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Reviews

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REVIEWS

The Mabinogion. Translated with an introduction and notes by Sioned Davies, Oxford University Press, 2018, 293 pp.

In her critical translation of *The Mabinogion*, Sioned Davies, Chair of Welsh at Cardiff University, prepares readers to encounter the classic collection of “eleven medieval Welsh prose tales” in both linguistic and historical contexts (i). Davies begins her critical introduction by providing a succinct, yet thorough, definition of what the *Mabinogion* is and how it came to be in its current state. She does so through a short explanation of the Welsh term *mabinogi* and history of the tales as a collection, beginning with Lady Charlotte Guest’s original English translation in the nineteenth century. This contextualized definition explains the thematic background of the title and the tales once believed to have been intended for an audience of young boys as a result. As Davies claims, “[I]t needs to be emphasized that *Mabinogion* is no more than a label, and a modern-day one at that: the stories vary as regards date, authorship, sources, content, structure, and style. . . . [T]he *Mabinogion* have taken on a life of their own, and earned their place on the European and world stage” (x). This critical translation seeks to clarify and support this claim for the sake of highlighting the cultural significance of the tale collection to Welsh and to European history.

Subsequently, Davies’s introduction proceeds to lay out and explain the implied sections of the collection, drawing historical and content connections between certain tales without overdirecting the readers in how we ought to interpret the relationships. The first four tales have been inextricably linked by their common hero, Pryderi, and shared closing line “and so ends this branch of the Mabinogi.” This group, the *mabinogi* proper or “Four Branches of the *Mabinogi*” (x) form the only truly distinct group, though the link between them is still “fairly tenuous” according to Davies (xi). The remaining seven tales have no clear groupings despite myriad attempts that scholars have made at classifying them. Davies explains why these attempts have been unsuccessful and maintains her own deduction that these are a collection of “independent and

extremely diverse tales” that “provide a snapshot of the storyteller’s repertoire, and give us an insight into the wealth of narrative material that was circulating in medieval Wales” (xiii). Davies’s introduction accomplishes this goal by pointing out patterns and differences in the tales rather than delineating classifications for them in absolute terms, providing readers the proper context and opportunity to contemplate their own interpretations.

The most unifying commonality in the *Mabinogion* is the tales’ clear basis in the oral tradition and “narrative techniques of medieval storytellers” (xiii). After describing the significance of oral storytelling and the role of a poet or bard in medieval Welsh culture, Davies claims that one of her new translation’s “overriding concerns” is to try to impress on audiences the “exhilarating power of performance” (xv). While the success of this aim remains too subjective to determine, the translations of the tales themselves are comparatively more accessible thanks to the clean, modernized diction and the translations that accompany Welsh names. Davies quotes Michael Cronin’s caution to translators: “[T]ranslation relationships between minority and majority languages are rarely divorced from issues of power and identity” (xxviii). The *Mabinogion* is closely linked with Welsh history and identity that began long before Guest made the first translation and continues into modern adaptations. Elements of the collection are uniquely medieval, such as the Arthurian influence; distinctively Welsh, such as the bard character Gwydion; and even geographically significant to the cross-cultural understanding of Welsh history and society that might be gained from studying the *Mabinogion*. These are tales of strange magic and complex names and words that have no clear English counterpart, but Davies helps both Welsh insiders and outsiders understand them by providing guiding tools.

This edition includes a map of Wales and a pronunciation guide that make the translation even more accessible to English speakers and fulfills the goals that Davies lays out in her translator’s note: to “convey the performability of surviving manuscript versions” and celebrate the history, culture, and values of a people through their stories without the barrier of language (xxxix). The pronunciation guide and translator’s note give due credit to the nature of such a task and contribute to setting this translation apart as a culturally and literarily contextualized reading experience in medieval Welsh prose narrative. Davies acknowledges the impossibility of reproducing medieval Wales, but does her utmost to provide the tools to “transmit to a modern-day reader these unique theatrical experiences” (xxxiii).

As a literature student, I had previously studied Lady Charlotte Guest’s translation of *The Mabinogion*. While the introduction acknowledges previous translations, particularly the first (Guest’s), and how the tales were popularized and contributed to Welsh history and culture, I find that Davies’s real

contribution in retranslating is to make the collection more accessible to modern audiences and to highlight and contextualize the collaboration of historical fact with folktale motifs, and the oral with the literary tradition by means of her critical introduction and explanatory notes. Intended for an international academic audience, those Anglophone readers interested in Welsh history, folklore, and identity may find this translation particularly engaging. Davies's introduction is comparatively short for a tale collection of such historical significance, but still sufficient to prepare us to encounter the tales individually and collectively. Overall, this critical translation is not only efficient, but a pleasurable way to experience *The Mabinogion* for both initial and repeat encounters.

Jacqueline N. Smith
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Debating Disney: Pedagogical Perspectives on Commercial Cinema. Edited by Douglas Brode and Shea T. Brode, Rowman & Littlefield, 2016, 252 pp.

In his introduction to *Debating Disney: Pedagogical Perspectives on Commercial Cinema*, underrated Disney appreciator Douglas Brode, author of the groundbreaking *From Walt to Woodstock: How Disney Created the Counterculture* (2004) and the painfully adulatory, if overreaching, *Multiculturalism and the Mouse: Race and Sex in Disney Entertainment* (2006), posits a bold claim: "No other book filled with readings on Disney has attempted to alternate negative and positive essays, as well as many others that are balanced or neutral" (xvii). Coediting with second-generation pop-culture specialist and frequent collaborator Shea T. Brode, his father, Douglas, labels this collection *postmodernist* in its measured avoidance of what the Brodes view as a "Manichaeian conflict" that seems to split academic analyses of the corporation's texts into either pro-Disney or anti-Disney camps (xvii). The pair aims to curate "infinite ways of digesting such material via the intellect, the emotions, or most impressively a critical inroad that combines both" (xvii).

