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REVIEWS

The Fairest of Them All: Snow White and 21 Tales of Mothers and Daughters.
Edited by Maria Tatar, Harvard University Press, 2020, 225 pp.

The preface to Maria Tatar's *The Fairest of Them All* points to the primary aim and methodology of her collection of mother–daughter tales. “The narrative we know by the name of ‘Snow White,’” Tatar writes, “has a long, complex, stratified history, and this volume is something of an archeological dig, unearthing different layers from our own culture and from places around the world” (ix). In the introductory essay that follows, Tatar provides both the grounds for her selection of the twenty-one tales and a detailed history of the tale type classified as ATU (Aarne–Thompson–Uther) “709 *Snow White*” in *The Types of International Folktales* (2004). As she underscores, the popular tale summarized under the title “Snow White” in the folklore index is *not* international in scope; rather, it constitutes a synthesis of the regional variants of German-speaking informants that were collected, crafted, and revised by Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm during the nineteenth century. Tatar explores how these variants, which show traces of multiple stories about mother–daughter rivalry with a wide geographic distribution, evolved (or, more accurately, were narrowed down) into the dominant Anglo-American and European tale known today.

Tatar's essay thus delineates a kind of funnel effect. Although drawing on varied folkloric materials, the Grimms opted to channel these sources into a single version, a short short story called “Sneewittchen (Schneeweißchen)” initially published in their 1812 collection of tales. As Tatar succinctly puts it, “[T]hey decided to write what is, in the final analysis, their own story” (18). The Grimms' authoritative version, however, constitutes only the first stage of a two-stage process of adaptation and standardization. In the second and decisive stage, the Disney Studios adopted the Grimms' story as the template for their animated 1937 feature film, *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*. The Disney version soon prevailed and almost erased the cultural memory of earlier variants. In a remarkable instance of literary globalization, the Grimms'

composition—that is, their composite retelling of related but different stories about mother–daughter conflict—as mediated and distributed through the Disney Studios, turned into the universal reference point for subsequent adaptations. The diversity of tales in *The Fairest of Them All* demonstrates to contemporary readers the extent to which the Grimm-inspired Disney film indeed became a “global metanarrative . . . aimed to liquidate the competition and monetize the folktale for all it was worth” (34).

Overtuning the funnel effect, as it were, Tatar’s collection offers a broad range of stories told by peoples of diverse ethnicities living in widespread locations, including West Africa, Southern Sudan, Limpopo Province in South Africa, Inner Mongolia, China, Armenia, Egypt, and Morocco, among others. Hence Tatar’s significant twofold decision in this book: first, to rename the many stories linked by the motif of generational rivalry between women as “The Beautiful Girl”—a descriptive category more inclusive and appropriate to the African, Asian, and other cultures in which such tales appear—and, second, to limit the title “Snow White” to a shorthand reference to Anglo-American and European variants. In so doing, Tatar’s “archeological dig” contests and offsets a singular, albeit representative, process of cultural imperialism.

The repositioning of ATU 709 in its multiple ethnic contexts closely relates to another important contribution of Tatar’s book: the foregrounding of the racial premises that have not merely interpolated but instilled “skin white as snow” as a motif and meme. As Tatar reiterates in her preface and introductory essay, the beautiful girl seldom has pale or white skin: “Disney’s ‘skin white as snow’ is an exception in the fairy-tale universe rather than the rule” (x). The title “Snow White” is not only a misnomer but also misleading and malignantly consequential. In a parenthetical aside, Tatar poses a salient question: “(is it any coincidence that the German flag was red, white and black until the end of the empire in 1918?)” (26). Nonetheless, it was not until the Disney Studios adapted the Grimms’ version that the queen’s famous wish for a child “white as snow, red as blood, and black as the ebony window frame” underwent far-reaching alteration with the addition of one word: skin. Moreover, as Tatar observes, “once the story migrated into a culture with a history of slavery and of discrimination based on skin color, it was not long before Snow White’s name became freighted with new meanings” (26).

In presenting this historically and geographically grounded reading of ATU 709—a folktale often found in climates *without* snow and among peoples whose skin is *not* white—Tatar drives home the impact of its color casting on ensuing generations. For my part, as the author of the essay “Reading ‘Snow White’: The Mother’s Story” (*Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* [1990]) referenced by Tatar, I was taken aback to realize that the color schematics of the “classic” fairy tale were as prejudicial and insidious as its gender

thematics. The beautifully reproduced color illustrations that accompany this volume exemplify the reach of the “skin white as snow” topos. All of the Snow Whites are indeed pale-skinned or white, and some are even fair-haired or blond.

In one notable image by German illustrator Lothar Meggendorffer, the biological mother of Snow White, shown seated at an ebony-framed window and wishing for a beautiful child, is endowed with strikingly long, golden blond tresses. Such portraiture is not surprising, however, for the twenty-nine images in *The Fairest of Them All* derive from works by Anglo-American, European, and Scandinavian artists. The insistent “snow whiteness” of these images embodies the hegemonic influence of the Grimms’ and Disney’s visions that is challenged in this volume. It also elicits a wish for other exemplary collections of beloved fairy tales accompanied by illustrations that show, as well as tell, readers of all ages just how wonderfully colorful and diverse its “Beautiful Girls” may be.

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A Garden of Marvels: Tales of Wonder from Early Medieval China. By Robert Ford Campany, University of Hawaii Press, 2015, 164 pp.

For the intended audience of Robert Ford Campany’s *A Garden of Marvels*, “primarily . . . undergraduate students and other curious non-specialist readers” (xix), this question will come up: What could I possibly have in common with long-dead people from this far-removed civilization and culture that I may know nothing about? The unexpected answer is: surprisingly, a lot.

Delving into this text in early 2021, a little more than a year into the surreal widespread loss of loved ones and extreme isolation due to the coronavirus pandemic, is both a guilty pleasure and profoundly revelatory. Campany’s compilation of his own translations of 225 *zhiguai* 志怪, “accounts of anomalies” (i.e., narratives that feature experiences of the strange, uncanny, or inexplicable), provides a rare portal through which the reader can be transported, immersed within texts bounded by the late Eastern Han Dynasty (220 CE) to the Tang Dynasty (618 CE)—a “stunningly rich body of social memory”(xl) that provides “insight into Chinese beliefs and practices especially at the popular level” (xxxix)—and discover between the world of medieval China and the reader’s present reality a shared enduring fascination with the membranous permeability that separates the realms of the living from the dead and incorporeal.

The category of *zhiguai* (accounts of the strange) texts is diverse, encompassing a wide variety of anecdotes, historical records, memoirs, letters, temple inscriptions, and biographies, among others, that recount encounters

with sacred, ordinary, and apotropaic objects, shapeshifting animals, ghosts, demons, local gods, and numinous beings such as Daoist transcendents or the Buddha, Buddhist practitioners, deities and supernatural creatures; visits to otherworldly places such as the court of judgment in the afterlife, hidden villages of immortals or enlightened beings à la James Hilton's Shangri-la or the Tibetan mythical kingdom of Shambhala, or even heaven or hell; and unaccountable phenomena such as bizarre dreams, premonitions, and miraculous occurrences, including surviving entombment and the return from death (xxviii).

These brief accounts curated by Campany, a single paragraph to a few pages, with the protagonists' name, place of origin, rank, occupation or affiliation, and a brief description of the event, gradually depict for the reader a Chinese conceptualization of the cosmos that includes an intricate tapestry of the complex relationship that humans have to the invisible world. There is an implicit symmetry in the structural organization in both the physical and spirit worlds, as subofficials, functionaries, magistrates, etc., mirroring their human counterparts in the massive imperial bureaucratic machinery, appear in a number of the texts tasked with tracking the accounting of humans whose time has come to an end, with transitioning and processing them into the spirit realm, and meting out justice, punishment, and rewards. Many of the *zhiguai* presented depict humans, by turns, castigated, hunted, and killed, or saved, befriended, and seduced by these otherworldly beings. Often, humans blinded by limitations to perceive the larger matrix of the cosmos, fail to notice their mistreatment of insects, animal creatures, and spirits who cross their path, and truly evil humans cause great suffering to others by committing grave harm and violence or by behaving immorally. In these *zhiguai*, evil actions by humans are swiftly punished, and, interestingly, justice is equally applied across the barrier because incorporeal malevolent beings can be overcome and punished by an enlightened Buddhist or Daoist master.

Why is it a guilty pleasure to read? It is compelling and immersive. I was drawn into this world and lost track of my pandemic-mode self for a while. Ironically, it got me thinking about the inner workings of the virus, how we are processing the sheer numbers of people affected by the loss of loved ones due to covid-19, how many people died alone isolated from their anguished families, and how people must wonder about where their loved ones are and how they are doing now. It was weirdly compelling to read items 8 (9–12), 16 (16 and 17), and 19 (17) that describe intimate relationships between men and their deceased wives and how they were able to have children that join the father in the world of the living. Items 27 (23) and 69 (51 and 52) were amusing showing how an exorcism or appealing to the spirit of a person who

was wrongly killed to intercede on your behalf was the way to cure diseases like malaria.

