson’s reworking of the “Twelve Dancing Princesses.” Readers will be glad to know that the volume also contains comparative essays, such as the chapter “Queering Gender,” in which Pauline Greenhill, Anita Best, and Emilie Anderson-Grégoire explore versions of “Peg Bearskin” and “La Poiluse” for the lead character’s capacity to control and undermine female and male roles in arranging her sisters’ and her own destinies. We also find here Margaret Mills’s translation of an Afghani tale performance of “Boxwoman,” prefaced with a multilayered and suggestive exploration of women’s transgressions as imagined within an all-male story realm.

The collection has grown and matured over nearly fifteen years, taking its beginnings in teaching and work with interested students, coalescing with colleagues at conferences, and finally resulting in this volume. In their introduction to the thirteen essays, editors Kay Turner and Pauline Greenhill point out that with all the feminist analysis and recasting of tales, “queer readings seem absent from feminist fairy-tale criticism” (3). She who knows how to look will, however, find transgression in abundance in many tale types, and to prove the point, the editors include an appendix titled “Trans and Drag in Traditional Folktales”; this appendix groups a selection of Aarne-Thompson types under headings such as “animal trans,” “animal drag,” “bio trans,” and “gender drag.”

The essays are divided into four sections. In the first section, “Faux Femininities,” the contributors discuss the relations of embodiment and gender in the Grimms’ fairy tales. In the second section, “Revising Rewritings,” the contributors revisit rewritings of classic tales, which proves perhaps an easier ground to find issues of gender and sexuality explicitly examined. In the third part, “Queering the Tales,” the contributors turn “more directly to the ways that Grimms and other tales can redirect presumptions of sexuality and marriage away from the hetero norm” (20). The last section, “Beyond the Grimms,” contains, in addition to the contribution by Mills, Eliot Mercer’s queer adaptation of “The Grave Mound.”

Within such a plethora of contributions, there naturally are also quite diverse approaches to what constitutes queerness, where it is located, and how to analytically cast it. We detect a spectrum here that ranges from uncovering more breadth and nuance in the reading of gender roles and sexuality all the way to asserting difference, including and beyond the homoerotic. Jeana Jorgensen begins her chapter, “Queering Kinship in ‘The Maiden Who Seeks Her

Brothers,” with Judith Butler’s assessment of fantasy from *Undoing Gender* as “not the opposite of reality, it is what reality forecloses” (69)—a choice that most of the contributors could have followed: as fictional narrations, fairy tales do revel in the impossible but imaginable. If earlier scholars have found reason for tale worlds to fulfill poor narrators’ fantasies of excess food, wealth, and sociopolitical ascent, it should not surprise us that in the twenty-first century, scholars and retellers alike find explorations and transgressions of gendered, even bodily norms—fantasies, one can be quite certain, that were there all along, just as the desire for excess and power has not gone away.

There is not space to dwell on all the cases presented—which is not meant to detract from their merit. In the opening chapter Cristina Bacchilega equates the only two Grimm heroines with the attribute of cleverness as women challenging heteronormativity. Kevin Goldstein seeks—yet does not find conclusive evidence—for the descriptor “wise woman” in “The Goose Girl at the Spring.” One of the strongest chapters for its analytic rigor is Margaret R. Yocom’s “But Who Are You Really?” In it she discusses the shifts in the use of pronouns in “Allerleirauh” as an indicator of the underlying ambiguity of the main character’s gendered embodiment. She works with side-by-side quotations from the original German text and the English translation, with the pronouns referring to Allerleirauh highlighted. This allows her to underline her conclusion that in this tale gender is treated as a disguise, as the pronouns shift from feminine to neutral when Allerleirauh is disguised in her coat of animal furs and then back to feminine when she is revealed as a young woman and marries the prince.

Kimberly J. Lau’s analysis of Angela Carter’s “Lady of the House of Love” is particularly compelling, viewed as an engagement with and opposition to the “erotic, necrophiliac impulses of the ‘Sleeping Beauty’ tradition” (137) in addition to further intertextual and intermedial narrative components. Until recently, “Rose Red” has been, in Andrew J. Friedenthal’s analysis, a lost sister, a figure who did not gain popular notoriety and conscious stature through retellings and recasting. The recent uptake of the narrative in various adaptations, he argues, “may reflect centuries of cultural taboos against both lesbianism and free expressions of female sexuality, taboos that her story and thus her very presence, threaten to unleash” (163). Another tabooed subject is revealed in Kay Turner’s reading of the Grimms’ “Frau Trude”—the intergenerational love between an older and a younger woman.

*Queering the Grimms* thus proves to be another strong component of Wayne State University Press’s committed attention to narrative and, in particular, fairy-tale scholarship.

*Helen Miriam Bendix  
Bard College and Regina E Bendix  
University of Göttingen*

*Reading, Translating, Rewriting: Angela Carter's Translational Poetics.* By Martine Hennard Dutheil de la Rochère. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2013. 374 pp.

It is widely known that Angela Carter's interest in the fairy tale spanned from her fictional rewritings in *The Bloody Chamber* (1979) to her role as editor of *The Virago Book of Fairy Tales* (1990) and *The Second Virago Book of Fairy Tales* (1992). She read the fairy tale across many languages and cultures. However, with the notable exception of Anna Watz's article, "Angela Carter and Xavière Gauthier's *Surréalisme et Sexualité*" (2010), which acknowledges Carter's involvement with Surrealism through translation, Carter's practice of translation has often been relegated to the background of criticism. Martine Hennard Dutheil de la Rochère's *Reading, Translating, Rewriting: Angela Carter's Translational Poetics* (2013) challenges this tendency by placing translation at the foreground of Angela Carter's engagement with the fairy tale.