The elder Brode's own two entries enact this directive through an inventive, if uneven, zeitgeist historiography that contextualizes Disney films within the cultural standards of their times. His first article performs a comparative discursive reading of the 1955 theatrical version of the reedited miniseries *Davy Crockett* (ABC, 1954–55) held up against the 1952 film classic *High Noon* in the light of that postwar era's objectivist versus altruistic frontier-hero tropes. His second piece presents a passionate defense of Walt Disney's employment of and portrayals of Jewish people as relatively inclusive and tolerant compared with those of other beloved Anglo-American literary and filmmaking auteurs of his time (for example, F. Scott Fitzgerald,

Ernest Hemingway, and director Howard Hawks). The latter article was provoked in part by performer Meryl Streep's controversial 2014 comments that the Walt Disney Company founder had been sexist and anti-Semitic, which were publicized during a National Board of Review awards ceremony that honored Emma Thompson, who starred as *Mary Poppins* creator P[amel]a L. Travers in the corporate biopic *Saving Mr. Banks* (2013). The younger Brode's contribution, the ambitiously mistitled "Seeing Black," endeavors a "critical reaction" survey of *The Princess and the Frog* (2009; 77) but extensively cites prominent mainstream film reviewers who are not African American (Roger Ebert, Manohla Dargis, and Scott Foundas). The essay sets up, in a series of straw-man arguments, selectively underdiscussed critical responses by African American online commentators (notably from *BlackVoices.com*, where incipient cultural-text readers and rising scholars of the New Black Aesthetic, such as Angela Bronner-Helm, had shared cinematic analyses with their community from the late 1990s onward) while simultaneously cherry-picking quotes from African American filmgoers who praised the movie. Without Shea T. Brode offsetting his sample with mainstream reviews from notable African American film journalists whose writing might have reflected a professional middle ground of a thoughtful yet complex range of community response (Armond White, Elvis Mitchell, and later Pulitzer Prize winner Wesley Morris), this pro-*Frog* piece, in dismissing that community's call for positive black male representation in Princess Tiana's romantic colead, amounts to much less than "balanced or neutral."

The Brodes gift newcomers to Disney scholarship with reprints of critical articles from diverse ideological perspectives of the past two decades—my favorites being political economist Janet Wasko's 2001 juxtaposition of major Disney myths against sociohistorical realities; Dorothy L. Hurley's now-classic 2005 "Seeing White: Children of Color and the Disney Fairy-Tale Princess" to which the Brode Jr. piece had no doubt aimed to respond; and Scott Schaffer's 1996 insightful critique of the firm's "Distorting" (35) and "Small Worldization" (41) of regional pasts into present-day products. They do not neglect the expected cultural-textual entries about representational politics, interspersing several that unpack changing gender and racial depictions within Disney's recent and readapted film franchises. Their dedicatedly interdisciplinary editorial mind-set also uncovers delightful treats by organizational systems specialist Rebecca Rabison, who tackles deviant, criminal, and corporate-corruption portrayals coded into the filmic Magic Kingdom; health-policy administrators and family sociologists Jeanne Holcomb, Daniel Fernandez-Baca, and Kenzie Latham, who offer a grounded, social-scientific assessment of Disney cinematic narratives about parenting

and domestic caregiving; and religion scholar Gary Laderman's findings on the firm's symbolic contributions to our collective "history of death" (163) within US popular culture.

The collection offers little in terms of nuanced reception analyses of how US audiences might respond to particular moments in specific Disney movies versus equivalent reactions of their cinematic counterparts overseas. Exceptions to this are the rare internationally themed articles on Disney's now-forgotten World War II and Cold War film and TV documentaries *Victory through Air Power* (1943), *Japan* (1953), and *Ama Girls* (1957), which reflected the company's (and the US government's) evolving political views on Japan (texts closely and historically read by Cynthia Miller and A. Bowdoin Van Riper), and Wasko's brief description of old survey data findings from the Wasko et al. 2001 Global Disney Audience Project (the summary of which did not specify film texts or worldwide regions; 14–16). "In Third World countries, a visitor can see the image of Mickey Mouse on the wall of some local cantina, Donald Duck drawn by children in the sand—with no pressure from Disney to do so, and no financial returns for them. People—not all but most people—love Disney," Douglas Brode broadly asserts of Disney-film reception in all poor nations, even as he and his coeditor, both through their anthologizing and individual research, attempt to evaluate contextual distinctions between varied US audience interpretation across diverse times and communities within this country (xvi). This monolithic conceptualization of worldwide film viewers' experiences of pleasure leaves an impression that the editors fatalistically project the homogenizing outcomes of Disney's "franchising and merchandising" tactics (xv) as a done deal globally. Insisting that the company's transmedia branding strategy constitutes, *for better or worse*, "the American way," especially after the uncritical pronouncement of the oligopolistic scripted-entertainment conglomerate as "the most American filmmaker of all time" in its capitalistic efforts towards tireless consumer-goods marketing, the Brode volume produces in a careful reader impressions other than non-Manichaeic (xv). Like the title of the 1991 Musical Celebration of the Imagination series of video homages would suggest, the book editors seem "Simply Mad about the Mouse."

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It's the Disney Version! Popular Cinema and Literary Classics. Edited by Douglas Brode and Shea T. Brode, Rowman & Littlefield, 2016, 235 pp.

Douglas Brode has positively written elsewhere on Disney's multiculturalism and influence on culture, an atypical stance, as anything carrying the Disney brand is typically "dismissed among the intellectual elite" (xiii). In his

short yet assertive introduction, the editor provides sharp counterpoints to other popular cinema and Disney critics who dismiss the company's legacy. Brode insists that, for better or worse, Disney continues the storytelling tradition of recasting tales to suit the current time—in Disney's case, modern America. Brode reasons that twentieth-century filmmakers like Disney "have as much of a right to adapt earlier texts as did [Charles] Perrault, [the Brothers] Grimm, and anyone else who rethought oral tradition on the printed page" (xvi). He states that, in editing this collection, there was a conscientious effort to include "a wide variety of Disney feature-length films, each derived from some acclaimed preexisting work," and the contributors could "be pro-, anti-, or neutral/balanced on Walt, his films, and his company" (xvii). Indeed, they run the gamut.

What follows are twenty essays on a varied selection of Disney films and their sourced counterparts, with footnotes for each entry and a general index. Arranged by the chronological release date of the Disney feature, the essays focus on twentieth-century works from the premier *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (1937) to *Tarzan* (1999). The essays do have a common topic but are too scattered in focus to qualify as thematically cohesive, partially because some are reprinted from sources as far back as the mid-1990s.

In the initial essay on *Snow White*, David McGowan agrees with Brode, saying Disney features continue the long-standing tradition of adaptation. He leads with some helpful background on the emergence of animation in cinema and Disney's role in it for unfamiliar readers. McGowan acknowledges "the level of control [the Disney film] retains and exerts" on these stories and characters, inducting them into the company brand and divorcing them from any alternative source, though he argues this still "echoes the Grimms' own process [. . .], which similarly has become canonized" (10). Others are not able to forgive such control, as some films create a (negative) replacement instead of an expansion or a (positive) cultural reinterpretation of the tale. Peggy A. Russo affirms that *Song of the South* (1946) created a stereotype of the Uncle Remus character compared to Joel Chandler Harris's version. She justifiably notes that "Disney had not created this film with a black audience in mind" (38), and the film was "a great disservice" to the source material and the culture from which it derived (40).

