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Reviews

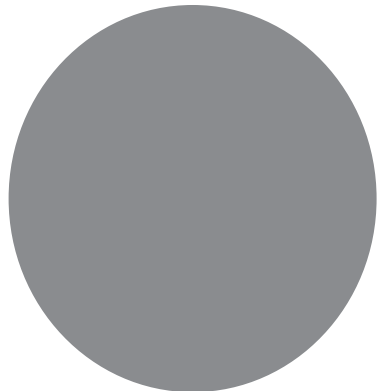
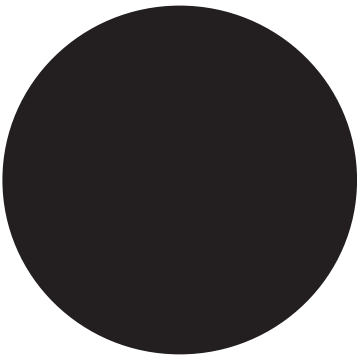
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Reviews



REVIEWS

Mists on the River: Folktales from Siberia. By Yeremei Aipin, illustrated by Gennedy Raishev, translated by Marina Aipin and Claude Clayton Smith, Shanti Arts, 2020, 50 pp.

Does your sandpiper soup have too much fat? Does the hunter's wife get a drink of water? Why does Rosy Cranberry burst apart? Yeremei Aipin's collection of Siberian folktales, *Mists on the River*, can give the reader some important insights about a culture miles away from the American reader. This small collection, only nine stories, of unusual and interesting tales gives the reader much to ponder and provides insights into a world beyond their usual existence.

I often challenge my students to tell me about the culture that originates an oral tale based only on the story in front of them. The further the story is from the student's experience, the more difficult the question. Herakles makes sense to most students, but the perseverance and kind nature of Scarface, the Blackfoot hero, confounds them. They ask why Chang, of the Chinese tale "The Magic Boat," did not seek to replace the emperor and just wanted to go home? And they are frequently horrified that the cruel Sedna is in charge of the Inuit food supply. It usually takes a long discussion to help them see the culture behind the stories. Aipin's folktales will challenge many readers to understand the culture that rests at the heart of the stories. Indeed, I find myself making assumptions that likely miss the story's point.

The Ostayk and Vogul people (now known as the Khanti and Mansi) live in an area of Siberia as cold and desolate as the land inhabited by the Inuit of North America, but food does not seem to be quite the problem for the Khanti and Mansi as it is for the Inuit. Hunters are important in this book, as seen in stories like "Birdie-Birdie's Bow and Arrow" and "Paki the Bear." Fishermen such as "Lany the Fisherman" are also important.

Two stories of the nine focus on sandpipers. This certainly piqued my interest. I always think of sandpipers as desert birds. But Laura Nielsen, in "Tough Little Birds Face Alaska's Ice," explains that arctic sandpipers are

essentially “little balls of fat” (*Frontier Scientists*, 2016). This creates an understanding for the story “The Wife and the Sandpiper,” and the idea that perhaps the arctic sandpiper is not a good bird for soup because of the fat.

There are two stories that create lists: “The Sandpiper” and “Bridie-Birdie’s Bow and Arrow.” The former explains the parts of the sandpiper, while the latter shows the connections among the elements of fire, wind, sun, clouds, and rain. Other stories include “Ptichek and His Sister,” which uses a trickster hero to help with survival during a dangerous encounter.

In these tales the animals and experiences important to the peoples of Siberia are similar to other tales in the warnings, foibles, and desires, but they also create wonder and curiosity. Does the sandpiper provide shelter for the people or does the story describing his body meet another cultural element? Certainly, hunters are often in dangerous areas, and the story of “Paki the Bear” reveals the hope of those hunters for especially friendly helpers in the woods, while Ptichek and Chi-Chi show the need for clever self-reliance, and “the Cuckoo” warns children to be good to their mothers.