Carter's writing was vast and varied, ranging from nonfiction, essays, and journalism to translation, editing, book reviews, short stories, theater, performance texts, radio plays, novels, short stories, and poetry. Her reading was as diversified as her writing, moving beyond geographic, linguistic, and cultural boundaries to draw from multiple traditions. For example, Maggie Tonkin's *Angela Carter and Decadence: Critical Fictions/Fictional Critiques* (2012) and Rebecca Munford's *Decadent Daughters and Monstrous Mothers: Angela Carter and the European Gothic* (2013) attest to a growing recognition of Carter's debt to European literature; both critics acknowledge the ambiguities that arise from Carter's eclectic sources and the resulting textual hybridity and cultural interplay in her writing.

Such transnational, translingual, and transgeneric migrations of narrative are essential territories for fairy-tale scholarship. Hennard investigates the contours of these different "trans" in relation to Carter's deep relationship with the cross-cultural imagination through the lens of translation. Hennard cites the work of Homi K. Bhabha (1994), as she explores how translation not only underlies the dissemination of fairy-tale narrative but is also intertwined with a sense of in-betweenness in Carter's writing. She demonstrates how translation feeds Carter's poetics on many levels, even extending beyond text into territories of intermedial and intersemiotic production. For Hennard the practice of translation is intertwined with creation, as it allies creative reading with creative writing (2). The word *translation* expands in meaning throughout Hennard's study, as she redeploys the term to propose fresh insights into Carter's engagement with the fairy tale.

The book provides an extensive introduction and first chapter that investigate the range of Carter's reading and translation practices and examine Carter's numerous "French connections," often integrating striking discoveries from the

Angela Carter archive housed at the British Library. Hennard's research attests to her extensive knowledge of the field of fairy-tale studies yet maintains an astonishing level of readability. The work is accessible to undergraduate and graduate students, while at the same time proposing observations that will interest the most experienced fairy-tale scholars. There is also close attention to textual detail, an essential aspect of any work that deals with translation. The work, however, is not limited to the practice of translation as such but also places emphasis on how this activity informs Carter's poetics.

Hennard investigates different tale versions, with chapters dedicated to texts known as "Little Red Riding Hood," "Bluebeard," "Puss in Boots," "Sleeping Beauty," "Beauty and the Beast," and "Cinderella." In each chapter she explores Carter's readings, writings, and translations as a web of intertwined works that can be read collectively. Hennard also places these works in the tradition of textual production, editing, and research on fairy-tale texts, with a concentration on Carter's evolving relationship with the work of Perrault and Jeanne-Marie Leprince de Beaumont. The headings for each chapter attest to patterns of contextualization and textual metamorphosis. For example, the title of Chapter 2 is "Updating the Politics of Experience: From 'Le Petit Chaperon rouge' to 'Little Red Riding Hood' and 'The Company of Wolves.'" Hennard navigates different versions of the tale by Andrew Lang, the Opies, and Perrault, to better situate Carter's translating, editing, fiction writing, journalism, critical practice, radio plays, and films. She thus foregrounds the complexity of Carter's own shifting engagement with "Red Riding Hood." Chapter 3 proposes a similar pattern: "Looking Through the Keyhole of Culture, or the Moral Function of Curiosity: From 'La Barbe bleue' to 'Bluebeard' and 'The Bloody Chamber,'" and Hennard's minutely structured chapters are well substantiated by the writings of recent critics such as Marina Warner, Jack Zipes, and Cristina Bacchilega.

Hennard also positions Carter's creative activities in a vast tradition of textual and visual manipulation of fairy-tale narrative. Hennard, in reference to Edward Said (1993), describes the critical paradigm at work in this book as being contrapuntal, as she brings different fields of thought to resonate with each other (15). Because of this, her book allows the reader to perceive the subtle forms of innovation in Carter's narratives, as the research moves beyond easy conclusions about fairy-tale texts and draws us gently into the intricacies of Carter's relationship to different writers and tale traditions. For example, in addition to an emphasis on textual transformation, context, and editorial framing, Hennard proposes nuanced studies of text-image interplay, with particularly interesting sections on the 1977 edition of Carter's *Fairy Tales of Charles Perrault*, illustrated by Martin Ware. Hennard locates Ware's images in the tradition of fairy-tale illustration by drawing subtle connections with Gustave

Doré's famous drawings. In reading Carter's work across the arts and languages, Hennard shows how Carter's interaction with the fairy-tale genre feeds a general tendency toward recuperating the sociohistorical dimension of texts and other artistic forms: "What I propose to call the *translational poetics* at the heart of Carter's work thus brings together aesthetics and politics as it tirelessly interrogates and subverts naturalized divisions, oppositions, and hierarchies and draws its creative energy from productive differences" (6).

In this sense *Reading, Translating, Rewriting* allows for not only a deeper understanding of Carter's connection with the fairy tale but also her modes of authorship. Hennard explores how the act of editing and collecting informs Carter's poetics of juxtaposition and hybridity and reveals an awareness of the resulting questions of authorial power: "The work of translation brought an awareness of the agency of the translator as mediator and re-creator" (3). Such reflections about agency, however, do not open the door to easy conclusions about Carter's political or feminist agenda. On the contrary, Hennard observes how Carter's posture was one of social questioning: "Always inclined to read texts and genres against received ideas about them, Carter perceived the worldliness hiding behind fairy-tale magic and was alert to the social role of the form" (20). As Carter did with fairy tales, Hennard works against received ideas about Carter's involvement with the form, reading Carter's work through a crisscrossed lens of arts, languages, and disciplines, to propose probing insights into an author whose work with the fairy tale continues to interpolate critics and readers alike.

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***Running with the Fairies: Towards a Transpersonal Anthropology of Religion.***

By Dennis Gaffin. Newcastle upon Tyne, UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2012. 293 pp.

Toward the end of his introduction to *Running with the Fairies*, Dennis Gaffin lays out his intentions for the book: to "elevate fairyology to a respected branch of the anthropology of religion and of religious studies"; to encourage other scholars to study "spirits and god-like beings in European and American religion and spirituality"; to present a model of "participatory anthropology"; to show that "some of the features of fairy mystical experience," which might be categorized as phenomena belonging to "indigenous 'others,'" are actually part of Western experience; to "explore the relationship between the anthropology of religion and the transpersonal psychology of religion"; and to interrogate the "relationships between belief and knowledge in discourse on religiosity, spirituality, and mysticism" (22–23). An assessment of how the author fairs in realizing some of these goals—establishing "fairyology" within

the study of religion and situating experiences with fairies within a broader cultural context—offers useful insight into the book as a whole.