The authors consider other oral storytelling traditions in their entry on Robin Hood—medieval bardic songs. Furthering arguments from the introduction, they observe that the nature of oral tradition has "each temporal interpreter imparting to the piece his or her own style," so "the versions changed slightly with the passage of time" (72). Disney has made two films of the English hero: the live-action *The Story of Robin Hood and His Merrie Men* (1952) and the animated *Robin Hood* (1973). Each film has a

minstrel character who periodically narrates, recalling the tale's origins. Although the authors continually discuss oral tradition, they do not reference any specific songs or transcripts, so, as such, their entry lacks argumentative weight.

Alexis Finnerty and Douglas Brode highlight *Sleeping Beauty* (1959) in their structural analysis. They consider functions listed by Vladimir Propp and how they can easily combine with classic American/Hollywood paradigms, landing on the most culturally appealing of both. For instance, "the recurring ancient theme of good defeating evil" gives the sources and retellings wide-ranging Western appeal, partially leading to the success of Disney's cinematic adaptations (111). In all, the entry contains nothing distinctly revelatory and has little to no support for its long-reaching claims—a consistent failing of Brode's entries here.

In his essay, "From Icon to Disneyfication," Finn Hauberg Mortensen examines Hans Christian Andersen's 1837 tale, Disney's 1989 film, *The Little Mermaid*, and Edvard Eriksen's bronze statue erected in Copenhagen in 1913. Mortensen considers how each version "(re)presents a continual modification of previous cultural representations" (178). However, this essay (originally a 2008 publication) is more about the "icon" of the mermaid than Disney per se, so the relevance is tangential at best.

Although the other essays do not concern themselves with traditional fairy tales, a few add points to the legitimacy and adaptation arguments prevalent in the collection. In her analysis of the two Disney films titled *Alice in Wonderland* (1951 and 2010), Sarah Boslaugh observes how "the author[] has become merely a source that can be drawn from or ignored, portrayed faithfully when it serves [the filmmaker's] purpose or betrayed when it does not" (56). In their respective essays, Elizabeth Bell and Susan Aronstein say that Tinker Bell and Merlin have been appropriated from their sources and morphed into metonymic icons of the Disney brand, as a trail of fairy dust above the animated castle logo and the sorcerer's hat. Both signify the Disney company's collective product—magic. Unfortunately, Bell's 1996 entry is outdated, since she references how the fairy "makes no public appearances" in the theme parks (80). Yet, Tinker Bell now features in the meet-and-greet area of the parks after the release of her own animated film in 2008. Shari Hodges Holt observes how "questions of authorship are evoked by the [film's] title" of the motion-capture animated Disney's *A Christmas Carol* (2009) when juxtaposed with the opening shot of a storybook, the author clearly stated as Charles Dickens (159). The acknowledgment of the source adds literary credibility but also underscores how powerful the studio's influence is if, after viewing this scene, people will still consider the story as "Disney's."

Collectively, this book argues for consideration of “the Disney version” as one worthy of serious criticism, the same as other retellings. It furthers the conception that what is popular is not necessarily inferior. Disney films, for better or worse, are a continuation of the storytelling tradition of adaptation, even as they dominate the Western cultural mind-set.

Jeannie Coutant
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All Kinds of Fur: Erasure Poems & New Translation of a Tale from the Brothers Grimm. By Margaret Yocom, Deerbrook Editions, 2018, 88 pp.

With sensitivity and a keen eye and ear, Margaret Yocom’s new translation of the Grimms’ version of ATU 510B, “All Kinds of Fur,” is deceptively simple and beautifully insightful. A quick read, this is a welcome contribution to the growing body of work that connects the creative and critical impulses of fairy-tale work. Folklorists, fairy-tale scholars, and poets (as well as those of us who occupy more than one of those identities) will find much to enjoy, learn from, and return to in this slim book.

Fairy-tale scholars and folklorists have debated the merits of various translations, translators, and translation theories, especially in regard to the Grimms’ tales, and thus a new translation is always a pleasure to investigate. Yocom’s translation of the 1857 edition’s tale text is not terribly far from other popular translations, such as those by Jack Zipes, Maria Tatar, or D[ee] L. Ashliman. For instance, Zipes writes in his translation of the 1857 text, “When she was grown-up, the king looked at her one day and realized that her features were exactly the same as those of his dead wife. Suddenly he fell passionately in love with her” (*The Complete Fairy Tales of the Brothers Grimm*, 2003, 239). This is Yocom’s translation of the same passage: “Once, when she had grown up, the king looked at her and saw that she in every way was like his dead wife, and suddenly he felt an intense, hot-tempered love for her” (5/6). The differences are subtle, but whereas the Zipes translation allows the passionate, romantic love of the king for his daughter to pass unremarked, the Yocom version substitutes other words that make the love seem off-kilter and unhealthy, thereby interrogating the ways in which love is framed in the tale.

What Yocom changes most notably in her translation is arranging the lines by using the ethnopoetic methods pioneered by folklorists, which is a choice she defends in the afterword, stating, “Although the Grimms burnished their tales with literary language, I wanted to indicate that the oral tales they were based on resemble poetry more than prose fiction” (83). Indeed, I recommend reading Yocom’s afterword before reading the translation itself, because, for me at least, understanding some of her choices helped me appreciate the

translation and the erasure poem more. As someone who has not been exposed to much erasure poetry, for example, I benefited from seeing Yocom explain (on page 83) how the phrase “but you must be back here” (spoken by the cook to *All Kinds of Fur*) can, with erasure techniques, yield “steer.” Yocom’s playful use of language that shows the tale’s protagonist alternating between human and nonhuman/animal identities is in keeping with both creative and scholarly approaches to the tale that investigate her alterity through metaphor and symbol.

The erasure poem is overlaid by using shaded text onto Yocom’s new translation, such that if you read all the text you will get the translation, but if you only read the black text and ignore the gray-scale text, you will get the erasure poem. One example of how the text might differ is from pages 39/40, with the tale text reading,

Now, when she came into the kitchen to resume her work and sweep up the ashes, the cook said, “Leave it be until tomorrow and, instead, cook the king’s soup for me. I would also like to look on a little upstairs, but don’t you let a single hair fall in the soup, or else, in the future, you will not get anything to eat.” So the cook went away, and *All Kinds of Fur* cooked the soup for the king, a bread soup.