What surprised and delighted me most was discovering antecedents within the *zhiguai* to familiar narratives. In item 24 (22), Yu is offered a choice of a supernatural treasure as a gift and only takes what he can reach on the shelf. This is reminiscent of the Japanese tale of “Tongue-cut Sparrow” where the old man takes the lighter gift from his sparrow host and is rewarded for his humility and ungreedy heart. The Grimms’ “The Queen Bee” and “The White Snake” tales have a similar element as item 29 (24 and 25), where Dong Zhaoshi saves an ant from drowning, and the ant repays the favor by saving Dong from prison and imminent death by execution. In item 88 (59 and 60), a young maiden of Shu is transformed into a freshwater spring, calling to mind the Greek myth where Artemis does the same for her attendant Arethusa to save her from the river god Alpheus. Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* is conjured when humans are transformed into tigers as punishment in items 30 (25) and 56 (40 and 41). Mordicai Gerstein’s children’s book *Carolinda Clatter* (2005), with its description of a giant’s sleeping body becoming a mountain with forests, caves, and waterfalls, mirrors the cosmogonic myth of Pangu, whose body parts become the world in item 85 (58 and 59). The eerie feel of the scene in C. S. Lewis’s *The Magician’s Nephew* (1955), where Digory Kirke enters the Garden to pluck an apple from the Tree of Knowledge to protect Narnia, is highly reminiscent of item 47 (35), where uninvited intruders eat their fill of otherworldly fruit from a remote orchard but are admonished by an unseen voice in midair to drop the fruit they intended to take with them. And most unexpectedly is the account that could be the plot of a horror story: a mollusk harvester is picked clean by a horde of mollusks amidst a feeding frenzy, leaving behind her intact skeleton in item 87 (59)!

Why revelatory? I experienced a profound perspective shift while reading this collection: illness and death now have a radically different meaning for me. Previously, when I read that someone died after an encounter, I saw it exclusively as punishment or certainly as an undesirable outcome. But, in the course of reading these texts, I have come to see that falling ill and dying is a means of leaving this world and entering into the realm of the spirit world, and that under certain circumstances it may be the desired condition as it is the natural and necessary compliment to being born and to live. In item 71 (52 and 53), Zhu Daoxiu, magistrate of Canling, and Liu Kuo, an adjutant in Jingzhou, were avid chess partners.

After Daoxiu dies, Kuo receives a letter from Daoxiu stating:
“Whenever I think of our meetings over chess, I grow nostalgic. But I

believe there is reason to hope that we will soon see each other again.” When Kuo finished reading the letter, it vanished. Afterward Kuo was bedridden with an illness and soon died. (53)

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The Giant Ohl and Tiny Tim. By Christian Bärmann, translated and edited by Jack Zipes, Little Mole and Honey Bear Press, 2019, first published by Hugo Schmidt, 1918, 87 pp.

Johnny Breadless: A Pacifist Fairy Tale. By Paul Vaillart-Couturier, translated and adapted by Jack Zipes, illustrated by Jean Lurçat, Little Mole and Honey Bear Press, 2019, first published by Clarté, 1921, 104 pp.

Jack Zipes is the polymath of the folktale and fairy-tale worlds. Over the course of his career, Zipes has begun and developed the sociohistoricist approach to the study of fairy tales and revitalized interest in such wonderful resources as philosopher Ernst Bloch and creative storytelling. We also have Zipes to thank for his many literary rescues. In *Don't Bet on the Prince* (1986), Zipes rescued feminist literary fairy tales, and in *The Trials and Tribulations of Little Red Riding Hood* (1993), Zipes rescued not only many Little Red Riding Hood tales, but also ignited a major discussion about “our attitudes toward gender formation, sexuality, and the use of power” (xii).

This time, Zipes has turned his wide-ranging knowledge to the rescue of literary fairy-tale children's books from the 1920s to the 1950s. To do so, Zipes started his own publishing house. Both *The Giant Ohl and Tiny Tim* and *Johnny Breadless* come to us via Zipes's Little Mole and Honey Bear Press. Both of these books were originally published shortly after World War I. Both have their roots in lessons learned from that war.

The Giant Ohl and Tiny Tim

This is a lovely book about a lonely giant who had been told he would only find happiness among humans. There are obvious difficulties that stem from his size and lack of knowledge about humans. Hence, the sweet title to the first part of the story: “. . . How his intentions were all good and, yet, he became the terror of the entire region” (3).

Eventually, the giant Ohl was hired and befriended by Tiny Tim. The two together transform the community. Tiny Tim helps the community overcome their prejudice about the giant. The giant, in turn, loves interacting with the community. He works hard on Tiny Tim's farm and, on his time off, plays with the children. He also builds a rack with railings and seats that he can carry on

his back so he can take the children into the forest, “letting them look into the nests of birds and show[ing] them the dens of wolves and bears” (42). Together, the giant Ohl and Tiny Tim save the town from three demons. The giant Ohl even defeats Death to save Tiny Tim and their town from the great epidemic. They all, of course, live happily ever after “in a region in which death and devils no longer dwell” (84).

The Giant Ohl and Tiny Tim is not only a lovely tale, but it inculcates and teaches the powerful message of how people might overcome their prejudices against strangers. At the same time, it teaches that cooperation between those who are different—the giant and the tiny—can result in something more than each alone could have managed. The text and the images were created by Christian Bärmann, who was both a painter and a storyteller. Both the text and the images are suffused with a happy, optimistic perspective much needed today. The overall feeling of the message is to include all, young and old, big and small, as if in a large, warm embrace.

Johnny Breadless

This is a “revolutionary book,” with powerful moral overtones, a book that has “paved the way for many progressive books for children” (100). Zipes notes this pacifist tale was written in an effort to develop a more radical approach, “to change the nature of children’s literature and [to speak] truth to power” (100). Born of World War I, that “brutal war of the trenches,” *Johnny Breadless* insists that we face the corruption in the world and carve out a different path (100). With a hero as innocent as the Little Prince in Antoine de Saint-Exupéry’s tale (1943), *Johnny Breadless* has us face the other side of that innocence. Rather than a gentle book of the heart, *Johnny Breadless* lays bare the causes of war and suffering. Rather than the soft blanket of illusion, *Johnny Breadless* drives us to face those problems and implores us to take action. While Zipes notes that some might call it “somewhat didactic,” I experienced it instead as a passionate *cri de coeur* (5).

For anyone studying children’s literature, *Johnny Breadless* is an important rescue. This pacifist tale bears witness to the era that brought us Vera Brittain, Wilfred Owen, and J. R. R. Tolkien. We can hear the lesson learned by a soldier who survived. As Zipes states in the preface, “The only positive effect of war is that it can transform soldiers into pacifists” (5). Zipes works to keep readers in touch with the range of literary storytelling tradition of Western culture, and *Johnny Breadless* is an important piece of the puzzle. Careful scholar that he is, Zipes includes the original French edition with its illustrations in case anyone wishes to make a comparison. For his translation, Zipes used the 1934 illustrations by Jean Lurçat.

We tend to focus so intently on the insights and problems of our own age, that we lose sight of the emotions, nuances, and ideas incorporated in stories from the past. In these two books, we see the quintessential Jack Zipes. He has rescued *The Giant Ohl and Tiny Tim*, which might very well capture the hearts of children of any era. Zipes has also rescued *Johnny Breadless*, which, in a fashion true to the sociohistoricist view, provides a perspective of a bygone era as well as a perspective that has powerful resonance in the modern world.

I am reminded of a time when I was hunkered down in the semidark of a rarely frequented floor of a large library. From a bottom shelf, I pulled a book only to find that its pages had not yet been cut. It had languished unread since its publication about 100 years earlier. I pulled out my letter opener, kept for this reason, and carefully cut the pages. As I did so, I whispered to the author, "How happy you must be. Someone is reading your book!" The authors of these two books might also rejoice.

Zipes has always shown a true commitment to ensuring that worthy stories do not get lost—whether they are feminist tales relegated to the margins by an established hierarchy, folktales from our past, or children's books with a message. Once again, Zipes does not disappoint.

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Henri Pourrat and "Le Trésor des Contes." Edited and translated by Royall Tyler, *Blue-Tong Books*, 2020, 387 pp.

Although his tale collections appeal to a broad readership in France, Henri Pourrat has been a somewhat marginal figure within fairy-tale and folktale studies. In this critical edition of a selection of Pourrat's tales, Royall Tyler seeks to resituate and validate the work of Pourrat within the field. Tyler translated an earlier collection of Pourrat's tales into English, *French Folktales* (1989), organized in sections titled "Fairy Enchantments," "The Devil," "Bandits," "Around the Village," "The Mad and The Wise," "Bestiary," and "Love and Marriage," following editions of Pourrat's work in France and Pourrat's own apparent wishes. Some thirty years later, Tyler returns to Pourrat, producing an interesting anthology that provides biographical, historical, and methodological contexts to better understand Pourrat's work, as well as tales not included in the 1989 collection. Part 1 includes a biography of Pourrat and the social and historical contexts in which Pourrat produced his collections of tales. Part 2 brings together Pourrat's field sources with the published form Pourrat gave them, which allows the reader to understand his method of adaptation. Part 3 follows a similar scheme as *French Folktales* with sections titled "Loves," "The Devil and His Devilry," "The Mad and the Wise," "Animals," "Fairies," "Robbers," and "Around the Village." Together they give Anglophone

readers a sense of the ideological motivations, the sociohistorical context, and the methodology of Pourrat's important collections of French, and specifically Auvergnat, folktales.