In addition to the unique stories, the book is accompanied with illustrations by the well-known Khanty artist, Gennady Raishev. The son of a Khanty hunter, Raishev creates art steeped in the art and stories of his people. Each story has a watercolor drawing with stylized decorations. The tall, long-beaked sandpiper, the warmth of the hearth, and the importance of the hunter in the culture are emphasized through the illustrations.

Aipin’s little book is an opportunity to pass on the stories of his grandparents and preserve an oral history that few people still know. It is an excellent introduction to Siberian folktales. It will help folk-story lovers add another layer to their understanding of the world of story and will give any reader the opportunity to gain more knowledge of the world. Some may mistake it for a children’s book because it is so small, but a serious folklorist will recognize the complexity of the stories. Children will love it, but if they start asking questions, adults may find it difficult to respond.

Judith Gero John
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The Penguin Book of Mermaids. Edited by Cristina Bacchilega and Marie Alohala Brown, *Penguin Classics*, 2019, 330 pp.

The Penguin Book of Mermaids, edited by Cristina Bacchilega and Marie Alohala Brown, is a thoughtful, comprehensive, and vibrant anthology of tales showcasing the myriad shapes aquatic beings take in myth, folklore, legend, and religion. Bacchilega and Brown discuss the different significances behind humanity’s fascination with mermaids and their existence in popular

culture. Their scholarly insights augment and complement an impressive curation, presenting a smorgasbord of mermaid folklore and fairy tales from different regions and time periods.

The introduction of this anthology is erudite, presenting existential and philosophical considerations in humanity's relationship with mermaids. Mermaids are liminal beings and are therefore disconcerting and disorienting. Half fish, half woman in many accounts, they remind us of the in-between. Bacchilega and Brown write that "there is something deeply unsettling about a being whose form merges the human with the nonhuman" (xi). Bacchilega and Brown point out that the existence of these aquatic beings invokes questions about what it means to be human and about what lies beyond (xi). Perhaps, in many of the tales, they also point at the inherent inhumanity within us. Certainly, as is evidenced by the selkie tales of Scotland and the Icelandic *marmennill* tale, these mer-creatures cast a sometimes forgiving, sometimes harsh glance at the fallibility and caprice of humanity.

The question of mermaids and how they may be differentiated from other aquatic mythical beings may be seen as one of the considerations of this anthology, providing "sixty tales from a wide range of cultures and time periods" (x). Bacchilega and Brown unpack what they deem humanity's "ambivalence toward mermaids and other water spirits," correctly identifying that this is connected to their bodies (xii). The editors compare the connection between the occidental mermaid with water spirits in other parts of the world. This is a feature that sets this collection apart from other academic books that I have read attempting to delve into the attraction of mermaids, particularly because this book discusses and contextualizes popular conceptions of mermaids side by side with older underpinnings and looks at different accounts from the diaspora, the global south, and from indigenous communities. In short, the introduction is a joy to read, with an exhilarating array of references reaching into different cultures inclusive of popular culture and even the arts, as may be seen in an invigorating discussion of René Magritte's "The Collective Invention" (xiii). This sets the stage for a well-curated exploration of mermaids and other aquatic beings across millennia, cultures, and continents.

The editorial introduction for each section and tale explores the different cultural backgrounds, resonances, and implications of the tale. Some tales are grouped by nation. The first section, "Water Deities and Sirens from Olden Times," begins with accounts of water spirits in antiquity. The first story in the collection is that of Oannes, a Babylonian account of an "animal endowed with reason" who has both piscine and human attributes (5). Next, the anthology considers the *Kāliya* found in the Sanskrit *Bhagavata Purana* (6). Of particular interest to me was the well-known Polynesian tale of Hina, who is rescued from

marrying Tuna, an Eel-King, who is turned into the first coconut tree. Variants of this tale, the editors note, are seen in many Polynesian tales about the origin of the coconut and provide an important foregrounding to Polynesian folklore and beliefs (13).