In the erasure poem, words are grayed out to leave us with the following text—“Now resume ashes and starfall light the way”—which is an intriguing take on the protagonist’s oscillation between kitchen and ball, creature and human, gender-neutral child and woman, and furry and celestial garments. Lines from the protagonist’s father emphasize selfishness as words like “me” emerged from the erasure poetry, whereas lines from the new king, her husband-to-be, emphasize seeing and being seen, hinting at a loneliness to be eased by someone who is hopefully his equal.

Yocom’s focus on drawing out the heroine’s transformation “from a traumatized young woman who has, over the years, faced her abuse and has come to understand that she—and all people—are both animal and human, both scarred and beautiful” is in line with my own scholarly take on the tale, as a story that chronicles incestuous abuse through the uses of coding and symbolism (84). Further, Yocom’s intellectual and artistic sensibilities make her an excellent guide to a nuance-laden revisiting of this tale. Just as *ATU 510B* refuses readers and scholars easy answers, so too does Yocom’s book tread a path of rich ambiguity and tantalizing hints towards deeper—though never absolute—meanings.

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Dancing the Fairy Tale: Producing and Performing “The Sleeping Beauty.”

By Laura Katz Rizzo, Temple University Press, 2015, 197 pp.

Just as a story changes with the teller, a dance changes in the body of the dancer. The dancer has the power to bring a beloved character to life through movement, years of training, and technical prowess, embodying centuries of tradition for a new generation. Yet the dancer's voice is often lost after she exits the stage, leaving the storytelling about ballet itself to the critics, scholars, and historians.

In *Dancing the Fairy Tale: Producing and Performing “The Sleeping Beauty,”* dance scholar Laura Katz Rizzo uses a women's studies perspective to frame the history of this iconic and challenging ballet as produced by the Pennsylvania Ballet in Philadelphia. By focusing on the women who have directed and performed *Beauty*, she rejects a perception that ballet dancers are merely silent and subservient putty for male choreographers to manipulate. Women, she says, “are literally at the center of the stage and outnumber their male counterparts by the hundreds,” and yet their power has been repeatedly overlooked by ballet critics and scholars (17). Indeed, women are the central characters of *Beauty* itself, from the vengeful and dark fairy Carabosse and the kind Lilac Fairy, to, of course, Aurora herself. Using the character of the Aurora as a metaphor, Rizzo deftly illuminates the agency and strength of the ballerina cast to play this technically demanding role and how the ballet reflects a collective desire for a world where good triumphs over evil, and we all live happily ever after.

In chapter 1, she sets the stage, accurately claiming that most writing on ballet has been from the perspective of the audience, specifically that of the male critic. She also argues that working dancers have not written significant critical work, not because they are not intelligent and articulate, but because they are not trained in the academic language of dance writing; they are trained in the rigorous steps of classical ballet. Rizzo says there is “an unfortunate gap” between the “lived experience of the ballerina and the lived experience of the ballet historian and critic” (14), which contributes to an overarching viewpoint that ballerinas are “objects of the male gaze on display for audience members and as female bodies disciplined by the political and social control of the capitalist patriarchy” (15). But without the dancers, the dance cannot exist. She explains that *Beauty* can be a metaphor for ballet itself because “ballet sleeps until it is reanimated by the dancing bodies of performers” (26).

She chooses the Pennsylvania Ballet to further shift the existing narrative of ballet history from New York City to the many successful and technically proficient professional companies around the United States, and because it was the first American company to produce *Beauty*. She caveats that her book

is not a comprehensive history or study of ballet in Philadelphia, but she includes detailed accounts of the challenges faced by the company and its directors, particularly as each production emerged in the wake of social and economic difficulties.

In chapters 2–4, she opens the curtain, revealing a detailed history of each production, starting with the ballet's lavish premier in 1890 in Saint Petersburg, Russia, to the score by Pyotr Illych Tchaikovsky and choreography by Marius Petipa, whose works helped to shape the technique and popular perception of the classical ballet canon. Indeed, each subsequent production of *Beauty* is inevitably compared to this original, but she reminds us that, because this production appeared before the advent of film, it will never be reproduced exactly. Even if we did have a full score (sections of the ballet have been preserved in Benesh notation, a system to document dance and human movement), each generation of dancers has their own unique bodies, technical skill, and lived experiences.

She then describes the first professional *Beauty* with a live orchestra in the United States in Philadelphia in 1937, under the leadership of dancer Catherine Littlefield. With ingenuity and limited resources, Littlefield not only produced a relatively opulent and well-received *Beauty*, providing a much-needed escape for audiences beleaguered by the Great Depression, but also trained her company in a kind of hybrid form of ballet inspired by vaudeville and the likes of Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers.

Rizzo then describes *Beauty*'s second awakening in 1965, produced by Barbara Weisberger, against the backdrop of modernism, the civil rights movement, and second-wave feminism. Weisberger struggled to bring the tale of a benevolent monarchy to a generation suspicious of class stratification with pared-down costumes (only one tutu), minimalist sets, and new choreography. Rizzo illuminates the tension between *authentic* and *contemporary*, as traditionalists found Weisberger's *Beauty* to be an affront to earlier classical interpretations. Despite receiving support and even full choreographies from George Balanchine, Weisberger struggled, eventually being ousted from her own company.

In chapter 5, Rizzo adds to her archival research with interviews with three dancers cast as Aurora in two recent productions—1997 and 2002—giving them voice in a field where dancers are perceived to be silent, supporting her initial claim that ballet dancers have creative and bodily agency. Despite ballet being a “formal syntax,” the dancers “use the vocabulary of classical dance to formulate their own artistic voice” (117). Through her interviews, she finds that playing Aurora is a “ritual enactment of tradition” in which the lead dancer grows from ballet dancer to ballerina, just as the princess becomes a queen. Rizzo summarizes her book with a brief history of the Charles Perrault

fairy tale on which the ballet is based, its interpretations since the seventeenth century, and how Aurora signifies the power and resilience of women in the face of tradition, patriarchy, and social change.

Dancing the Fairy Tale emphasizes the “Dancing” over the “Fairy Tale.” Rizzo writes for scholars of dance history and balletomanes looking for a feminist perspective on American ballet history, and she expects her audience to be familiar with the ballet canon, choreographers, and step names. However, for folklorists seeking histories of how fairy tales are embodied through performance, Rizzo’s research could be quite valuable, particularly for scholars seeking feminist perspectives.