Is Fairy Faith, as Gaffin describes it, a legitimate subject for scholars of religion? Certainly, anyone interested in new and emerging forms of spirituality might find something of interest in the author's own experiences with "fairy energy" (33) and the accounts of his informants. But one of the most striking features of this quest for legitimacy is Gaffin's effort to distinguish his Fairy Faith from New Age movements and belief systems. There is an implied disdain for people who, for example, might consult *Healing with the Angels Oracle Cards*, but the fairies Gaffin describes have a great deal in common with spirit guides, power animals, and—yes—guardian angels as they are envisioned and experienced by contemporary seekers. He is dismissive of writers who conflate fairies with aliens and poltergeists, but his own description of "mystical Fairy Faith" could apply to innumerable modern belief systems: "The mystical Fairy Faith, in its mild-mannered ways, provides an avenue for both psycho-spiritual development and a unique, increased attachment to God and Nature" (24). This sentence works just as well if we replace the phrase "mystical Fairy Faith" with "goddess spirituality" or "shamanistic practice."

The offhand denigration of New Age beliefs is just one element of Gaffin's strategy for establishing Fairy Faith as a "legitimate" set of beliefs. The author also strives to situate his own experiences and those of his informants within the context of world religion and Western mystical tradition, and he aligns himself with other writers he identifies as "fairy-minded" believers, such as William Butler Yeats, Arthur Conan Doyle, and the anthropologist Walter Evans-Wentz (91). To note similarities between fairies and such entities as nymphs and djinni is unremarkable—in fact, Gaffin might have added depth and nuance to his presentation if he had read the opening chapters of Diane Purkiss's *At the Bottom of the Garden: A Dark History of Fairies, Hobgoblins, Nymphs, and Other Troublesome Things* (2001) (a book not listed in the bibliography). Instead, the author turns to Paracelsus: Gaffin's "quintessential" fairy is an "elemental" of the air, whereas "earth fairies include elves and leprechauns whose energy is heavier than the lighter, airy sylph fairies" (97).

At this point the student of traditional fairy lore is confounded. For Gaffin and his informants, fairies are ethereal entities best understood as "messengers, representatives, embodiments, partial manifestations, or aspects of God, the Creator, or the Source" (25). Gaffin's fairies occupy a space in between the human and the divine, but their liminal nature is one of the only features these fairies share with their folkloric counterparts. Gaffin acknowledges this in passing references to how fairies have been understood in the past, but his engagement with the rich history of fairy belief is superficial and unpersuasive—to the extent that informed readers who come to this book hoping for a

sophisticated introduction to contemporary Fairy Faith will likely lose all confidence in the author. An example: While doing research in the Faeroe Islands, Gaffin found informants who linked the disappearance of the troublesome elves called *huldufolk* to the arrival of electricity in the 1950s. When he asserts that this is just one example of “spirit beings” (92) retreating in the face of modernity, Gaffin is making a reasonable point. What he does not say is that fairies have been retreating in the face of modernity since Chaucer—at least. That fairies are—and always have been—creatures of the just-gone past is one of their essential traits.

This lack of historical perspective emboldens Gaffin to make claims for his book that are, at best, naïve. He asserts that no one has assayed in-depth interviews with “fairypeople” (28) or the “fairyminded” (28) since Evans-Wentz published *The Fairy-Faith in Celtic Countries* in 1911. The omission of Eddie Lenihan’s *Meeting the Other Crowd: The Fairy Stories of Hidden Ireland* (2003) from Gaffin’s bibliography is an immediate problem. Lenihan’s informants shared stories about fairies of the traditional sort—ambivalent, mercurial, geographically bound. These accounts offer a fascinating counterpoint to the testimonies of Gaffin’s informants, but Gaffin seems to be unaware of them.

More problematic is Gaffin’s assertion that we “do not know if the experiences of fairyfolk of previous centuries . . . were part of a path to the Divine, or whether fairies were part of psycho-spiritual paths for transformation in personal or collective growth. We do not know how the Fairy Realm of the past affected the fairyminded or fairypeople’s inner lives or wider worlds” (36). Gaffin is undoubtedly correct if he is looking for first-person accounts of fairy encounters that affirm his own experience of fairies as beneficent mentors with wings. But he is wrong in thinking that we cannot know anything substantive about what fairies meant and how they operated in the distant past. *Cunning Folk and Familiar Spirits: Shamanistic Visionary Traditions in Early Modern British Witchcraft and Magic* (2005) is another book that does not appear in Gaffin’s bibliography. Author Emma Wilby uses court transcripts from trials against accused witches—including those who had fairy familiars—as her primary sources, and these records offer a window onto a complex system of beliefs and practices of which fairies were one part. It is worth noting that anyone who reads Wilby’s book is unlikely to describe her fairies as agents of “psycho-spiritual . . . transformation” or “personal or collective growth.”

Ultimately, Gaffin’s book is best appreciated as a spiritual biography with footnotes. Gaffin has the new convert’s zeal and a clear desire to argue for the legitimacy of his beliefs. The question of whether or not Fairy Faith is a “real” religion will be beside the point for most scholars. Academics interested in new religions, though, may appreciate Gaffin’s testament as an attempt to codify a faith in its infancy. And, although Gaffin does not seem much

interested in how fairies evolved from soulless, troublesome beings into otherworldly mentors and avatars of the divine, an investigation of that transformation is a project waiting for an intrigued and qualified researcher.

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*Féeries: Études sur le conte merveilleux XVII<sup>e</sup>–XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle. Vol. 7, Le Conte et la Fable.* Edited by Aurelia and Jean-Paul Gaillard Sermain. 2010. 264 pp.