Pourrat concentrated his attention in the Auvergne region of France. A bourgeois from the town of Ambert, Pourrat first began collecting tales in 1908 and continued through the 1950s, his most productive years being the 1910s and 1920s. Tyler situates the *Trésor* within the context of Pourrat's other important publications, the most notable being *Gaspard des Montagnes* (1921–31), which Pourrat characterized as “a sort of epic novel of Auvergne a hundred years ago” (19). Like nineteenth-century folklorists, Pourrat sought to preserve the memory of the rural folk at a time when “[r]ural society was under threat” (23), and he clung to French Catholic and preindustrial values, which led him, initially, to embrace Pétainism during World War II, with its values of “travail, famille, patrie” (“work, family, country”). Tyler then goes on to place the *Trésor* within, on the one hand, the history of the European tale in the tradition of Noël du Fail, Giovanni Francesco Straparola, Giambattista Basile, Marie-Catherine d'Aulnoy, Charles Perrault, and Marie-Jeanne Lhéritier; and, on the other, the tradition of French regionalist folklorists such as François-Marie Luzel (Brittany), Jean-François Bladé (Gascony), Emmanuel Cosquin (Lorraine), and Paul Sébillot (Brittany). Interestingly, Tyler maintains that Pourrat “explicitly recognized the possibility, even the likelihood, of written-to-oral transmission,” which is evidenced in the second section of the anthology (38).

In Part 2 of *Henri Pourrat and “Le Trésor des Contes,”* Tyler juxtaposes Pourrat's source texts from the field with the versions he eventually published in the *Trésor*. Already touching on some of Pourrat's adaptation techniques in the introduction, including the economical use of *patois* and the use of literary language from canonical writers like François Rabelais to both send the reader back in time yet make the texts accessible, Tyler gives specific examples of Pourrat's transformation of oral tales into *Trésor* tales. The first tale discussed, “Finon-Finette,” was collected from Marie Claustre, a domestic servant and lacemaker. The two-page field version clearly is a folklorized version of Lhéritier's “Finette, ou l'adroite princesse” (“Finette, or the Clever Princess”); Pourrat develops these two pages into a ten-page tale incorporating an important detail taken directly from Lhéritier's literary tale: Claustre does not specify where the father goes when he leaves his daughters on their own; Pourrat pulls the detail of the father going to the Holy Land from Lhéritier's “Finette.”

In a variant of “Cinderella” that Pourrat also collected from Claustre, the heroine is also referred to as “Pé d'âne” (“Peau d'âne” or “Donkeyskin”), showing the ways different literary tales, when folklorized, often blend when entering oral tradition. (There are examples of this, for instance, with respect

to d'Aulnoy's Cinderella tale, "Finette-Cendron," motifs of which often blend with Perrault's "Cinderella" in oral versions.) Pourrat's final version of the tale relies on the seamstress Alphonsine Dapzol's variant, in which the heroine is named Marie and dazzles people at mass rather than at a ball. Whereas in Dapzol's oral tale "people turned to look at her" (68) in church, Pourrat embellishes the scene by noting that people "even climbed on each other's shoulders for a better look" (72). By comparing the field versions with Pourrat's published tales, we can see how Pourrat deepens character psychology, expands descriptions, and increases dialogue among characters to produce more literary tales, all techniques for which he was criticized. Tyler explains that folklorists like Paul Delarue were skeptical of his collections because Pourrat failed to indicate his sources in the published work, he mixed oral and literary variants of tales, and he embellished and expanded upon his source tales. But Tyler also gives us a sense of Pourrat's approach to his material. The collector and adapter once stated, "Literal fidelity kills literary fidelity" (36). Tyler also provides field sources for Pourrat's "Bluebeard," including versions where the heroine kills the eponymous villain; Pirelette (or Rapunzel) tales, in which the heroine is simply kidnapped by a female figure, with no allusion to motherly sin; and "Little Fistful," a Tom-Thumb-like character.

The end of Part 2 segues into the third section that is strictly an anthology of tales following the thematic groupings already noted. The section "Loves" opens with a fascinating version of "Donkeyskin," in which the heroine proves more clever and agile than that of Perrault. It also includes a tale that combines motifs from Genesis and "Bluebeard": a couple lamenting Adam and Eve's fall claim they would never cede to curiosity, when a king tempts them with a gold tureen in order to test them—a test they indeed fail. The next group focuses on devil tales, including one in which the devil and his wife function as helpers ("Pamplune, the Devil's Valet"); another in which the wife outsmarts the devil ("The Sack of Gold"); and "The Werewolf," half story half explanation of the supernatural phenomenon. A version of "Little Red Riding Hood" can be found in the section "Fairies" that blends elements of "The Story of Grandmother," in which the girl eats the flesh of her grandmother and drinks her blood, and the Grimms' "Little Red Cap," in which the woodcutter—here Red's godfather—comes to save the day. Pourrat's version of "Sleeping Beauty" casts the fairy Carabosse from Perrault, who makes a connection between the wooden skewer she begrudgingly is forced to use at the dinner and the spindle upon which the princess will prick her finger. (The removal of spindles from the kingdom humorously leads to the invention of the spinning wheel.)

The section concludes with a version of "Mélusine." Among the robber tales is one in which the village blacksmith is to be hanged for his crimes, but since the village has two tailors and only one blacksmith, they wish to

make a deal to retain the much-needed blacksmith, despite the innocence of the tailors. The final thematic section “Around the Village” includes “The Two Neighbor Women,” about a kind woman and an unkind woman, each of whom is appropriately rewarded, the kind woman receiving endless cloth (appropriate in the context of seamstress and lacemaker storytellers), while the unkind woman is besieged by fleas. Other tales have everyday settings and figures, such as a school where boys manage to mock their schoolmaster; the market in which a man named Renard outsmarts his creditor; a witty doctor who does not fall for some roisterers’ ruse; and others concerning a woodcutter, a blacksmith, and a tenant farmer.

Tyler’s critical anthology provides a lot of supporting material that begs for further research on Pourrat’s *Trésor des contes*. It nicely ties together the complex ideology that motivated Pourrat’s desire to collect, edit, adapt, and publish Auvergnat tales with the historical and political context of early and mid-twentieth-century France. In some respects, as Tyler suggests, Pourrat’s methodology of adapting and editing tales was not fundamentally different from the work of the Grimms; critics such as Ruth Bottigheimer, Maria Tatar, and Jack Zipes have all laid out the Grimms’ techniques of adaptation and traced the editorial evolution of the *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* (1812–15). But publishing over a hundred years later within new disciplinary norms resulted in the marginalization of Pourrat’s work within fairy-tale and folktale studies. *Henri Pourrat and “Le Trésor des Contes”* indeed provides compelling arguments for reconsidering the place of Pourrat within the field, opening up rich new avenues for further research.

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Shakespeare and the Folktale: An Anthology of Stories. Edited by Charlotte Artese, Princeton University Press, 2019, 373 pp.

In 2015, Charlotte Artese published her groundbreaking text *Shakespeare’s Folktale Sources*, in which she demonstrated how folktales profoundly shaped and influenced Shakespeare’s plays. While scholars had previously noted connections between folktales and Shakespeare’s plots and characters, these observations were largely restricted to motif spotting. In *Shakespeare’s Folktale Sources*, Artese argued that the majority of Shakespeare’s plays are deeply entwined with folklore and, more specifically, that seven of the plays have plots that are derived directly from folktales. Furthermore, she illuminated the ways in which the network of Shakespeare’s plays and their narrative elements function much like folktales themselves.

Artese’s new book, *Shakespeare and the Folktale*, is the logical and welcome extension of her previous project. In this anthology, she has collected

and edited the folktales that are the backbone of her argument: the folktales that animate Shakespeare's plays. As she explains in her introduction, "[T]his anthology aims to augment our knowledge of Shakespeare's sources and influences by supplying examples of his folktales' sources rather than revisiting his acknowledged literary ones," which are already generally recognized and are readily available in other texts (3).