Abigail Keyes

Independent Dance Writer and Educator

Making a Splash: Mermaids (and Mermen) in 20th and 21st Century Audio-visual Media. By Philip Hayward, John Libbey Publishing, 2017, 211 pp.

Philip Hayward’s *Making a Splash* was published in 2017 in a small spate of research monographs on the mermaid theme. These included Tara E. Pedersen’s *Mermaids and the Production of Knowledge in Early Modern England* (2015), Lucy Fraser’s *The Pleasures of Metamorphosis: Japanese and English Fairy Tale Transformations of “The Little Mermaid”* (2017), and Jennifer A. Kokai’s *Swim Pretty: Aquatic Spectacles and the Performance of Race, Gender, and Nature* (2017). Hayward’s work goes some way to explaining, perhaps, this academic trend: the book details waves of popularity of mermaid films and television, including recent vogues. It covers “all feature films and television programs that have included substantial representations of mermaids or mermen” in North America, Europe, and Australia from 1904 to 2015 (3). Though Hayward excludes animations apart from Disney’s and a few others, and acknowledges that he may have missed some productions, it is difficult to imagine that anyone is more qualified than he is to critique any omissions. The book offers an encyclopedic collection of sources that will prove essential for anyone working on this topic.

Making a Splash does not engage much with fairy-tale studies but has several points of appeal for researchers in the field. Working from a base in cultural studies (and thereby engaging with adjacent fields such as literary studies, art history, and musicology), Hayward takes up the concept of *media lore* as developed by the Russian Laboratory of Theoretical Folkloristics, which understands screen-based communication as a third type of cultural knowledge distinct from oral and literary communication (18). Analysis is then framed by psychoanalytic theory, particularly Freudian, Jungian, and Lacanian ideas. These are certainly well suited to unpicking Hans Christian Andersen’s influential fairy tale.

Chapter 1 focuses on such psychoanalytic readings of Andersen's story and of Disney's *The Little Mermaid* (1989), then turning to an informative range of audiovisual responses to the sexualization of mermaid Ariel, including pornographic parodies. As a result, this chapter provides vital context to screen depictions of mermaids but somewhat neglects the topic of children as mermaid fans, though they are the main target audience for both the Danish fairy tale and the Disney adaptation.

Chapters 2–4 likewise focus on films and novels for adults and the issue of the mermaid's identity, sexuality, and sexual appeal. Chapter 2 explores the "allure" of "fixed-form" mermaids (who do not metamorphose), particularly for the heterosexual male gaze, with special reference to films and plays from the 1940s and 1950s (56–66). Chapter 4 also focuses on sexual appeal, but this time through the figure of the "transformative mermaid" who "switches with relative ease" between different physical forms, which is a depiction that was institutionalized by the 1984 romantic comedy *Splash* (92). The value of the media-lore frame shines here in the author's comparison of this blockbuster film with nonmainstream products such as pornographic parodies, feminist mermaid-themed pornography, and more ephemeral representations such as social media posts and a short film featuring a performance artist known as the Permaid (105–07).

Chapter 3, "Sonic Seduction: Mermaid Vocality and Its Expression in Screen Soundtracks," which is coauthored with Jon Fitzgerald, takes a musicological approach, which is an ideal lens for understanding audiovisual representations of the mermaid and the complex issues of gender, identity, and voice that weave through mermaid stories—Andersen's tale in particular. Here, technical but accessible explanation of film soundtracks and vocal techniques is used to show how speaking and singing voices, as well as music and sound effects, can and do deftly convey the multiple meanings of mermaids.

Chapter 5 then shifts from the male gaze to feminine identifications with mermaids, here exemplified by Sue Monk Kidd's novel *The Mermaid Chair* (2005) and the film adaptation of the same title (2006). Children's mermaid culture, while not the focus of these initial chapters, is addressed by chapter 6, which is a fascinating exploration of the twenty-first-century phenomenon of mermaid fan cultures, particularly of tween and teen girls. The chapter first looks at influential film and television representations in this sphere and then describes the recent growth of practices of "mermaiding," such as professional mermaid performers and cosplayers. Finally, it examines "aficionado productions" (143–48), noting the huge number of young people's amateur mermaid videos posted on *Youtube* and the like. One of these short clips had reached over 37 million views at the time of Hayward's writing (and has now exceeded 55 million). These videos constitute a significant, lively engagement with fairy

tales and folklore that has been largely overlooked. As Hayward notes, it is significant that the mermaid figure seems to offer a more liberating and positive identity for its young performers than has been associated with adolescent girls in previous research.

Chapter 7, “At the Margins: Mermen on the Screen,” notes the comparative lack of representations of mermen. It considers the troubling connotations of a merman’s physical body for masculine identities. Chapter 8 then pivots to a closer look at Animal Planet hoax documentaries that manufacture evidence and present reportage on the existence of merfolk in a way that “blur[s] the distinction between fiction and factual media production” (184). The inclusion of this pseudo-nonfiction format enriches the understanding of this complex topic as, of course, conventionally merfolk stories pitch themselves as *magical*.

Making a Splash offers an in-depth look at primary sources, and as such in parts it is quite summary heavy. Nevertheless, it effectively reveals the way audiovisual mermaid cultures exist as part of an interactive media lore that operates far beyond static screen stories (17). It would be wonderful to see these films and television programs put into conversation with stories in other media, and from other languages or cultures, and those that feature other imaginary creatures. Hayward has developed some of these possibilities himself in his follow-up volume *Scaled for Success: The Internationalisation of the Mermaid* (2018), in which he and others examine merpeople in diverse cultural contexts.

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The Maltese Cinderella and the Women’s Storytelling Tradition. By Veronica Veen, Self-published, 2017, 236 pp.

This is a book that we expected to like, but about which our feelings are mixed. That a version of “Cinderella,” learned by oral transmission, was still being told by a Maltese woman in the first decade of this century is of inherent interest and proves again that rumors of the demise of *Märchen* (fairytale) in European oral tradition are exaggerated. Archaeologist/cultural anthropologist/art historian Veronica Veen recorded the tale of *il-Germudija*, the Sooty One, from Marija (1913–2008)—she is not further identified—in 1992, with the assistance of Gianna, Marija’s niece, also a storyteller, who appears throughout the book as Veen’s consultant on women’s life and storytelling in Malta. All well and good, except that we learn far less about Marija than we do about Veen, who cannot let go of a fight—never quite explained—that she had with Maltese authorities over an archaeological excavation in the 1980s. Veen’s preoccupation with this dispute becomes an irritation to even a sympathetic

reader: the writer gets in her own way. A book that has many sound ideas, and follows an appropriate ethnographic method, is betrayed by eccentric disregard of scholarly conventions, unsupported assertions, and a stream-of-consciousness writing style, all of which could have been fixed by an editor and peer review.