*Féeries: Études sur le conte merveilleux XVII<sup>e</sup>–XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle. Vol. 8, Le merveilleux français à travers les siècles, les langues, les continents.* Edited by Jean Mainil. 2011. 258 pp.

In pursuing research on the literary and social history of folktales and fairy tales, the annual journal *Féeries* offers a solid theoretical and methodological framework that envisages fairy tales in the process of their diffusion but also as part of particular mental frameworks and as agents in social realities. This approach bypasses questions of comparison and intertextuality in order to explore the ideological and symbolic connotations of the marvelous as a mode of thinking, remembering, and acting.

Entering its seventh issue, *Féeries* brings together experts in the field of fairy-tale studies under the direction of Aurélia Gaillard and Jean-Paul Sermain to address the theme “Le Conte et la Fable.” Corresponding to the varied usage and terminology for fable in Greek antiquity (*ainos*, *logos*, *mythos*, *apologos*), the French fable of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries also knew diverse transformations and hermeneutic dispositions in relation to particular historical and aesthetic contexts. Its intertwining with the fairy tale is one of the most decisive moments for the evolution of both genres as narrative formations but also for the development of a whole culture.

The contributions to Volume 7 are framed by two essays by Jean-Paul Sermain. The opening essay, “Fables, contes, nouvelles: Liaisons poétiques,” refers to the affinities and differences among the three genres and their depictions since the early modern period, with examples ranging from Boccaccio and Bandello to the Romantics. In the closing essay, “Ce que les contes doivent aux fées: Liaisons anthropologiques,” Sermain delineates the anthropological parameters of the fairy tale of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In her contribution, Ruth B. Bottigheimer analyzes rich literary material to argue that the medieval tale and the modern fairy tale, even if they share certain common motifs, differ in their narrative motivations; modern fairy tales are perceived as “rise fairy tales,” emerging in Italy with Straparola’s *Piacevoli Notti*. This essay is followed by two contributions by Patrick Dandrey and Federico Corradi dealing with the emblematic figure of La Fontaine and his double preoccupation as fabulist and storyteller.

Catherine Velay-Vallantin's "Charles Perrault, la conteuse et la fabuliste: 'l'image dans le tapis'" discusses the frontispiece of Perrault's *Contes* (1697) as representing one scene of oral narration in relation to the frontispiece in his translation of Faërne's *Fables* (1699), in which a storyteller is also represented. Her analysis is an excellent exemplification of the historicity of the two genres, forging a synthetic view of the different groups involved in their appropriation (Perrault's brothers, the first French Academicians, the Parisian printers and booksellers, the fabulists close to Versailles). Velay-Vallantin also paves the way for research on the complex reception of popular tradition that arose at the end of the seventeenth century as a "popular" orality claimed by the erudite storytellers. She concludes by addressing the enigmatic gesture of the woman storyteller depicted on the frontispiece of Perrault's *Contes*.

The next four articles, written by Julie Boch, Jean-Noël Pascal, Raymonde Robert, and Jean-François Perrin, refer to the ways in which the fairy tale and the fable, and consequently imagination, memory, and morality, are conceived in the literary production of specific writers of different eras. Breaking new ground on the underlying significance of the tale's motifs into the twenty-first century in his essay "'Rédifier' les contes de Grimm: *Chants populaires* de Philippe Beck," Jean-François Perrin turns to a contemporary poet and his approach to the mythic element in his dialogue with ideas of the Brothers Grimm, Schiller, and Walter Benjamin. Finally, in "La clé et le puits: à propos du déchiffrement des contes et des fables," Aurelia Gaillard discusses the recurring images of the key and the well in fabulous narratives and how the concept, valorization, and reciprocal relations of ancient myth, the fairy tale, and the fable were rearranged in the last decades of the seventeenth century.

The contributions in the eighth issue of *Féeries*, titled *Le merveilleux français à travers le siècles, les langues et les continents*, address the general question how a corpus of texts specific to France during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries had such a lasting influence in different linguistic, cultural, and geographic contexts. Analyzing different oeuvres, genres, and media (literary, musical, or visual), the contributors discuss the parameters of diaspora, appropriation, and further popularization of fairy tales in new contexts: from children's bedrooms to the world of the marketplace and the fair. Even if the volume concentrates on the gradual transformation of a literary fairy tale initially specific to the French public, it is made evident, as in the case of the composition of *Rusalka* by A. Dvořák as studied by Elizabeth Harries, that European authors, composers, and editors could draw on a multiplicity of local, ethnic, and trans-European sources. This cultural pluralism is the basis of fairy-tale diffusion. Nevertheless, for certain contributions the emphasis on written and literary traditions could obscure the influence of orality and folklore in the analysis of the tales, because historically both traditions traveled.

The preface of volume 8, written by its editor Jean Mainil, draws attention to the apparent enigma of a new fairy-tale mode invading France at the turning point between Classicism and the Enlightenment. In “La Belle et la Bête en famille: Cousinages historiques et poétiques,” Jean-Paul Sermain introduces a comparatist approach to historical and poetic versions of “Beauty and the Beast.” Jean-François Perrin studies the European reception of oriental literary texts, especially the fairy tale. The contribution from Ute Heidmann explores the complex intertextual relations of Perrault’s tales with other generic forms, ranging from the works of Apuleius to those of Straparola, Basile, and La Fontaine. Jack Zipes, in his essay “Un *remake* de *La Barbe bleue*, ou l’au-revoir à Perrault,” analyzes a cinematic version of a classical fairy tale in Western culture, Catherine Breillat’s *Bluebeard*. In particular, Zipes discusses the “memetic process where overshadowing, transformation and remaking act as key functional components” (74). Daphne M. Hoogenboezem focuses on the different reception of Perrault’s and Madame d’Aulnoy’s tales in the Netherlands, and subversive readings of the classical French fairy tales in the late-nineteenth century are addressed by Glen Regard.