The next section, “Mermaids and Other Merbeings in Europe” deals with tales set in Europe and begins on a strong note by presenting accounts of mermen and mermaid sightings in the waters of Iceland and Greenland (20). The Icelandic account is a quasi-humorous story of “The Merman” (or, as known in Icelandic, the marmennill), who has “powers to foretell the future” (20). This is followed by a grouping of tales of mermaids and a selkie from the Scottish Highlands, the Hebrides, and the Orkney Islands (27). Additional tales in this section include two accounts of mermaids from the *Child Ballads*, Germanic and Estonian aquatic beings, and an enthralling grouping of tales from Greece.

The “Literary Tales” section of the anthology is a treasure trove ranging from the first literary account of Melusina, by Jean d’Arras, to an excerpt from Straparola’s *The Pleasant Nights*, “Fortunio and the Siren.” Another excerpt of note is from Friedrich de la Motte Fouqué’s *Undine* (1811), which will hopefully lure people into reading this eerie and evocative novella (101). Hans Christian Andersen’s enduringly popular fairy tale “The Little Mermaid” (1837) is contained here, along with the lesser known “The Fisherman and His Soul” by Oscar Wilde (133). Amid the many noteworthy selections, I was particularly pleased with Kurahashi Yumiko’s revisioning of the Andersen classic, “A Mermaid’s Tears,” which is in keeping with the work the editors have done to make the anthology more inclusive, not resting on the laurels of past works on mermaids and all things aquatic (145).

Finally, the section that was of the most interest to me was “Merfolk and Water Spirits Across Cultures.” This final section is of a more international flavor and has a good selection of indigenous accounts of mermaids and merfolk. As a postcolonial scholar currently researching indigenous folk narratives, I find this collection invaluable, particularly because it includes a good selection of tales about mermaids and various other aquatic beings from different Polynesian and indigenous cultures, from the autochthonous peoples of Australia to the indigenous people of South America to the Khasi indigenous community of northeastern India. African Mermaids and water spirits across the African diaspora are also represented here (165). Yemaja in her various guises was mentioned, as well as the Mami Wata (166). Suffice it to say, this is a section that I shall be reading again and again because there is so much to consider in the dizzying range and diversity of mermaid fairy tales and folklore across the ages.

The different sections of the book work well together, and it is particularly helpful that there is an extensive section on suggestions for further reading, allowing the budding scholar of all forms of aquatic beings to do further research on the folklore and beliefs of all mentioned cultures and variants.

Anita Harris Satkunanathan
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Smack-Bam, or the Art of Governing Men: Political Fairy Tales of Édouard Laboulaye. By Édouard Laboulaye, translated and edited by Jack Zipes, Princeton University Press, 2018, 276 pp.

Charles Godfrey Leland and His Magical Tales. By Charles Godfrey Leland, edited by Jack Zipes, Wayne State University Press, 2020, 189 pp.

Jack Zipes continues his recent series of collecting tales by lesser-known folklorists in two of his latest books, *Smack-Bam, or the Art of Governing Men* (2018) and *Charles Godfrey Leland and His Magical Tales* (2020). At first glance the two texts seem to have little in common, yet both explore the myriad interests of two colorful nineteenth-century folklorists, both of whose interests, culturally and politically, spanned across the Atlantic Ocean to America from Britain, France, and beyond. Though both Édouard Laboulaye and Charles Godfrey Leland are not unknown, they are known for their work in areas outside of fairy tales. In these two books, Zipes shifts the focus to the tales they wrote, collected, or retold, framing them according to each man's cultural interests.