In chapter 1, Veen discusses storytelling settings in Malta and the background of the “dynasty of tellers” from whom Marija descended. Surprisingly Marija “always mentioned male tellers as sources” (19), a point that Veen might have queried had she been aware of Bengt Holbek’s distinction between male-centered and female-centered tales, and his finding that, while men did not like to tell women’s tales, women would tell tales of both genders (*Interpretation of Fairy Tales: Danish Folklore in a European Perspective*, 1987, 168). Awareness of Holbek’s concept of tales as projective screens for showing critical conflicts, as between mothers-in-law and daughters-in-law, would also have spared her from the error of suggesting that this vexed relationship was a particularly Maltese cultural phenomenon rather than one of the drivers of female-centered fairy tales internationally (28).

Chapter 2 presents several Cinderella tellings by Gianna and, at last after 47 pages, Marija’s version. The tale is translated from Maltese to English by Gianna, and Veen gives a detailed account of the telling situation with sensitive commentary based on discussion with the two narrators. It is to Veen’s credit that she allows us to see these transcripts of her interview with Gianna; her method is to bring the reader into the process of interpreting her encounters with the tales and their tellers. It becomes clear that one of the fascinations of the Cinderella story for Veen is that it bears on her own experience as a step-daughter, as well as that archaeological dispute: “[T]he Cinderella story is also about me!” (59).

These two chapters are the strongest, and most of interest to folklorists and fairy-tale scholars. The book as a whole requires patience with misrepresentations of scholarship. For example, in chapter 3 Veen overestimates the reality of ATU types, not recognizing the incredible variety of actual manifestations, resulting in problematic conclusions like “Though the Maltese Cinderellas are basically Catskins ([AT] 510B), as far as we want to ‘typologize’ them, their assertivity is more in Basile’s common Cinderella/Zezolla-line ([AT] 510A)” (79). Laboring under the misapprehension that the only, or most, “energetic and determined” Cinderellas are from Malta, Veen displays her limited knowledge of the tale type in general, as well as of the freedom tellers may take in narrating the tale as they wish. In fact, she wavers between a literary assumption of some kind of fixed text and the more interesting one of a “huge cloud of motifs” (she intends the digital storage analogy) from which tellers choose whatever elements serve their tastes and needs (93). It is not true,

however, that “most collectors, still today” make composite texts of tales recorded in the field; anyone trained in folkloristics since at least the 1940s knows this is a cardinal sin (93).

Chapter 4 discusses the collectors of Maltese fairy tales, which is a useful contribution, as well as the Sicilian Laura Gonzenbach, whom Veen particularly admires (129).

The final chapter draws together **“some loose but important threads left,”** but only the most patient of readers will have persisted (boldface in original, 194). So much good scholarship is available on women narrators and symbolic/cultural anthropological implications in female-centered tales, in Southern European cultures, that Veen could have reflected on here: for example, James M. Taggart’s *Enchanted Maidens: Gender Relations in Spanish Folktales of Courtship and Marriage* (1990), Marisa Rey-Henningsen’s *The Tales of the Ploughwoman* (1996) of Galicia, and Isabel Cardigos’s *In and Out of Enchantment: Blood Symbolism and Gender in Portuguese Fairytales* (1996). None of these gets into the selected and annotated bibliography, but then, as Veen says, “Bibliographies tend to be bombastic exercises in what I call showing-off science” (228). We plead guilty.

We are saddened that Veronica Veen’s self-funded fieldwork, her detailed analysis, and all the effort of self-publishing in her second language have resulted in a book that, due to her sense of her own victimhood—Cinderella’s sooty stage—and lack of an editor to rein in her tendency to dart off on a tangent, does not do her justice. Nevertheless, all credit to her for seeking out the teller and listening to an oral tale, taking the trouble to think deeply about its strangeness, history, and meanings, when most academics hurry by.

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L’Orientale allégorie: Le conte oriental au XVIII^e siècle (1704–1774) [The Oriental Allegory: The Oriental Tale in the XVIIIth Century (1704–1774)]. By Jean-François Perrin, Honoré Champion, 2015, 310 pp.

From Antoine Galland’s 1704 *Les Mille et une nuit* (The Thousand and One Nights) to Voltaire’s 1774 *Le Taureau blanc* (The White Bull), French Oriental tales were a genre without a proper critical study. Jean-François Perrin has filled that gap in fairy-tale and eighteenth-century studies. Drawing on the wealth of knowledge he has accrued since founding *Féeries* (Fairy Play), an online journal dedicated to eighteenth-century and nineteenth-century tales, Perrin establishes the Western Oriental tale as an eclectic genre whose core texts share common ground in the *Nights* but

exhibit vastly different poetic styles. The book argues that, once Galland reworked Oriental tales in salon French with a reputation for flippant double entendre, he set the stage for a wild Enlightenment romp with Eastern allegory, from hybrid montages to libertine and parodic satires (15). In a parade of wit that Perrin considers a vogue within the fairy-tale vogue launched in the 1690s, we meet writers as diverse as Antoine Hamilton, François Pétis de la Croix, Thomas Gueullette, Crébillon fils, Jacques Cazotte, Louis de Cahusac, Voltaire, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau, among others. The book conversely offers new insight into the global impact of the *Nights* by identifying it as the catalyst of a wholesale reconfiguration of the literary landscape in France (59).

The first part of the book, “Genèses,” provides an overview of the *conte oriental à la française* (French Oriental tale) as Perrin will treat it, with chapters on its main progenitors, Antoine Galland, Hamilton, and Voltaire. Part 2, “Poétiques,” takes up four styles that exemplify the literary ingenuity of writers that transformed Middle Eastern and Asian tales into French Enlightenment allegory. In part 3, “Problématiques,” Perrin explores four topics mined from the French Oriental tale—the nature of enchantment and the participation of the reader, reincarnation, gender politics, and the science of sleep—against the backdrop of eighteenth-century intellectual history.