In “Le Chat Botté dans l’Angleterre du XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle: ‘The Infinite Cat Project,’” Catherine Velay-Vallantin studies the editorial, folkloric, and ritual logic of “Puss in Boots” in conjunction with the ritual games and processions at the Bartholomew Fair of London. She explores the effects of fairy-tale production on the world of experience as well as its impact on traditional collective imagination and examines how the invention of a folkloric tradition and the creation of a totalizing memory of the past could lead to the reversal of existing power relations.

Finally, in the concluding *Miscellanies* section, Blandine Gonsollin analyzes the disorganization of the narrative economy of de Lubert’s tales in relation to the parodic and licentious tales of the period.

Analytical critical reviews of recent scholarly bibliography as well as abstracts of the contributions in French and English are also included in both volumes.

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**Blancanieves.** Written and directed by Pablo Berger. Performed by Sofia Oria, Macareena Garcia, Daniel Giminez Cacho, and Maribel Verdu. Cohen Media Group, 2013. Film.

Events often occur in groups of threes in fairy tales. The same pattern seems to have occurred in contemporary fairy-tale films. The Grimm brothers’ “Snow White” has been adapted in recent years into three feature-length films: Tarsem Singh’s *Mirror Mirror* (2012), Rupert Sanders’s *Snow White and the*

*Huntsman* (2012), and Pablo Berger's *Blancanieves* (2013). Although Berger's *Blancanieves* lacks the American star power of *Mirror Mirror*, which featured Julia Roberts and Nathan Lane, or the elaborate special effects of *Snow White and the Huntsman*, Berger's film is the most successful and experimental of the three films. As is often the case in fairy tales, the third time is the charm.

Shot in black and white, *Blancanieves* avoids the trend of lavish special effects or 3D technology found in many recent contemporary films. Like Michel Hazanavicius's popular 2011 French film *The Artist*, which earned the Oscar for Best Picture in 2012, Berger has chosen to frame his fairy tale as a modern silent film that focuses on strong acting and a clever but appropriate reimagining of a well-known fairy tale. *Blancanieves* is set in the austere landscape of 1920s Spain. Named after the title character of Georges Bizet's opera, Berger's film transforms "Snow White" into a moody melodrama. The striking cinematography of the Iberian Peninsula is supported by a haunting score by Alfonso de Vilallonga. The many music and dance scenes in *Blancanieves*—both flamenco and the stylized movements of the bullfight—emphasize the rhythms and sensuality of the film.

The protagonist, Carmen (played as a child by Sofia Oria and as a young woman by Macarena Garcia) is the daughter of a famous bullfighter and a flamenco dancer. Her father (Daniel Gimenez Cacho) is distracted while performing in the bullring and is deeply gored before a stadium of horrified onlookers. His accident causes the premature birth of his daughter and the death of his wife in childbirth. Encarna (Maribel Verdu) is an ambitious and greedy nurse who cares for the paralyzed matador and quickly becomes Carmen's new stepmother. Only interested in her husband's wealth, Encarna isolates the once famous bullfighter from his family. She imprisons him in his wheelchair and begins to mistreat her young stepdaughter. When Encarna kills her father and plots to eliminate Carmen, the young woman manages to escape and is taken in by a traveling troupe of dwarfs who stage bullfights. Although Carmen escapes death, she suffers amnesia and does not know who she is and so is renamed *Blancanieves*, or Snow White, by the dwarfs. Using the bullfighting skills taught to her by her father, *Blancanieves* becomes a successful female bullfighter. As a popular matador, she regains her memory and identity when she performs in the ring where her father met his defeat at the opening of the film. But a moment after her professional triumph and reclamation of her identity, her stepmother, in disguise, offers her the poisoned apple.

Berger has said that he was inspired to create his film after seeing photographs of bullfighting dwarfs that he found in Cristina Garcia Redero's photography collection *Espana Occulta/Hidden Spain* (1999); he has also acknowledged direct allusions to Tod Browning's creepy 1932 film, *Freaks*. Berger's adaptation of "Snow White" is a sometimes disturbing film that is intended for a more

mature audience of teens and adults rather than the child-friendly film adaptations, such as Walt Disney's *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (1937). Just as he updates and makes this Snow White a far more active female protagonist who achieves recognition based on her skills rather than her beauty, the director also provides an ambiguous conclusion to the film that undercuts the concept of the happy ending. Blancanieves falls into a paralyzed state, and there is no handsome prince to wake her from her spell. Instead, she becomes a sideshow attraction in a traveling circus, where individuals pay to see if their kiss will wake this Sleeping Beauty. The kiss and concern of one of the dwarfs, who remains her constant guard during the imprisonment in the glass coffin, elicits a single tear. This tear hints that Blancanieves's imprisonment might be coming to an end, just as her kiss revived her father from his paralyzed state.

Although *Blancanieves* was the Spanish submission for the category of best foreign film in 2013, it did not make the Academy Awards short list for the Oscar. This fairy-tale film has had limited release in the United States, but it is well worth seeking out. I think it is far more effective in its use of the features of the silent film than *The Artist*, which was more successful. It is also the most compelling and complex of three recent film adaptations of "Snow White." After a showing of the film at the Roger Ebert Film Festival, Berger explained, "I'm not a film director. I'm a storyteller. I tell stories. I tell fairy tales." Even though *Blancanieves* dramatically shifts the setting of "Snow White" from the dark forests of Germany to the windswept bullrings of Spain, the film is a haunting and mysterious version of the tale that is both satisfying and provocative. Like Jean Cocteau's *La Belle et la Bête* (1946), or Guillermo del Toro's *Pan's Labyrinth* (2006), Berger's *Blancanieves* is a visually stunning fairy-tale film that retains the spirit of the original tale but manages to extend and add to it in provocative ways.

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***Beauty and the Beast.*** Directed by Phelan McDermott. Featuring Mat Fraser and Julie Atlas Muz. Co-produced by ONEOFUS and Improbable. The Young Vic Theatre, London, December 4–11, 2013. Performance.