The book consists of an introduction, eight chapters, a bibliography, and an extensive index. Each chapter addresses one Shakespeare play, including a brief discussion of that play's sources followed by the full text of five to eight related folktales. In *Shakespeare's Folktale Sources*, Artese considered seven plays: *The Taming of the Shrew* (1592), *Titus Andronicus* (1592–93), *The Merry Wives of Windsor* (1597/1602), *The Merchant of Venice* (1596–99), *All's Well That Ends Well* (1598–1608), *Measure for Measure* (1603–04), and *Cymbeline* (1611), each of which features one or more plots drawn directly from a folktale. The contents of *Shakespeare and the Folktale: An Anthology* overlap with but do not replicate those found in the earlier book. The new anthology includes a chapter on *King Lear* (1606), which "adapts a legendary history that includes folktales and folk narrative motifs," a chapter on *The Comedy of Errors* (1594), which has a classical Roman source as well as a folktale source, and a chapter on *The Tempest* (1610–11), "whose dependence on the 'Magic Flight' folktale is partial and incomplete but fascinating nonetheless" (7). Artese does not include chapters on *The Merry Wives of Windsor* or *Measure for Measure* because of the lack of relevant folktale versions available to print in English.

There is a significant methodological challenge to Artese's project, which is, simply put, that we do not know exactly which versions of each folktale circulated in Shakespeare's day, let alone which ones he personally encountered. The very nature of oral tradition makes a perfect reconstruction of Shakespeare's folktale sources impossible. However, this does not make Artese's project any less worthwhile. We know that the folktale plots that underpin Shakespeare's plays existed before he ever set pen to paper because medieval versions survived (2). Though we will never know exactly which versions Shakespeare encountered orally, "folktales collected in the modern world (the nineteenth century and after) can give us insight into the stories Shakespeare and his audience might have known" (2).

The folktales that Artese has assembled are, therefore, not Shakespeare's exact sources but instead "later members of the genus of his sources" (2). Because we cannot know the exact sources—and because Shakespeare himself may likely have been working from several different oral versions—Artese has included several examples of each folktale type in the collection to provide a sense of possible variations. "Attending to the folktale in its many guises can

give us a clearer sense of the story tradition available to Shakespeare, although we cannot reconstruct it exactly" (3).

Because the anthology represents an educated and creative reconstruction rather than a precise replica of Shakespeare's sources, Artese's primary criteria for selection was how closely a folktale resembled the Shakespeare play in question—how closely the plots matched or whether certain motifs were present. She also evaluated stories for "how well they were told" and considered the "diversity of the cultures represented" (8). Rather than limiting the anthology only to tales collected in Europe or written in English (though all the texts in the collection have been translated into English), Artese has chosen a broad and inclusive approach, as "folktales show a remarkable ability to transcend cultural and linguistic boundaries" (8). Because many of Shakespeare's widely recognized literary sources are in French and Italian, this should not be a controversial choice. As Artese writes,

Orally transmitted tales recorded in very different places can be quite similar. A folktale told in Iraq in the twentieth century participates in the same tradition Shakespeare drew on for his plays, and so might provide evidence about how the folktale appeared in seventeenth-century London. I am convinced that what we gain by examining these folktale traditions justifies this inevitably speculative enterprise. We cannot know exactly how these stories were told in Shakespeare's day, but we can learn about the story traditions themselves. (8)

The anthologized folktales are mostly from Europe, the Middle East, and India, but the collection also includes a Moroccan tale, two stories from African diasporic cultures (collected in North America), and three Chilean tales. While some of the tale types included in the collection will likely be familiar, the selection of individual tales is wide-ranging and moves far beyond the most expected and frequently printed texts. For example, the *Cymbeline* chapter includes three Snow White tales (ATU 709), but instead of reprinting the Grimm's "Little Snow White," this section contains "Blanca Rosa and the Forty Thieves" by Yolando Pino-Saavedra (1967), "The Glass Coffin" by Violet Paget (1880), and "Lasair Gheug, the King of Ireland's Daughter" (1965). Most of the folktale types explored in the collection, such as Lord for a Day (ATU 1531) or Taming of the Shrew (ATU 901), are not especially familiar to a general or even a fairly folklore-savvy audience.

This anthology is an illuminating supplement to *Shakespeare's Folktale Sources*, but it also stands on its own. It will be of particular use in courses that explore folklore's influence on literature, as well as in any Shakespeare course,

particularly an introductory course where the folktales can serve as powerful entry points to the plays, which can sometimes feel inaccessible to those new to Shakespeare. The book also functions as an instructive model for any folklorist whose research requires the reconstruction of sources, whether due to the distance of time or a paucity of written records.

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The Fairy-Tale Vanguard: Literary Self-Consciousness in a Marvelous Genre. Edited by Stijn Praet and Anna Kérchy, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2019, 280 pp.

The Fairy-Tale Vanguard, edited by Stijn Praet and Anna Kérchy, is a wide-ranging collection of essays spanning five centuries and several countries. It includes chapters on the fairy tales of such famous authors as Charles Perrault, Lewis Carroll, and Robert Coover, as well as contributions on other writers' works whose connections with the fairy tale still need investigation. The focus is on literary texts, but three chapters extend the scope of the volume to films and visual arts. Many contributions provide fresh insights into well-studied material, explore the creations of emerging artists like Rikki Ducornet, or uncover unexpected fairy-tale intertexts in canonical works. Others, however, tend to reiterate familiar arguments or apply theoretical frameworks at the expense of an in-depth analysis of the literary texts themselves. This inevitably results in a somewhat uneven and disparate volume, which nevertheless contains some real gems.

The Fairy-Tale Vanguard is divided into two parts based on Praet's distinction in his introduction between "metaliterary reflection in the guise of peritextual discourse and metafiction" and "literary experimentation" (4) as the main expressions of literary self-consciousness. In a neat symmetrical manner, each section of the volume contains six chapters followed by a "Response" by a leading fairy-tale scholar who highlights potential connections as well as tensions between the articles, engages critically with them, and suggests paths for further research. The volume is rounded off by a thought-provoking interview of American writer and artist Rikki Ducornet. Although this bipartite structure follows the premise underlined in the introduction, most of the articles clearly appear to fit in both sections. This evidences the intricacies of literary self-consciousness, which could have been discussed more fully and more explicitly in the volume.

Part 1, "Metaliterary Reflections," explores peritextual discourses and metafictional devices. Sophie Raynard and Ute Heidmann both document the peritexts and intertexts of French seventeenth-century *conte de(s) fées*: Raynard records those of Marie-Jeanne Lhéritier de Villandon's, Marie-Catherine

d'Aulnoy's, and Henriette-Julie Castelnau de Murat's literary productions, while Heidmann returns to those of Charles Perrault's famous collection. Anna Kérchy provides fascinating insights into Lewis Carroll's multiple metafictional devices in the Alice tales as means to reflect on cognitive and imaginative processes, using a new and effective nomenclature including such terms as "meta-fantasy," "metaimagination," and "metafancy." Jessica Tiffin convincingly draws attention to the financial and ideological forces that can account for tensions in Edith Nesbit's fairy tales between playful criticism and endorsement of tradition. Björn Sundmark considers the influence of Pär Lagerkvist's avant-garde manifesto on his collection of "evil" fairy tales, highlighting interesting connections between his theoretical and fictional writings. Closing this first section, Emeline Morin compares Eric Chevillard's and Robert Coover's metafictional reflections on the fairy tale, underlining major differences in the French and Anglo-Saxon approaches to the marvelous.

Part 2, "Intergeneric, Stylistic and Linguistic Experimentations," provides case studies of self-conscious experimentation in literary and visual arts. Richard van Leeuwen and Helene Høystrup both focus on how intergeneric experimentation creates forms of "hybridity": van Leeuwen explores this phenomenon in the genres and protagonists of eighteenth-century French texts influenced by the *Thousand and One Nights*, while Høystrup concentrates on the hybrid audience of Hans Christian Andersen's fairy tales. Daniel Gicu shows how a national agenda leads to stylistic experimentation in the creation of the first Romanian fairy-tale collections. María Casado Villanueva teases out the "Cinderella" plots in two short stories by D. H. Lawrence and Katherine Mansfield, convincingly arguing that Lawrence's story can be read as a rewriting of "Cinderella" for modern times while Mansfield's is an anti-"Cinderella" criticizing capitalist and patriarchal values conveyed by fairy tales. Michelle Ryan-Sautour provides a subtle and insightful analysis of Rikki Ducornet's verbal and visual experimentations to recreate the experience of the marvelous inherent in fairy tales. Ryan-Sautour's article and her interview of the author at the end of the volume are superb companion pieces. Finally, Willem de Blécourt argues for a reappraisal of Tommy Wirkola's much-criticized film *Hansel & Gretel: Witch Hunters* (2013) as an intermedial experiment combining fairy tales and witch films.