In *Smack-Bam*, Édouard Laboulaye's political interests are at the forefront of his fairy tales, and Zipes highlights this with his careful selection of tales as well as his robust biography of Laboulaye's life. Although Laboulaye today is perhaps more known for his political activism in France, as well as his favorable relationship with the United States (not to mention his role in making the Statue of Liberty possible), Zipes concentrates more on his interest in the fairy-tale genre and his use of fairy tales as a vehicle for political commentary. Laboulaye read and collected tales from various countries in Europe, ultimately transforming them into his own works. Here, Zipes argues, is where Laboulaye's personal style shines through as he molds each tale to sharply critique, with wit and humor, the systematic issues of the French hierarchical government during the French Second Empire.

Indeed, Laboulaye's tales are biting funny and charmingly sarcastic. For example, the tale that inspired the book's title, "Smack-Bam, or The Art of Governing Men," features a young prince who disdains education and is opposed to correction. He faces sharp reproof from a childhood companion

named Pazza, a witty young girl who seems his complete opposite and who smacks him during their first lesson about the alphabet. Although the tale closely follows the prince and his governing follies, Pazza reappears frequently in disguise to give guidance—often in the form of more smacks and sharp words.

Zipes curates the collection to highlight Laboulaye's political commentaries. Tales such as "The Young Woman Who Was Wiser Than the Emperor" or "The Story about the Tailor and His Daughter," wherein the heroines take charge of their marital destinies, bring to light Laboulaye's thoughts about female agency and female political rights. Similarly, both "Zerbino the Bumpkin" and "Briam the Fool" are retold by Laboulaye to showcase the nobility as foolish, the "bumpkin" or "fool" as wise, and life *away* from kingly courts as the preferred outcome. Under Zipes's translation and editing, each tale sparkles with humor and cultivated political thought that is still relevant today.

In Leland's *Magical Tales*, Zipes once more puts the spotlight on a figure who is less known for his work in folklore or fairy tales. Charles Godfrey Leland is more known for his publications on shamanism and pagan witchcraft, and is even attributed to the rise of Wicca in the United States. Thus, Zipes focuses on Leland's fascination with magic, shamanism, and witchcraft in his tales, which he has compiled from several of Leland's collections. In the biographical section that prefaces the tales, Zipes explains that Leland held many interests and traveled frequently, coming into contact with Native Americans, Romani groups in England, Italian "witches," and more. His approach to tale collection was unusual, in part because he was collecting tales before the establishment of official folklore societies and because he chose to embellish his tales rather than adhere strictly to the originals. Nevertheless, Leland's appreciation for magic and storytelling shines through the tales in each section, and his devotion to understanding minority groups is made evident through Zipes's selection of stories.

For example, Leland's tales display a fascinating variety of narrative forms and appear to retain the cultural elements of each group's traditions. The Algonquin stories are straightforward, often without the bells or whistles that accompany some of the tales that appear later in the collection. Shamanism features heavily in these stories, and it is not uncommon, such as in the story "The Golden Key," for prominent characters to impart shamanistic wisdom and spells onto the hero or heroine for their benefit and eventual prosperity.

The Florentine tales, sourced mostly from Italian "witches" that Leland met while living in Florence, are told in a more embellished style familiar to French and Italian fairy tales. In these tales, fairies and goblins alike provide magical aid, and witches are not always evil. In fact, "The Goblin of La Via del Corno" features a goblin who saves the hero's life as repayment for the hero saving the goblin's life earlier. Likewise, the tales of Virgil in the next section

paint Virgil as a helpful magician who often arrives like a fairy godmother in the nick of time. Readers will no doubt particularly enjoy “The Story of Romolo and Remolo,” a retelling of the classic Romulus and Remus story that involves a werewolf queen and two combative princesses, as well as Virgil’s other adventures in this section.

The collection ends with the Romani tales, which are each barely a page in length but are told with such dry humor it’s difficult to dislike any of them. With practical knowledge such as “Always eat all the food that people share with you” and warnings against killing snakes, Leland puts the cheeky humor of the English Romani on full display (174–175). Though Zipes keeps the antiquated labels of “Indians” and “gypsies” that Leland himself used, it only serves to show Leland the way Zipes would have us view him: as a product of his time, yet nevertheless a colorful amateur folklorist interested in the art of storytelling.