London's Young Vic Theatre was the place to be last winter for anyone suffering from seasonal panto-induced ennui. Its production of *Beauty and the Beast*, a co-production between ONEOFUS and Improbable, was a welcome antidote to the usual, loosely fairy-tale-themed offerings on the theatrical calendar in Britain during the holiday period: a cure for those left disenchanting by the plethora of pantomimes, which remain a much-loved part of the festive calendar. Many things can be said for pantomimes: popular, family-friendly musical stage comedies, they are fun, raucous, loud, and almost guaranteed to

leave the audience feeling buoyant. The problem with pantomimes, or rather, the problem for anyone who takes a more serious interest in the afterlives of fairy tales, is that these shows make no attempt to engage with the fairy tales from which they glean their titles and main characters. As contemporary adaptations of classic tales, pantomimes offer little in the way of engaged response.

This unusual adaptation of *Beauty and the Beast* demonstrates that live performance can be used to startling effect to explore the latent content of a well-known story and that this material can then provide the means for exploding a few present-day myths. *Beauty and the Beast* stages a fairy tale stripped to its very core, to its “nascent patina,” to borrow a phrase from “The Tiger’s Bride,” Angela Carter’s spellbinding revision of the original French narrative. Billed as an “adult fairy tale” and directed by Phelan McDermott, Improbable’s production of *Beauty and the Beast* tells “the true love story of a natural born freak and an American beauty queen.” The “freak” is British disabled actor and musician Mat Fraser, and the beauty queen is his real-life wife, acclaimed burlesque performer (and former Miss Coney Island) Julie Atlas Muz. Renowned for magnetic routines of seductive choreography, Muz has managed that most difficult of tightrope acts and is now recognized and her work acclaimed in the mainstream as well as the underground art worlds. It was she who suggested to Fraser that they develop a collaborative performance based on “Beauty and the Beast” (presumably, given the production’s intended adult audience, Muz was thinking of Villeneuve’s tale rather than Beaumont’s more child-friendly version). The idea, she says, came from her own reading; at the time, she happened to be engrossed in *The Uses of Enchantment*, by Bruno Bettelheim.

The performance owes its shape and content largely to the adaptive ingenuity of Muz and Fraser, though the influence of McDermott is clear. The director was vital in developing a uniform and uniformly fearless show: a production that was consistent and coherent in its aims and attempts. Notably, it was McDermott who insisted that the leading couple integrate fiction and reality and interweave the recognizable story of “Beauty and the Beast” with their own personal narratives. Set-pieces of cabaret and dance bring verve and rhythm to the show, and delightful puppetry from Jess Mabel Jones and Jonny Dixon lighten the mood and keep things quirky.

Both leading actors are entralling in their respective roles: Muz as a burlesque Beauty with plenty of zest, and Fraser as a complex and often unexpectedly entertaining Beast. But it is Fraser’s performance that really defines the performance, gives it power and passion and meaning. Born with congenital phocomelia, a condition that gives him stunted, flipper-like arms and no thumbs, Fraser redefines his disability as a paradigm for beastliness. In this way he forces the audience into direct confrontation with “otherness,”

with an otherness for which, in this production, unlike in the fairy tale, there is no metamorphic magic cure. Improbable's *Beauty and the Beast* departs from the canonical ending to conclude not with the Beast being restored to perfect, human form by Beauty's transformative love, but with Beauty (in her own persona, having stepped out of her role for the climactic moment) choosing proudly and without a trace of hesitation or regret to love a disabled man.

The production must be commended for its impassioned exploration of disability-defined-as-beastliness. The only problem with this taboo-busting project is that, at times, what is supposed to be an *exploration* seems closer to an *exploitation* of disability. After all, disability is a tricky subject, and disability performance is still the ungainly elephant in the room in contemporary British theater, either marginalized as a subgenre and forced underground or else suffocated by overzealous political correctness. In equating disability with nudity, the production tries to show at every opportunity that the naked and the disabled body are merely two versions of the same thing, variants of the same vulnerable yet confrontational entity, but in so doing, it errs on the side of excess. What characterizes the performance is the surfeit of naked flesh, and judging by the interim gasps and giggles, and the postperformance conversations, it is the nudity, rather than disability, that grips the audience. Although Muz insists that the spectacle of full male and female nudity (and in the closing scene, of naked, simulated copulation) is not intended to be shocking, that is the overall effect. The shock effect does not detract, however, from the production's clear communication of its message: there is beastliness and beauty in everyone. That the show adopts a full-frontal stance to relay this message is both its weakness and its strength.

Overall, *Beauty and the Beast* makes the audience sit up and respond by delivering a production of relentless pace and passion that mixes the sexy and the serious, the charming and the painful, the tender and the shocking. What matters is not how spectators react, but that they do, that they leave the theater a little changed—even, perhaps, re-enchanted: ready to re-believe in the possibilities that contemporary theater, when done well, can offer classic fairy tales.

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***Grimm Girls: Picturing the Princess.*** The Otter Gallery, University of Chichester, Chichester, November 23, 2013–January 26, 2014. Exhibit.

A woman sits on a sofa beside a wild boar. The boar is dressed in the scarlet suit of a soldier and has his massive head turned toward her, his mouth open. The woman engages the boar in what appears to be civilized conversation over afternoon tea. A child and a wolf encircle each other. Of the same

height, they are engaged in an interaction of equals, the complexities of which are beyond us; yet the chalky, dreamtime darkness of the forest convinces us that it is a serious and significant interaction. A girl is alone in a forest. With her hand on a pine tree and her feet on its outstretched roots, she balances above a rushing red river. Neither she nor we can see what lies in front of her, yet she collects up her skirts and looks curiously into the blue-gray darkness.