Throughout this collection, which includes such a vast array of texts from different authors, periods, and languages, the term "fairy tale" is unavoidably loosely used. Although it is notoriously difficult to define the fairy tale, a shared understanding of this genre would have provided a greater sense of unity and purpose to the volume. The introduction argues that literary self-consciousness and experimentation are inextricably entangled with the fairy tale throughout the ages, but the genre's other defining features, as listed

for instance by Marina Warner in *Once Upon a Time: A Short History of the Fairy Tale* (2014), are only briefly evoked or not at all. Ruth Bottigheimer and Elizabeth Wanning Harries, both of whom have authored landmark studies on the topic (which are only seldom referenced in the contributions), also note this lack of definition in their responses. Bottigheimer remarks that scholars “appropriate ‘fairy tale’ as a genre designation for fantasy, folktale, fairy fiction, and brief narrative, and in other contexts for novella, fairyland fictions, fairy stories, and even for novels,” causing their conclusions about “fairy tales” to be inevitably at odds with one another (132). Likewise, Wanning Harries observes that the contributors to the volume “explore very different things,” listing “fairy-tale genres, linguistic innovation in tales old and new, the incorporation of well-known tales in later fiction, the transmission of tales nationally and internationally” (247). While this multiplicity testifies to the enduring presence of fairy tales (as a loosely defined genre) in the collective imagination, it also reveals the often-overgeneralized uses made of the term, including (oddly enough) in contemporary fairy-tale criticism. Nevertheless, several contributions from *The Fairy-Tale Vanguard* open avenues for further research, usefully emphasized in the two responses. The inclusion of the work of Rikki Ducornet, one of the most gifted and original fairy-tale artists today, certainly paves the way for future studies, calling as well for a renewed attention to the interaction between form and sense in fairy tales.

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The Fairy Tale World. Edited by Andrew Teverson, Routledge, 2019, 484 pp.

Drawing on the work of established and emerging scholars, this collection of essays—as the title suggests—negotiates fairy tales around the world but also the world of the fairy tale itself. It begins with a definition of the term and a discussion of Andrew Lang’s work, but it quickly gets to the first of many conflicts in the field. The titular term “fairy tale” is fraught with “Eurocentric and Western associations that threaten to obscure the specificity, variety, and function of oral storytelling genres” (Lewis Seifert 159). In an effort to overcome this limiting terminology “that entail[s] homogenizing the world’s wonder tales according to a Euro-American model” (12), Andrew Teverson set out to reclaim the term and “extend and elaborate the emerging critique of the Euro-American focus of fairy-tale studies” (10). This aim is achieved through exposing the international influence of familiar texts, exploring how *Märchen* evolved differently across the world, expanding the canon to include marginalized works and analyses, and examining how contemporary writers and artists blend older forms and modern interpretations to create a novel pastiche.

The book is divided into five sections with seven or eight chapters in each. The sections—"The Formation of the Canon," "Africa and the Caribbean," "The Americas, Asia and Australia," and "Europe"—provide an excellent overview of both the specific topic and current scholarship in the area. However, there are threads that weave through all the chapters—particularly the ideas of colonialism, imperialism, and fairy-tale origins—that create a global tapestry of ideas. Other cross-chapter motifs are art, contemporary literature, and a definition of fairy tale. However, for those who wish to focus on a specific geographical area, the book offers a sample of approaches to scholarship to highlight the trends in research. Additionally, the geographical focus enables a study of a wider region, as stories travel heedless of political borders. It also allows cross-cultural comparison. For example, how do contemporary retellings in Australia differ from those in Japan or America? Yet, each section can be used as a stand-alone unit for a class or to delve into a geographical exploration of fairy tales in that region.

The first section, "The Formation of the Canon," opens by posing the question "Where do fairy tales belong?" Donald Haase answers the query and "confirms the resistance of folktales and fairy tales to the constraint of a one-dimensional belonging" (30). These tales exist in their own realm, and those who hear them often do not grapple with paratextual meanings and do not place the tales in their specific geographical and cultural setting. This enables fairy tales to be read through multiple lenses. Questions of interpretation and origin continue in the rest of the section through discussions of the origin of the fairy tale in the Middle East, Italy, France, Germany, and the problems inherent in translation. Nancy L. Canepa discusses the works of Giovan Francesco Straparola and Giambattista Basile in her chapter, "The Formation of the Literary Fairy Tale in Early Modern Italy 1550–1636," commenting on the "murky moral world of the tales" where "violence and deception may or may not prove to be winning strategies" (65). This chapter contrasts well with the "stylish atmosphere of the court" (68) found in the French tales Christine A. Jones uses as her texts in "Social Change and the Development of the Fairy Tale in France 1690–1799." Overall, this first section lays the groundwork for continuing themes in the rest of the volume.

Although the remaining sections are geographically focused, many of the entries grapple with the same sort of question that Ruth Finnegan posed, "Are there fairy tales in Africa?" (105), which introduces her chapter, "Fairy Tale in Africa: A Contrast of Centuries." Discussions of wonder tales or tales of magic occur in almost every section, expanding the fixed notion of a "fairy tale" to encompass a wider range of narratives. Emily Zoebel Marshall's study of Anansi tales in "This Is Not a Fairy Tale" further illustrates the classification

problems of folk narratives and fairy tales. A similar conundrum occurs in John Bierhorst's "Myths and Folktales in Latin America," as these tales combine myth, fable, urban legend, and religion and do not follow the traditional fairy-tale model. Another problem inherent in fairy-tale scholarship of the past is a focus on the European canon and its influence around the world.

The effects of colonialism and imperialism serve as a leitmotif in numerous sections. When coupled with the problems of recording tales that had previously been orally transmitted and the difficulties of translation into different languages, the inherent Western and Eurocentric biases grow more clearly pronounced. Yet, by identifying the problem, the contributors to this volume help to overcome the bias. They introduce numerous indigenous tales not influenced by colonizers such as Hawaiian wonder tales found by Marie Alohalani Brown, who scoured nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Hawaiian-language newspapers. Her chapter, "The Politics and Poetics of *Märchen* in Hawaiian-Language Newspapers," explains her methodology for obtaining the texts and notes how the tale of "The Fisherman and His Wife" (ATU 555) may have been used as propaganda. Pamela Lothspeich, who looked to the *Mahābhārata* and other ancient texts for examples of her titular "Lovely Fairies and Crafty Ghosts in Indian Tales," stated that English classifications for India's tales "are inadequate at containing them" and may even lead to Eurocentric generalizations that demean the culture as a whole (309). Rebecca-Anne Do Rozaroi and Danielle Wood's entries on Australian tales note the blending of European and native elements that speaks to the prioritization of a white, European dominance over the indigenous people of the country. Recognizing inherent prejudice and oppression in fairy-tale scholarship provides platforms for scholars to speak on issues of injustice, propelling the field forward.

This volume also provides a condensed look at the direction of contemporary scholarship. In "The Americas," issues of sexuality, digital culture, and fan fiction feature prominently, while explorations of African American adaptations and Latin American folktales are also included, showcasing the multi-directional and varied approaches in research. Similar disparity can be found in Asia and Australia, as Bollywood, Korean films, and contemporary retellings coexist with discussions of the ancient roots of Indian and South Asian tales. In the final section, "Europe," Sarah Bonner's "Tales Retold: Fairy Tales in Contemporary European Visual Art" explores renderings of female characters such as Little Red Riding Hood, the fairy godmother, and the stepmother by contemporary female artists and how these representations provide a way "of thinking differently about the constitution and performance of gender" (450). This chapter complements Nicole A. Thesz's "Eco-Critical Perspectives: Nature and the Supernatural in the Cinderella Cycle," where the author posits that "the Cinderella tale offers a proto-environmental model that teaches

dependence on nature in a physical, but also emotional, sense” (436). It also complements Amy Greenhough’s “New Materialism and Contemporary Fairy-Tale Fiction,” which explores the way natural laws are “held in suspension” in fairy tales and invites readers to reexamine their relationship with the material world (459). Not only are these chapters encouraging readers to examine fairy tales by using different approaches, they also seek to use fairy tales as a lens to view the world and our representation of it in a novel way.

The variety and diversity of the entries while all focused on furthering the understanding of the fairy tale is the strength of this collection. This book would be ideal for someone interested in the latest directions in fairy-tale research. It would also make an excellent text for an upper-level university course focused on a cross-cultural comparison of fairy tales. For scholars of fairy tales, this book is worth having on the shelf as a reference, as an inspiration for teaching and research, and as a way to enter the fairy-tale world.

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Recasting the Disney Princess in an Era of New Media and Social Movements.
Edited by Shearon Roberts, Lexington Books, 2020, 348 pp.

Disney as a corporation is built on a legacy of balancing various forms of cultural and social nostalgia with a constantly changing and growing society, updating programs and franchises to fit new audiences while attempting to ensure that the narrative foundation of the company remains recognizable to its already established audience with varying success rates. Part of the brand strategy has been a reliance on the idea of “happily ever after” as achieved by their franchise of fairy-tale princesses, who exist in dialogue with their antecedent version counterparts from canonical or classic Disney fairy tales, which in turn exist in dialogue with antecedent counterparts from tales by the Grimms and Perrault, among others. *Recasting the Disney Princess in an Era of New Media and Social Movements*, edited by Shearon Roberts, attempts to untangle the corporation’s attempts at evolving one of its core brand elements, the “Disney Princess,” in the face of the social changes of the last two decades, examining the creative responses to calls for more inclusive and accurate representation. While some of the work presented in this edited collection does take as its focus Disney productions derived from fairy-tale or folklore narratives, the volume’s scope is broad, also touching upon works from the Pixar, Marvel, and Lucasfilm franchise umbrellas, and productions from the Disney Channel’s various outputs. It is not grounded in fairy-tale studies or discourse, but the chapters pull broadly from a variety of discourses in interdisciplinary ways that will enrich scholarly discussions around representation and adaptation both within the fields of fairy-tale studies, media studies, and cultural

studies, and beyond, especially considering the evolution of the Disney fairy-tale princess as recognizable cultural icon.