Zipes’s anthologies of Laboulaye’s and Leland’s tales are by no means comprehensive, but they are the first step in bringing both authors back into the light and, in the case of Laboulaye, making them accessible to an English audience. Both *Smack-Bam* and *Magical Tales* are scintillating additions to Jack Zipes’s growing list of publications on lesser-known folklorists and authors. Not only are they enjoyable to read, but they also will no doubt serve as launching points for a deeper dive into the fairy-tale works of both Laboulaye and Leland.

Hannah Mummert
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South of the Sun: Australian Fairy Tales for the 21st Century. Edited by the Australian Fairy Tale Society, Western Australia, Serenity Press, 2021, 254 pp.

South of the Sun is a curious mixture of tales, poetry, and illustrations. The book has been collaboratively produced by a subcommittee of the Australian Fairy Tale Society (AFTS)—a small not-for-profit organization established in 2013 with the goal of collecting, preserving, discussing, sharing, and creating Australian fairy tales. The anthology brings together works created by members of the society, with a sprinkling of nonmember contributions by more established Australian writers, and includes mostly short stories, with a few poems, and a generous sprinkling of accompanying illustrations.

The book takes a somewhat democratic or elastic approach to the question of what might constitute an Australian fairy tale: all of the tales are set in a recognizably Australian social and cultural setting, from inner-city Melbourne to the Blue Mountains, and created by Australian writers, storytellers, and poets. Almost all of the tales and poems are adaptations of

well-known European fairy tales or folkloric tales, from T. D. Luong's science fictional reimagining of AT333 Little Red Riding Hood ("Refugee Wolf") to Erin-Claire Barrow's retelling of ATU451 The Brothers Who Were Turned Into Birds ("The Crows"). A great many of the tales in the anthology strongly evoke the diversity of Australia's population, with works that—as Louisa John-Krol notes in the introduction—reflect the cultural diversity of the contributors to the collection.

Two works offer very different approaches to including contemporary Indigenous voices. Jaquim Duggan's "Before and Now" is a short narrative poem vividly evoking our current environmental crisis through images from before—"When the fire sang / songlines" (78)—and now, when "The fire wails, / neglected" (79). In contrast, "The Karukayn Get Revenge" is a story transcribed and translated from a story told by Gurindji man Ronnie Wavehill. The story is shared with Ronnie's express permission and is a delightfully playful mermaid story that includes a vivid account of a healing using "fragrant plants for smoke healing . . . the same kind they use for *mungamunga*, bush girls" (121). The story is accompanied by illustrations of Ronnie Wavehill's granddaughter, Kira Dandy.

Many other stories use fairy-tale motifs or structures to tell the tales of migrants and refugees. Kathleen Jennings's vividly wicked "On Pepper Creek" tells the tale of a family of migrants who accidentally bring a boggart "stowed away in the tarred-and-corded chest they brought from the Old Country" (103). The boggart, like the Gardiner's, is unsettled by its new home, this "whispering, shivering world of untrimmed, slender-leaved trees and walls through which the moon could peer" (105). Jackie Kerin's marvelous "No Horse, No Cart, No Shoes"—"a tale written in language for telling"—tells the story of three resourceful and capable women, Lutheran refugees of the early 1800s who contributed to the founding of the town now known as Hahndorf. Yvette Landzinski's "The Lonely Mosque" is a marvelously taut and evocative story about an Arabic truck driver whose mother told him it was the genie inside him that "makes you wander, makes you mischief" (232).