Walter Crane's illustration of "Beauty and the Beast," Gustave Doré's "Little Red Riding Hood," and John Hassall's "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs"—these three images appear in the *Grimm Girls: Picturing the Princess*, an exhibition curated by Dr. Anne Anderson and supported by the Sussex Centre for Folklore, Fairy Tales and Fantasy. Both an exploration of the changing role of the fairy-tale princess and a celebration of high art in the nursery, *Grimm Girls* explores six fairy tales through their illustrations, presenting stunning examples of Pre-Raphaelite, Art Nouveau, Art Deco, and modern art, from Walter Crane to Edmund Dulac to Arthur Rackham, from Eleanor Vere Boyle to Honor C. Appleton to Jennie Harbour. The Sussex Centre also hosted an associated symposium, which featured talks from Maria Nikolayeva, Terri Windling, and Jack Zipes and included a heated debate about the role of Disney in relation to the fairy tale.

What are a tale's most crucial moments? When Red Riding Hood leaves the path? When Cinderella makes a wish? When Beauty stays? For illustration expert Edward Hodnett these are moments upon which illustrations depend. Designed around this concept, the exhibition shows each turning point through a multitude of perspectives. Both the uniformity and the diversity of images are striking. Beauty's father may encounter a knobby ogre (Edmund Dulac), a claw-footed merchant (Arthur Rackham), a silk-dressed ass (Rene Cloke), or a blue-black walrus (Eleanor Vere Boyle), yet the horror in which he makes his bargain does not change.

What of the princesses? The exhibition catalogue states: "Princesses are no longer prissy, they fight back." Yet what struck me were the complexities of power that have been attributed to the Grimm girls since their illustrations began. In contrast to her father, Beauty does not cower, and with her presence the Beast engages, whereas to her father, he simply rages. In Walter Crane's final image the invisible barrier between the two is thrust aside as Beauty lays atop the chest of the supine Beast, watching him with an intensity that seems to carry transformation in its very gaze.

Contemplating the illustrations for "Little Red Riding Hood," there is no doubt that, whatever mother, grandmother, or hunter may think, the meeting with the wolf is her own to negotiate. One of the most striking images is the exhibition's only painting, an oil by Sean Jefferson. Here, a girl in a red hoodie and stripy leggings is surrounded by mossy, yellowing trees and twisted, human-like fairies. The girl stands small but firm before a bespectacled wolf in

a long coat. She carries a daffodil behind her back, as if she knows to carry a token in order to be allowed past the underworld's gatekeeper, and yet she keeps it close, hers to offer when, and if, she chooses.

As for Cinderella, was she once a witch? The question had never occurred to me until I stood in front of her images. For Warwick Goble and Honor C. Appleton, an "absent-minded" Cinderella appears to call up other possibilities by the intensity of her dreaming gaze. When fleeing the ball, Dulac's Cinderella leans forward with outstretched arm into the night. She has the focused concentration of a shaman, soaring between worlds. So does Alice H. Watson's swanlike Cinderella, or Jennie Harbour's, who rises from her earth-bound prince in a magnificent peacock-colored robe.

The exhibition celebrates not just the power of the heroines but also the power of illustration itself, a medium as frequently belittled as the persecuted protagonists it depicts. Although inspired by Hodnett's idea of choice, curator Anderson was infuriated by his belief that illustration is not art but merely an addition to the text. In a talk given on January 22, 2014, Anderson explained that illustrators often provide their own, quite independent narratives. The Grimms' version of "Sleeping Beauty" has a kind old woman at the top of the tower and a hedge of thorns that transforms into roses when the right prince arrives. Illustrators, from Rackham onward, have shown the prince fighting his way through thorns and have placed the evil fairy as spindle guardian. These images tell their tales and shape our thinking, just as the words do.

To whom does a fairy tale belong? The symposium's debate on Disney remained unresolved, yet what struck me most forcibly about the exhibition and the symposium was the undeniable certainty that power is intrinsic to the fairy tale, just as it is to the fairy tale's protagonists. Artists—visual, verbal, or written—can only make whatever lasting contribution that the story itself allows. Fairy tales do not belong to *them*, but to *us*, whoever "them" and "us" may be. The story of the heroine, be she high-born princess or village maid, shows that whatever alien world confronts us, be it high society, the echelons of "high" academia, the commercial machinations of Disney, or the ravening beasts of the forest path, we always have the choice to hold our own.

Joanna Coleman  
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**WS.** By Paul McCarthy. *Park Avenue Armory, New York, June 19–August 4, 2013. Exhibit.*

We have a slightly different type of review for this exhibit. Rather than the traditional single-voiced authoritative review of one reviewer, it seemed appropriate to break the rules a little for this special issue and for this particular show. This review is a multivoice and multiperspective undertaking, providing

brief glimpses of the show from five of the students in Kay Turner's "Temporality in Performance" class taught as part of the graduate program of the Performance Studies Department at New York University in the summer of 2013.

Jennifer Orme, *Review Editor*  
Kay Turner, *New York University*

Paul McCarthy's installation *WS*, on display at the Park Avenue Armory drill hall in the summer of 2013, is many things. Among the words that immediately spring to mind are sordid, flashy, shocking, ostentatious, demoralizing, hilarious, bizarre, raucous, and just a bit icky. McCarthy's confrontation of issues of time and, in particular, ephemeral cultural objects is perhaps more interesting than the illustrative demonstrations of a hundred creative uses for Hershey's chocolate sauce.

*WS* is a large-scale installation that riffs off of Disney's *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*. The main component of the installation is the hours upon hours of video footage depicting an encounter with White Snow, McCarthy's alternate-universe Snow White; the nine (rather than seven) frat-bro dwarfs; and Walt Paul, a sinister alter ego of Walt Disney played by the artist himself. The narrative revolves around a reimagining of Snow White's coming upon the dwarfs' cottage and becoming a part of their world, which takes the form of an intense bacchanal filled with drinking, sex acts, bodily fluids of all kinds, and the eventual anticlimactic death of White Snow. This narrative comes in pieces and parts and is viewed on eight wall-spanning giant screens in the main room; some smaller segments screen in a series of "side chapels" in the Armory.