The edited collection is framed by a prologue centering youth voices as they consider the legacy of *The Princess and the Frog* (2009) years after the release of Disney's first animated film to feature a Black fairy-tale princess. It is then divided into four parts: "Rebranding the Disney Princess," "Diversifying the Disney Princess," "Deconstructing Princess Narratives," and "Embedding Social Discourse around the Disney Heroine." Shearon Roberts' first chapter positions the book in Disney history and criticism, delineating a timeline from 2009's *The Princess and the Frog* through 2019's *Star Wars: The Rise of Skywalker*, and documenting studio, market share and impact, financial record, and acclaim of forty-three of the products made across the conglomerate in those two decades. The other chapters in this section examine the marketability of diversifying representation, and how choices such as the creation of the animated television series *Sofia the First* (2012–18) featuring the corporation's first Hispanic princess, the casting of Marvel and Lucasfilm heroines, and the incorporation of pop and hip-hop into the Disney musical imprint all have moved the corporation into a new aesthetic space.

The second section turns to specific instances of more diverse representation and problematizes how increased visibility of certain identities can and does simultaneously erase or obscure a polyphony of ethnic and cultural identities. The third section, which might be the weakest section, claims to deconstruct the narratives and portrayals of several figures from the more straightforwardly "fairy tale" Disney narratives, such as *Beauty and the Beast* (2017) and *Frozen* (2013). Charity Clay reads of Shuri of Wakanda as more than a fairy-tale Disney princess and as a character contextualized by Black culture and womanism. Clay also delineates the various cultural tensions existing in this character, and the chapter stands out for its analysis and indication of further futures for this character, as well as representation within the larger corporation (227). The fourth section centers how increased social consciousness of various differences and marginalizations has provoked reimaginations of what and who counts as a Disney heroine beyond the icon of the princess, examining films including *Zootopia* (2016), *The Incredibles* (2004), and *Finding Dory* (2016). The volume closes not with a conclusion, but an epilogue by Varion Laurent that takes a brief but broad, optimistic look at changes in media in the context of the #MeToo movement.

While a small number of chapters would have benefited from a deeper engagement with fairy-tale scholarship, better contextualization of their authors' subject matter within the scholarship existing on those films, scholarly and public discourse about representation, and the general social contexts of their production, this does not detract from the overall worth of the

collection, nor the work it performs. It is no small feat to try to capture the current moment of change in a multinational media conglomerate, nor the polyphonic and rarely united response to its new media in a single volume. Roberts's curation builds upon previous scholarly definitions and discussions of Disney's remit, presenting examinations of not only who appears on screen, but who sits behind various lenses. When taken as a whole, the volume indicates the many disparate ways the field of Disney studies broadly might be brought forward under a single umbrella in an age dominated by new media and multiplicities of franchises. Stand-out chapters, such as Sheryl Kennedy Haydel's "#NolaBorn: Tiana and the Road Home for New Orleans Residents" (117), Alexis Woods Barr's "No Capes Needed: The Plight of Super Moms" (263), and Abeo Jackson's "The Women of Wakanda: Black Beauty and Casting" (309), are especially strong because of their reflexive readings of Disney-branded works not only in the moment of their production, but their legacies and how they fit within greater social contexts that demand greater parity in representation.

This volume might not be the first stop for those interested in Disney's particular take on adaptation, or its reconfiguration of the fairy-tale princess with regards to both the Disney Princess franchise and the concept of the fairy-tale princess as it exists in the more broad fairy-tale canon. However, it does perform necessary, current labor in examining who is now allowed access to the label of being a Disney princess, problematizing the constructions and connections of that particular icon of fairy tale to a wider audience. As such, the volume recontextualizes how scholars might yet consider the idea of Disney as the home of an Americanized fairy tale in a global mediasphere and significantly expands upon the work of Johnson Cheu's 2013 collection, which was the last to take a focused look at diversity and representation in Disney feature-film outputs. *Recasting the Disney Princess in an Era of New Media and Social Movements* is an insightful collection and incisive analysis of Disney's media landscape as it evolves, adding to scholarly conversations around gender, race, inequality, colonialism, and the overall marketing strategy of the corporation around the concept of difference.

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A Cultural History of the Disney Fairy Tale: Once Upon an American Dream.
By Tracey L. Mollet, Palgrave Macmillan, 2020, 181 pp.

Since the release of the Walt Disney Company's first feature-length animated film in 1937, the Disney fairy tale has become embedded within contemporary Western culture as the quasi standard in proclaiming the promise of happily ever after. Mollet's previous monograph explored the Disney and

Warner Brothers animated shorts within the historical context of World War II and the Depression. In this book, she suggests that this highly desirable notion of happily ever after is firmly located within an idealized conception of the American Dream, shaded with its rose-tinted hue. Disney films, such as *Beauty and the Beast* (1991; 2017), *The Little Mermaid* (1989), and TV shows such as *Once Upon a Time* (2011–18), among others, promote America as a utopian space where all your dreams will come true.

Foregrounding her analysis of the much-loved Disney fairy tales in American cultural history, Mollet charts her analysis from 1937 up until present day, together with changes in American society stressing the complex entanglement and nuances of Disney fairy tales. The selection of Disney princess fairy tales with a European history sees the blurring of reality with the mythical and magical; social context with the aptly termed “contingent nostalgia” celebrates the very American nationalism that culminates in a pervasive ideology. Thus, in many ways, the traditional stories are reconstructed within a diegetic space that Mollet argues is inherently American. This book engages with these Disneyfied fairy tales, uncovering how the American Dream is revealed in the canonical works of the Grimm brothers or Charles Perrault. At the same time, Mollet also explores how these Disney adaptations keep to the socioeconomic, cultural, and political changes of society during the respective era in which they were produced.

The structure of the book follows a typology adapted from Amy Davis (2006) and Bridget Whelan (2014) by which the Disney princess films are periodized in view of the values and virtues demonstrated by their respective princess (Classic, 1937–59; Renaissance, 1989–91; Revisionist, 2007–18; Renewal, 2009–13; and Reboot, 2014–17). The Classic Era includes the early outputs of the Walt Disney Company and perhaps some of their most notable films: *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (1937), *Cinderella* (1950), and *Sleeping Beauty* (1959). In this chapter, Mollet argues the heroines are typecast as domesticated princesses, with no ability to determine the narrative of their lives that consequently resolve in heterosexual marriage. Evoking nostalgia for the prewar society, Mollet suggests these fairy tales axiomatically demand a resurgence of patriarchal social structures so that the American Dream may be actualized, contrasting some of the problematic progressive attitudes that were emerging. Moreover, the triumph of the underdogs of the era (namely, the dwarfs in *Snow White*; Jaq and Gus in *Cinderella*; and Flora, Fauna, and Merryweather in *Sleeping Beauty*) reflects the societal cohesion enacted by policies contained within F. D. Roosevelt’s New Deal.

The Renaissance Era moves away from the heroines longing for love, and, in maintaining their inherent goodness, both Ariel (*The Little Mermaid*) and Belle (*Beauty and the Beast*) desperately desire something more than their

“provincial life,” Mollet identifies these crucial magical transformations that transpire reflective of an inward change. As such, the American Dream is poised as within each of us and attainable for all. Moving into the Revisionist Era, Mollet explores *Enchanted* (2007) and *Once Upon a Time* as the theme of inward change progresses to counter the legacy of moral binaries. In this chapter, she proposes the evolution of values coalesces into the increased accessibility of the promise of the American Dream for (redeemed) traditionally immoral characters. The Revisionist Era also sees the magic of fairy tales enter into the real world (importantly New York City following the 9/11 attacks). Mollet asserts that “marrying together the promise of the American Dream with the fairy tale ‘happily ever after’” clearly positions America, the home of capitalism, as the site where dreams come true (87).

In the Renewal Era, the contextual backdrop of Hurricane Katrina, the financial crisis of 2007–08, and election of Barack Obama play a significant role in shaping the Disney fairy-tale narrative. Mollet reveals qualities of these Disney fairy-tale narratives tantamount to those of the Classic Era most clearly highlighted in the resurgence of rags-to-riches story line and the underdog’s victory. Drawing upon *The Princess and the Frog* (2009), *Tangled* (2010), and *Frozen* (2013), Mollet also illustrates a further broadening of the inclusivity of the promise of the American Dream regardless of race, gender, class, or background. The only requisite is true American (good-natured) values as demonstrated in the “emphasis on hard work and optimism” (129). The Reboot Era, identifiable by its live-action retellings of earlier fairy tales, explicitly counters the political zeitgeist of the Trump administration in the United States. The comprehensive analysis imposed by Mollet onto films of this era such as *Maleficent* (2014), *Cinderella* (2015), and *Beauty and the Beast* (2017) is enlightening as it lends itself to the conclusion that Disney has found its own identity despite cultural sway.