In contradistinction to Edward Saïd, Perrin considers the *Nights* an early ethnographic project (272). Galland, a learned Orientalist, translated stories from the East to teach “un savoir authentique des réalités orientales” (authentic knowledge of Eastern realities) to the uninitiated Westerner and fashioned the Orient as a mirror of European ideas and values (32). Writers Perrin would call imitators took up what Voltaire would dub the “Mille et un” (thousand and one) framing device and spun it to marvelously diverse purposes. Like Galland, Pétis de la Croix (*Les Mille et un jour* [The Thousand and One Days], 1710–12) and Gueullette (*Les Mille et un quart d’heures* [The Thousand and One Hours], 1733) both had extensive knowledge of the East—Pétis traveled and Gueullette read voraciously—and showcased it in the sophisticated humor of the French literary tale and the serial structure of the *Nights*. Drawing real-world influence “de tous les rayons de la bibliothèque” (from library books, 156), Gueullette, for example, created pastiches of the East, what Perrin calls “paradoxical fictions” (265). One of them, his *Contes chinois* (Chinese Tales, 1723) features as its framing device a narrator who recounts all of his reincarnated lives.

A second line of imitators, beginning with Hamilton’s tales published posthumously in 1730 and up through Voltaire and Rousseau, ironized and satirized Galland’s “style allégorique à l’orientale” (allegorical Oriental style, 16). These Hamiltonesque tales are antipedagogical satires of the

East (36). They weigh down the core features of the *Nights*—its frame, its décor, its interpolated coherence—with extravagant features of European romance to produce fantastical, libertine, and absurd storylines filled with every manner of persiflage, from burlesque parody (Hamilton) to oversexed furniture (Crébillon fils).

Of the two lines Perrin traces, satirists à la Hamilton are the core of the book's interest. Satire shattered the coherence of the *Nights* to establish a "régime métافictionnel distancié" (distanced metafictional regime) that depends on and toys with the reader's knowledge of Galland's strategies and motifs (70). Among the satirists, Perrin highlights Crébillon fils for his particularly extravagant ingenuity, Voltaire for philosophizing with the Oriental tale, and Rousseau for using it to engage political issues. The *Nights* offers a new vantage point even on well-trodden paths like Voltaire's philosophical tales. By linking his "Mille et un" to Galland, Gueullette, and Hamilton (whose work circulated in manuscript form as Voltaire began to write tales), Perrin suggests that the rhythmic wit and cycle of skepticism endured by Voltaire's famous characters owe a debt to French Oriental tales.

These two lines influenced by the *Nights* nevertheless share common ground. French Oriental tales are a pastiche of cross-cultural poetics and themes borrowed from fabliaux and older European tales, Orientalist travel literature, and the fantastical tales told within the embellished, often quite fictional, travelogues of the period. They are an unruly genre that pose "problèmes à la fois passionnants et délicats" (exciting and delicate issues) for the critical reader hoping, as Perrin does here, to tease out their sources and impact (9). An example of the complexities Perrin untangles is Crébillon fils' *LEcumoire, ou Tanzaï et Néadarné* (The Skimmer, or Tanzaï and Néadarné, 1734), a fairy tale and wish tale with faux-Eastern characters with absurd names and libertine predilections, whose magic object is a mundane but wicked kitchen skimmer.

In an uncommon poetic move, Perrin uses the epilogue to become a *persifleur* of the *Nights* himself, creating a *mise en abyme* of the book's argument and suggesting that the influence of the *Nights* goes on. The book's great contribution is that it gathers up breadcrumbs Perrin has been leaving for years into a master argument about how the *Nights* transformed French literary style through the pens of Galland's imitators. He reveals an extensive, if sometimes overwhelming, web of connection among disparate writers by identifying their shared sources and poetic similarities. Scholars of French fairy tales and eighteenth-century literature will marvel at the sheer number of tales treated here—handily listed in an index—from a period famously known for its *lack* of fairy-tale production. Perrin's montage is food for thought about the role of satire in fairy-tale history and

fodder for new insight into the relationship among the *Nights*, Orientalism, and Enlightenment thought.

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Patricia A. McKillip and the Art of Fantasy World-Building. By Audrey Isabel Taylor; McFarland, 2017, 180 pp.

Audrey Isabel Taylor begins her book with this statement: “This is a book about critical world-building” (7). While this may seem obvious or trite, it succinctly covers the main point of her book—to exemplify how to consider world-building critically by examining the world-building of a single author. Her main claim is that world-building should be studied critically, especially in the fantasy genre, because world-building is more complex than creating a simple setting. Taylor divides up different elements of world-building and then discusses how they were employed by Patricia A. McKillip across multiple novels.

Taylor starts off by defining her terms and approach in chapter 1. She explains what she means by such terms as “world” (7), “elements” (10), and “world-building” (13). Her basic premise is that world-building is different than selecting a setting; it serves more purpose than merely being an “intriguing artistic location” (12). Her concept of world-building includes extrinsic things like cities and landscapes, as well as intrinsic things like legends, politics, and relationships. She concludes by examining how various people view world-building: specifically, the author, the reader, and the critic.

Chapter 2 moves on to discuss fantasy conventions. Taylor explains that tropes or common elements of fantasy create expectations for readers, which authors then either meet or frustrate, exactly like in mainstream literature. She briefly discusses archetypes such as “the hero with the thousand faces” but explains she wishes to keep her discussion lighter than the term archetype allows (36). She gives an example of how McKillip subverts tropes in *The Tower at Stony Wood* (2000) by giving the maiden-in-the-tower story a feminist revision twist (40–42).

In chapter 3, Taylor discusses how important characters are to world-building. She explains that how characters interact with the world demonstrates how readers should understand the world. Her discussion of McKillip’s characters encompasses how age, gender, training, and temperament all affect the ways in which characters view their worlds and in turn how readers understand the fantasy world, as well as their own world. Taylor argues that characterization is essential to effective world-building.

Chapter 4 extends the argument by discussing how legends, as told and understood by characters, affect McKillip’s storytelling. Taylor presents many

examples of little legend bits that give McKillip's novels an extra layer of history and depth, and is a device Tolkien also used. One example comes from *The Forgotten Beasts of Eld* (1974): "Cyrin the Boar, for example, is introduced thus: Sybel's father 'caught like a salmon the red-eyed, white-tusked Boar Cyrin, who could sing ballads like a harpist, and who knew the answers to all riddles save one' (4)" (94). This example demonstrates how bits of legend become part of descriptions in McKillip's work, creating the sense of age and tradition common to tales told in the ordinary world. Taylor expounds on how using legends creates authority in McKillip's novels.