Issues of temporality arise in the structure of the bizarre, asynchronous narrative, but McCarthy's most intriguing play with time comes in the installation's display of physical objects. The house, the enchanted forest, and all the bits of evidence of filth, debauchery, pleasure, and destruction have been transported and placed in the dead center of the room, surrounded by the video. These pieces are the bits of preserved ephemera that call into question the entire realm of enchantment McCarthy has built in his video work. Visitors can peek through holes cut into the set for camera lenses and see the mess of food, drink, fluid, garbage, clothing, party bits, Christmas trees, ruined furniture, and life-sized silicone casts of White Snow and Walt, depicting their abjection as a permanent fixture of the space.

Experiencing the set, one is less sure how to confront the scenes of the video. The line between the realm of enchantment and the realm of the real is no longer so clean. The presence of these real objects makes us confront the pastness of the event. Suddenly, *WS* is a record of an event, one in which enchantment—for better or for worse—momentarily seeped into our world.

Taylor Black

There are plenty of temporal lenses through which one might experience Paul McCarthy's *WS*. There is its uncanny use of doubles and mirrors; or the disorienting effects of the hours of video, defying linear order by playing on loop; or the artificial forest as a perverse Garden of Eden, existing outside, before, or at the beginning of time. What speaks most to me is the house at the center of the installation and the means by which it complicates our understanding of evidence, temporal order, and linear storytelling. Most viewers, drawn to the dazzling centerpiece of the installation, peer into the house before they watch the videos in the bunkers; thus we witness the remnants of Dionysian excess before we become privy to the events that produced them. The house, then, is as much crime scene as diorama: it is a snapshot of *after*, positioning the viewer as detective. She deduces what she can about the beginning, with access only to the end.

*Rebecca LeVine*

The experience of walking through McCarthy's massive, temporally multiplicitous world induced an overwhelming sensation in me that can be described by Carolyn Dinshaw's phrase: "temporal vertigo." This temporal vertigo did not merely remain within the confines of the Park Avenue Armory; it brought me in and out and spun me around not only the various times and spaces of the *WS* video footage and live sets, but also the various times and spaces that I have experienced throughout my life. In this way, it seemed that McCarthy invited each of our individual streams of temporal experience into the installation, which is filled with various curated streams of temporal experience. *WS* emphasizes audience members' status as characters in an asynchronous story, elevating us from mere detached spectators to implicated witnesses.

*Kiera Bono*

An overwhelming sensory experience, *WS* is both vile and beautiful, haunted and empty. I entered the installation running slightly late. It was rainy and humid; I was feeling acutely sensitive. This influenced the way I saw the exhibit, which resonated with me in a most violent way. There are many elements of *WS* running simultaneously, creating a disjointed experience out of time. One must devote no less than a whole afternoon to fully feel the breath of the entire project.

Upon entering the space, one is hit with a wave of cacophonous sound and visuals. Across the walls, several screens project films of sex, violence, and partying between White Snow, the Dwarfs, Walt, and the Prince. This is not your typical fairy tale. The house party lies at the center of the drama, where characters representing the wholesomeness of American values derail into debauchery. A major element at play here is chaos.

At the center of the piece is a larger-than-life forest surrounding the house where the party occurs. One can peer voyeuristically into the doorways and windows to see the naked figures of Walt and WS, the remnants of food and broken bottles, the traces of ephemera that are typically discarded after a house party. The house sits at the edge of the forest, which the spectator can walk through, awestruck at the giant artificial trees, plants, and animals. The forest is littered with sounds of bugs and fauna, which feed into the distorted sounds from the video. It is here, in the forest, that time stands still. As I wandered through the entire space, I felt overwhelmed with images of violence and extreme sexuality. I felt that the only place I could remove myself from it was to go into the forest. In the forest I encountered a moment of reprieve and wonderment; I was Snow White and time stood still.

Within WS the horror of the images seems to question the very heart of what enchantment means. As one walks through the forest, one only has to tune into the surrounding sounds to hear the awfulness of this tale. My visceral reaction throughout the whole installation was one of disgust. I questioned McCarthy's motives behind the piece. Was he distorting the traditional tale into a contemporary statement on disenchantment? The more I think about the work, the more it becomes evident that McCarthy plays with these ideas as a means to question the temporality of enchantment. Within the utopian grounds of the forest, time stands still. The farther I moved from the center, the more aware of time passing I became. The purity of White Snow's image is broken here. It transgresses into the dirtiness of the fast-moving sounds and images unfolding rapidly around the still forest.

*Melissa West*

To think about the tale of Snow White that you know is already an exercise in traveling back in time: to childhood, to hearing or reading the story, to seeing the animated movie, and to enacting the fairy tale itself in your plastic Disney princess dress. Although the characters plucked from the story are familiar, the moments we witness in McCarthy's versions of them only faintly echo the traditional narrative. Viewers are simultaneously brought into the enchanted land of childhood and forcibly removed from it. One becomes an observer in the artist's childhood home as he recalls the memories of the adults in his life. This compelling and grotesque remembrance of childhood is especially visible in the last few hours of the seven-hour film on the main screens, as the various Snows, Walt Paul, and the Dwarfs descend into a drunken and deadly bacchanal.

Inundated with stimuli from White Snow's journey, the final scenes are particularly disorienting as you start to wonder if you, too, are blind drunk and confused and whether you've seen this part before or not. In the screening

rooms on the side are shorter films about parts of White Snow's tale, with titles such as "Cooking Class," "The Contract," and "Living with Walt." These shorter films are not told in a specific order but display increasingly complicated dynamics of power, gaze, and "reality" for White Snow and Paul-Walt, which can be particularly frustrating for the viewer. The layers of time for the characters, for the artist who is reckoning with his own childhood, and for the viewer attempting to trace a storyline both contradict each other and blend together in the exhibition.

WS's disjointedness is an overwhelming experience in durational spectatorship, the dark hall of the Armory is like a Las Vegas casino, a world unto itself without windows or clocks, the passage of time unmarked except by the ache in the viewer's lower spine. WS is worth seeing, if only for the striking Technicolor images it will leave you with—although I can't tell you what you will get out of it, considering that I am still not sure what I got out of it.

*Cassidy Hollinger*