Occasionally, Mollet’s analysis appears far-fetched or linking only tenuously to the film at hand. The most glaring example is Olaf’s lack of bones in *Frozen* (“I don’t have a skull ... or bones”) equating to the queering of his identity. Despite the wide acceptance of the film by the LGBTQ+ community, the argument falls short in the little acknowledgment of context, insofar as he is a snowman, who tend not to have genitalia. Additionally, the intrusion of Mollet’s identity as an acafan significantly shapes her optimistic analysis and approach. For example, the recognition of the 1991 film *Beauty and the Beast* as “one of the greatest Disney animated features ever made” can be regarded as an exaggeration (63). Other films such as *Frozen* won two Academy Awards among a number of other accolades compared to *Beauty and the Beast* receiving only a nomination for an Academy Award. However, despite this optimistic tone being somewhat muted at times, the dismissal of criticisms made by Jack

Zipes, among others, serves to preserve the positive image of the Disney fairy tale. Mollet contends that viewing fairy tales as stolen or sanitized is a misguided understanding of authorship. Moreover, she underscores the hypocrisy of Zipes's assertion that fairy tales are free to be adapted or changed (2011, 13), unless, that is, to be adapted or changed by the Walt Disney Company. Her conclusions, therefore, are reached by way of negotiation of existing interpretations but not without stressing her own personal disposition.

Ultimately, Mollet's book provides a detailed account of the Disney fairy tale paired with the concurrent histories of America. It is both easily readable and highly enjoyable, and I would therefore recommend this book to both academics and lay readers alike.

Charlotte Durham
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La Fiaba. Morfologia, antropologia e storia. By Glauco Sanga, Cleup, series *Etnografie no. 7*, Padova, 2020, 308 pp.

Folk narrative has been a privileged field of study for folklore scholars in Italy for a very long time. For example, Giuseppe Pitre published his four volumes *Fiabe, novelle e racconti popolari siciliani* (Sicilian Fairy Tales, Novels and Folk Tales) in 1875, while Benedetto Croce, at age seventeen, wrote the fairy tale "Il lupo e a vorpa" (The Wolf and the Fox) in the Neapolitan magazine *Giambattista Basile* in 1883. In the 1950s, Gianfranco D'Aronco and Sebastiano Lo Nigro applied the classification criteria of the Finnish school of Antti Aarne to Italian tales, and Gianluigi Bravo in 1966 edited the Italian translation of the *Morphology of the Folktale* by Vladimir Propp. In 1975, Alberto Mario Cirese published the first national inventory of (not sung) oral traditions. Sanga's book, the title of which translates into "The Fairy Tale: Morphology, Anthropology, and History," follows in this scholarly tradition, offering a systematization of the object of study and its interpretative lines.

Sanga's initial step is to draw analytical boundaries, while remaining aware of how ambiguous and blurred they are: the book is about folktales that are orally transmitted. The first chapter focuses on the oral culture/written culture dialectic. Whereas in the written sphere the figure of the author and respect for the text are fundamental, in the oral sphere things are different. The author becomes irrelevant and instead textual variations, which are analyzed in chapter 8, are not only inevitable but desired, as long as they are accepted by the community. In this framework and referring to anthropologist Jack Goody, Sanga introduces the concept of *homeostatic memory*, explaining how oral communication is based on memory mechanisms, continuously oriented to the present. Another feature connected to this mechanism is the need for relationality and for sharing.

Sanga's analysis moves, in the next chapter, to the concept of popular culture. Here, attention is focused on two foundational scholars in the Italian anthropological panorama (and beyond): Antonio Gramsci and Ernesto De Martino. Although it would be decidedly simplistic to define Gramsci as a folklore scholar, the importance of his *Osservazioni sul Folklore* (in *Letteratura e vita nazionale*, 1950, 215–21) ought to be emphasized. Here, folklore is proposed as a distinctive conception of the world and of life, “in contrast (also mostly implicit, mechanical, objective) with the ‘official’ concepts of the world ...” (ibid., 215). De Martino instead is widely considered the greatest Italian anthropologist, a great researcher in the field, and a refined historian and theorist.

Following this theoretical framework, the theme of the book is addressed in full. Sanga initially focuses on the concept of folk narrative, divided into traditional, modern, and contemporary, with differences of degree in its relationship with what Antonio Gramsci would call the hegemonic culture. Then he goes on to illustrate various genres, providing relevant examples, such as *fiaba* (fairy tale), *novella* (short novel), *storiella* (story), *leggenda* (legend), and *racconto* (tale)—based on content criteria. Via this gradual process of focusing in on one genre, the author leads the readers into the complex world of fairy tales, proposing definitions and types, always supported by specific examples. Then the readers enter into the merits of fairy tales. The theoretical approach analyzed in greater depth is undoubtedly the morphological/structuralist one of Propp, whose well-known debate with Claude Lévi-Strauss is reported in the final chapter. In particular, the thirty-one narrative functions proposed (intended as the constant features of the fairy tale) are studied in detail in their logical sequence.

Sanga proposes an interesting revision of the Proppian morphological analysis. First, Sanga's proposal elevates the morphological element *Initial Situation* to the role of function and adds the *Misfortune* (my translation) function, which Propp had imagined as a repetition of the *Villainy* function, also suggesting some terminological adaptations and a readjustment in the functions' succession. Sanga also groups certain functions into *Trial*, understood as a fixed pattern consisting of a question (the test to which the hero is subjected), a positive answer (which produces a reward), or a negative answer (which produces the end of advantageous action in favor of the hero). The trials are then arranged in a chain of events whereby each trial sets the condition of what follows. I see in this approach a successful attempt to reconcile Claude Bremond's critique, and his consideration of possible plots, with the sometimes rigid Proppian morphology.

Sanga's next logical step is the identification of three macrofunctions of the fairy tale, with a *Preparatory Part*; a *First Movement*, which begins with *Villainy*;

and a *Second Movement*, which begins with *Misfortune*. Sanga's hypothesis is supported by the analysis of ten tales of magic in which the hero is a seeker.

In chapter 7, a new subgroup of fairy tales is proposed: *fairy tales of enchantment* are characterized by the presence of the hero (always a woman) as a victim. The subgroup's specific characteristics can be seen at the function level, with for example the *Enchantment* function in place of *Villainy*, or the function called *Death* replacing *Departure*. As for *Trials*, the fairy tale of enchantment counts twelve, whereas tales of magic have eleven, with the addition of the *Wake*. Sanga then proposes a typology of six Types, marked from A to F and rigorously exemplified.

The final part of the book offers an overview of the studies on the fairy tale mentioned earlier, with observations on language use, variants, marketing, and production. A careful analysis of narrators, even professional storytellers, and of their closing formulas is also offered. The book ends with anthropological reflections on the fairy tale, its origin (identified in the society of hunters, whose aggregation is based on solidarity and egalitarianism), and its much-debated detachment from myth.

The genre's systematization suggested by Sanga has merit and is analytically well-founded. Proposing a revision of the fundamental Proppian system is both courageous and very useful, demonstrating how older debates on the fairy tale are still central to the field and remain a harbinger of theoretical reflections. This is the strong core of Sanga's work—namely, the ability to be innovative while respecting the established tradition of studies. The richness of Italian fairy-tale examples and the precision of in-depth analysis in support of his theses are remarkable. They allow the reader, not necessarily the specialist, to follow the proposed path. Sanga provides a complete picture that would perhaps have been further enriched by an in-depth study on the problem of transcription, or what Alberto Cirese calls displacement from the oral to the written. That said, working on such a broad and complex topic inevitably leads to making choices as to what to leave out, and the structure of this book is, once again, remarkable.

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Oz Behind the Iron Curtain: Aleksandr Volkov and His Magic Land Series.
By Erika Haber, University Press of Mississippi, 2017, 259 pp.

Erika Haber accomplishes adept archival, biographical, and transnational scholarship in her compelling study of how L. Frank Baum's American fairy-tale series of Oz became the popular Russian Magic Land series by Aleksandr Volkov. Along the way, Haber convincingly portrays why and how both authors and their fantasy series deserve more critical attention and academic

recognition than they have received. With this book, she affords readers rich insights into life situations and institutional forces that brought Baum's work into Volkov's trajectory, leading to books that have delighted children over generations and geopolitical spheres. A striking takeaway from Haber's study involves how children's (and adults') enjoyment of a marvelous story expands the desire and ability to tell a variety of related stories. This book serves fairy-tale scholars and teachers well in their efforts to appreciate the durable malleability of wonder tales.