Taylor then discusses traditional setting elements in chapter 5 ("Pastoral Landscapes") and chapter 6 ("Cities"). These chapters explore the different ways the setting shapes the tales by the possibilities inherent in the physical location. The pastoral landscape creates a deeper relationship between characters and the natural environment, whereas the cities focus more on the complicated relationships between people, both familial and political. She draws on examples from multiple books in each of these chapters and compares and contrasts different relationships McKillip explores in her work.

Taylor's book ends with her reflections on the multifaceted topic of world-building as explored throughout her book and sets up a space in the critical conversation for more discussion to follow.

One thing done well in this book is how deeply Taylor examines the critical conversation, even as she argues we should be extending the conversation in new directions. She not only talks about what people are saying about fantasy, but she explores other critical conversations, too. For example, when she argues that some of McKillip's worlds are reminiscent of Renaissance Italy, she pulls from the critical conversation on the political and artistic facets of Renaissance Italy. When she discusses the uses of pastoral landscapes, she draws on the conversation about pastoral landscapes in classic literature and how they function there. Her deep awareness and understanding of critical conversations and her seamless integration of these sources into her writing are truly excellent scholarship. Her works cited section is thorough and well rounded, and her chapter notes are generous in their crediting other authors for their inspiration and insights.

Another thing worthy of note is that Taylor signposts for her readers extensively. She discusses a large canon of texts, but she makes sure readers know in any given paragraph which text she is dealing with currently. She summarizes exactly what readers need to know at a given point rather than the entire text, and her summaries effectively keep her book moving rather than bogging it down with unnecessary details. This method of signposting also encourages readers to read McKillip's novels for themselves—it creates interest without giving away everything there is about each book.

Although there are many good things about this book and its writing, the introduction to critical world-building moves very slowly. It may be difficult to gauge how quickly to move through an area one is attempting to expand and possibly even introduce to some, but the book drags a bit until Taylor moves into analyzing McKillip's work. Once she does start analyzing, she uncovers enough interesting concepts to keep several graduate students busy writing theses for many years, which certainly bolsters her claim that there is much work to be done in studying the world-building aspect of fantasy critically.

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Tales of Wonder: Retelling Fairy Tales through Picture Postcards. By Jack Zipes, University of Minnesota Press, 2017, 248 pp.

Jack Zipes collects fairy-tale postcards—a lot of them. He has been collecting fairy-tale postcards for fifty years. In his book *Tales of Wonder*, readers are given a rare and unusual glimpse into his personal collection of over 2,500 fairy-tale postcards, culled from antique fairs and flea markets all over the world. He has curated 500 postcards from his collection, creating a large, coffee-table art book that will appeal to scholars and lay people alike.

Fairy-tale postcards at first might seem like a niche topic, perhaps for collectors only. However, this is not the case; each postcard in the book is a work of art. In the introduction, Zipes says that “the significance of these popular cards has largely been ignored by collectors, scholars of cultural studies and folklore, and the general public” (xiii). This is surprising, as these postcards offer unusual and often uncommon visual interpretations of well-known fairy tales. Postcards are relatively inexpensive and readily obtainable by almost anyone. Yet, while fairy-tale postcards are affordable and part of popular culture, they enable the viewer to experience completely new artistic interpretations of favorite tales through new artworks. Zipes refers to postcards as “an extraordinary popular art” (xiii).

The postcards mostly range from the late nineteenth century to the 1950s. The excellent foreword by Marina Warner and the comprehensive introduction are extremely helpful in providing context and history for fairy-tale postcards as a phenomenon. Early postcards from 1895 to 1915 start off the book, along with a section on storytelling. Then, eight of the most well-known fairy tales in the Western world are presented with various postcards from 1900 to 2000. Each of these sections contains an introduction to the history of the tale. Also included are sections on other popular Grimms' stories, Hans Christian Andersen's fairy tales, Russian tales, and “fairy-tale novels” like *Peter Pan* and *Alice in Wonderland* (175). These are followed by a chapter on the reach of

fairy-tale postcards globally. In the final two sections, Zipes presents postcards that were created in a series: the first section is of photographic postcards (with two fantastic and very different French versions of “Bluebeard”), and the second is of art postcards, which includes individual artists commissioned to make a series. These two chapters show how some publishers would completely reimagine a tale or tales. Finally, Zipes ends with a concluding chapter on storytelling, musing on what storytelling means in our overwhelmingly technological contemporary world.

The postcards are in a wide variety of artistic styles, and various art movements are evident: there’s a smattering of Art Nouveau, one or two nods to the Symbolist movement, one influenced by Impressionism, and even a hint of the Pre-Raphaelite movement in one especially stunning Austrian portrayal of “The Frog Prince.” Sometimes a postcard is reconfigured as specific to a place, as in a “Rip Van Winkle” card that reads “Greetings from the Catskills.” There are stylized cards, like the Russian *Pinocchio* in which the characters are surrounded by abstract and flat folk-art details. Particularly amusing is to see all of the different imaginings of the same story. In a particularly menacing photographic French card from the 1900s illustrating “Little Red Cap,” a wolf bares its fangs at the camera, and the whole scene looks like something out of a horror film. In another French photographic series of the same tale, an emaciated wolf manages to look insane and terrified at the same time, while Little Red Cap placidly looks on. And, in an American cartoon version from the 1920s, the wolf has become a snappy dresser in a convertible, whistling at a woman on a street corner. The caption reads, “Who’s afraid of the big bad wolf?” Overall, the disparate styles of the postcards are organized in a way that is not visually jarring. And the artwork in this book is so fascinating and diverse that one cannot digest it all at once; this book is meant to be returned to again and again.

Every time one of these fairy tales is retold visually, the meaning of the tale changes slightly again, and that meaning layers itself onto the palimpsest of meanings and interpretations of well-known fairy tales that have accumulated over the centuries. Zipes’s book gives us new windows of interpretation of the stories, as well as a glimpse of history through the humble postcard. In *Breaking the Magic Spell* (1979), Zipes says that folktales and fairy tales “can cultivate the germs of subversion and offer people hope in their resistance to all forms of oppression” (21). Fairy tales can offer an alternative to capitalist interests and tyrannical governments. They suggest utopias, new ways of structuring society that are perhaps more fair and just than our present ones, Zipes says. As we know, in fairy tales good often prevails, and the poor and downtrodden often are victorious. Fairy tales are democratic in that way, and fairy-tale postcards are also democratic: nearly anyone can afford a postcard

and a stamp as opposed to a more expensive greeting card. Just as, according to the Brothers Grimm, fairy tales are for the *Volk*, the common people, the everyday person, so too are postcards. And so too is this book. It is a book for the people.

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