The book's chapters tack back and forth from Baum to Volkov, from the United States to the emerging Soviet Union, with a central chapter contextualizing the relationship of fairy tales and children's literature. The transnational elements of Haber's study extend around the globe. Grounded in archival research at Syracuse University and Tomsk State Pedagogical University, the introduction and chapters 1 and 2 establish the fascinating relationship, and similarities, in the meandering paths that led Baum and Volkov to write children's literature and create incredibly popular and long-lasting book series. Baum, she writes, led an imaginative childhood and experimented with several career paths. Volkov loved reading from an early age and studied to become a teacher and school director. He also started writing poems and plays, eventually moving from Siberia to Moscow to complete graduate study in mathematics and teach at the university level. Haber's attentive scholarship highlights crucial contexts and important questions that have been overlooked for many decades, especially relating to how Baum created an American fairy tale that Volkov then promoted throughout the Soviet bloc.

Chapter 3 contextualizes the Oz and Magic Land series by examining how fairy tales and fantasy stories relate with the emergence of childhood, romantic nationalism, and mass literacy in Britain, Russia, the United States, and the Soviet Union from the eighteenth century into the twentieth. Especially in the United States and Soviet Union, teachers, librarians, and government officials sought to control the publishing industry and what children should read. Baum's story failed to appear on reading lists and syllabi because of the fantasy themes and its colloquial writing style and popularity that encouraged sequels, making it too commercialized for many librarians and teachers.

Haber suggests an ideological pendulum in attitudes toward fairy tales, generally. While collecting and publishing tales became favorable in Russia and Europe in the nineteenth century because of heritage and language, fairy tales seemed frivolous in hard-working and practical United States. By the turn of the twentieth century, Baum advocated pleasing children in the introduction to his first Oz book, but the pleasure of wonder tales merited serious condemnation from Soviet educators who later found such stories "distracted children from reality with their make-believe and petty bourgeois elements"

(90). A decade or so later, however, Maxim Gorky linked the fairy tale and other imaginative genres with the important socializing tasks of helping children think and create. This set up Volkov's publication of *Wizard of the Emerald City* in 1939.

In chapters 4 and 5, Haber demonstrates that both authors were attuned to children as attentive fathers. While critics condemned Baum's books, children clamored for more, leading the series to continue longer than anticipated, even years after Baum's death. Baum himself produced musical plays and movies related to his Oz stories. Volkov responded to Gorky's call for imaginative literature by working to translate and publish Baum's charming book, shared with him by a colleague to encourage his reading English. Retaining references to Kansas, Volkov's book rationalized Baum's story and made it more appealing to Soviet children while retaining the themes of friendship, adventure, and cooperation. Haber provides thorough information about the illustrators who worked with both authors, confirming the significance of images and book design. She also notes that when Volkov produced a second edition after Stalin's death that the continuing popularity of the story encouraged him to write his own sequels, up to his death in 1977. She asserts that the Oz books appear haphazard because they mimic an oral storytelling style and emphasizes that the stories moved smoothly into other media, including movies, plays, radio, television, and fan fiction.

Throughout the book, and especially in chapter 6 and the conclusion, Haber grapples with issues of authorship and ownership. She traces how Baum fans embraced the Magic Land series starting in the 1960s while collecting foreign versions of the Oz series. Volkov's books eventually appeared in English, translated by fans with their own interests and biases. Haber singles out Peter Blystone's translations as open to viewing Volkov's work as a new canon involving Baum's characters and settings. Similarly, she traces how Baum needed to be introduced in the Soviet Union and Russia as the creator of the original series. While she expresses concern about increasing Russian nationalism and potential control of children's literature, Haber concludes that everyone benefits by reading both the Baum and Volkov series and predicts that their shared universe will continue to expand.

Originally published in hardback in 2017 and paperback in 2019, this book would work well as an assigned text or chapters in classes involving fairy-tale studies, children's literature, transnationalism, or media studies. It will be especially appreciated by Baum and Volkov readers and fans. Haber makes a useful contribution to the history of US fairy tales, including mention of several nineteenth-century authors preceding Baum, although she does not consider how indigenous wonder tales in collections by David Cusick and others influenced the emergence of children's literature. Particularly important to

this book and ongoing issues of fan fiction, convergence culture, and adaptation, Haber explains the Russian tradition of translating, reworking, and localizing foreign stories. Throughout, she asserts the importance of reception, that children recognize a compelling story when they read one, and then they keep asking for more. In so doing, these readers and viewers connect with each other and with the authors to cross all sorts of arbitrary boundaries of time, space, nationality, and ideology in pursuit of wonder tales and magical lands of adventure, curiosity, pleasure, and growth.

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The Story of Myth. By Sarah Iles Johnston, Harvard University Press, 2018, 374 pp.

The Story of Myth is an examination of how mythology was told and performed in ancient Greece along with the intricacies of the storytelling methods being utilized within each retelling. The performance of myth and its core story elements contributed overall to the belief in gods' and heroes' existence. The power these figures wielded over the lives of humans in the ancient world was substantial; these characters were woven into the fabric of society. The issue being studied is how stories function in belief systems to reinforce understanding; many of these processes still occur today in fiction.

Within the mythology and folklore communities, there have been several different ways of conceptualizing myths. Dorothy Noyes, whose work on cultural forms are consumed by the public, is used to explain the way information was absorbed by ancient Greek audiences to induce belief. Gillian Bennett's work on supernatural memorates, or narration of firsthand experiences, is used to explain how we use words to convince others of new ideas being possible, even if it goes against what we believe. James Frazer's work on *The Golden Bough* (1890) was examined because of its influential reach, though it was fundamentally flawed. The work of ritualists like Jane Ellen Harrison and Gilbert Murray was also used to situate the author's argument about how these efforts in mythological scholarship were admirable but ultimately wrong in their assumptions.

Chapter 1 goes into the definitions and difficulties of working with the word "myth," along with Sarah Iles Johnston's intents for the book. She explains that myths, at their core, are stories that were meant to entertain as their primary function, much like modern folklore today; secondarily, myths were also informative. Myths, in their context, were a public performance, meant to be seen and heard, as well as connect to other myths/heroes/gods that the audience knew.

Chapter 2 examines how mythology had been understood by scholars, as well as the pitfalls of scholarly thought such as the essentializing of myths. This means that the myths were lifted out of their original contexts to be studied, which limited the understanding of them entirely. Johnston focuses the chapter on the ritualists, who believed myths were created for the purpose of ritual, and argues that ritualists made incorrect assumptions about the connection of ritual to myth/performance.

Chapter 3 focuses on the power of figurative language within the performance of myths; Greek poets were able to create a story world that was very close to their own world by the way they chose to convey beliefs involving gods, heroes, and humans. Fiction has a relationship to this kind of belief formation, and Johnston explains how the words used are related to belief and changing one's ideas about reality.

Chapter 4 illustrates the connectivity between the characters and stories of the Greek mythic story network, which led to greater belief in the divine. One story could reinforce the belief in one hero that it centers around but also in every single character that the main hero came into contact with. These entwined relationships created an entire network of material to draw from and continually reinforce belief in these characters' existence.

Chapter 5 centers round the concept of characters and how a character can transcend the story they are included in to live in other story worlds. Instead of following canonical storylines of who exactly each hero/god was, there was an active conversation happening between the audience and the performers musing about the nature of these characters. Nothing was considered the true version, but all versions had a place beside each other while the folklore of the myths grew depending on who was telling it.

Chapter 6 explores the metamorphosis of characters that happen within Greek myths, which is referring to the permanent change a character goes through instead of the ability to shift into one form then another. Hybridity is also discussed and how hybrids are very well connected in the story network; they have relationships to everyone else in the same way gods and heroes do. Johnston argues that metamorphic myths were how the Greeks conceptualized the gods' wrath and punishments, an idea not discussed in the sacred rites associated with worship.

Chapter 7 looks at heroes themselves, who were almost always the main characters instead of gods in myth. Heroes had the ability to exist forever because of how their narratives were told to the public. Heroes, who are usually demigods, are also seen as the reason humans can comfortably live in the world because they are the monster slayers, banishing the threats to human life instead of the gods.

This text brings together many ideas from folklore and media studies in a cohesive, straightforward way that was also enjoyable. I appreciated the storytelling aspect of this book the most because Johnston understands not only how the stories were told but also how to engagingly tell them. However, Johnston's explanations, as far as concepts in mythology, are incomprehensible and need to be broken down further for people outside the discipline. This would not be a strong primer for someone looking for a text to explain how modern mythologists view this subject. There were also concepts from folklore that could have been easily applied such as the text versus context debate, David Hufford's experiential hypothesis, and Lauri Honko's work on the cultural source hypothesis. Johnston's research could be expanded to understand how belief functions, something folklore has already studied extensively.

This book would be a good addition for anyone looking to understand how mythology functioned in ancient societies along with how fiction functions today. It is a valuable resource for understanding story networks and how characters can move away from their original source material, using modern and ancient examples to ground the reader in the material. Performance is also highlighted and explained in detail, so this would help scholars who need illumination on how information about the world was transmitted through stories in ancient times.

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