A great many of the tales draw on the strong tradition of retelling the old tales with a focus on the independence, resourcefulness, wit, and wisdom of their women characters. This is a strong recurring theme of this anthology of works by mostly women writers. Strong and resourceful women and girls show up in tales such as Cate Kennedy's marvelous viewpoint-shifting tale "GPS," in which a girl taking a shortcut through the woods uses the power of GPS—"which stands for *Gravitational Pull System* or *Global Praying System* or *Grandmother Please Save*"—to outwit a stranger (12). Danielle Wood's "All Kinds of Fur" tells the tale of a motherless colonial girl-woman who, under

the watchful eye of her mother's ghost, learns to trap and skin and stitch her way out of her father's house. Perhaps the most gently satisfying of these feminist retellings is Leife Shallcross's entirely enchanting "The Aunties," in which thirteen aunts offer not just magical christening gifts but also companionship, solace, support, and friendship. And a pedicab decorated in fairy lights and sari silks.

Finally, there are those other tales that are slippery, but stick. Whose imagery and characters linger long after the last page is turned. Jennifer Lehmann's "Cricket" is a haunting and original tale of an uncanny golden child, summer storms, and "the Rocks people" who "watch all the time. And they don't like outsiders" (169). Angie Rega's "The Tale of the Seven Magpies" artfully uses the structure of an old European tale to tell a story that is distinctly Australian, with seven sons who never returned from the Great War, and a Magpie Queen who smokes a pipe and takes her tea "strong with two sugars" (229).

Not all the tales in the collection are equally successful, which is to be expected in any anthology, but perhaps particularly in one whose fairy godmothers needed to include as many tales as possible by members of an organization of enthusiasts, but not necessarily experienced, storytellers and writers. Quite a few of the tales suffer from awkward, even cringeworthy, use of Australian reference points, from over-the-top use of Australian "ocker" slang in dialogue to stumbling attempts to include or acknowledge Indigenous culture or language. A few tales suffer from didacticism, or from outdated approaches to creating "fairy tales for the twenty-first century." While the introduction asserts that the collection "challenge[s] assumptions that fairy tales are for children, are European, and must contain fairies and pale, passive heroines," not all of the tales do so with an equal measure of vigor and imagination (2).

The AFTS face a significant challenge in attempting to contribute to the creation of (new) Australian fairy tales and have faced this challenge with enthusiasm and gentle courage. As this issue of *Marvels & Tales* attests, the fairy tale as it is popularly understood in contemporary Australia is a borrowed thing, sitting somewhat uneasily in the Australian landscape. And yet, many Australian writers and artists—from as early as 1870, when "Gumsucker" (Sarah Roland) published the first collection of "Australian" fairy tales, *Rosalie's Reward; or, The Fairy Treasure*—have drawn on the fairy tale and folklore of our diverse heritages to think about Australian identity, landscape, culture, and heritage. We have, for centuries now, been using fairy tales not only to entertain and educate but also to attempt to understand who we were, who we are, and who we might yet become.

Nike Sulway
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A True Blue Idea. By Marina Colasanti, translated by Adria Frizzi, Wayne State University Press, 2019, 62 pp.

I expect wonderful things from the Donald Haase Series in Fairy-Tale Studies, and *A True Blue Idea* is a wonderful thing: a short collection of fairy tales from Italian-Brazilian writer Marina Colasanti, originally published in Portuguese. The collection includes ten stories, all original rather than retellings of older tales, although they draw on traditional fairy-tale elements. As Colasanti points out in her introduction, “This is a book of fairy tales, with swans, unicorns, and princesses” (1). However, her princesses fall in love with unicorns or turn into swans, rather than marrying princes as we might expect. In “Seven Years and Seven More,” the tale most closely related to the ones we know from Perrault or the Grimms, a princess is put to sleep by her father and fairy godmother, who think the prince she loves is not worthy of her. When the prince finds out, he puts himself to sleep as well, and there they both remain, separately asleep. They dream of each other, but are together only in their dreams. They live happily ever after—dreaming.

Most of Colasanti’s tales have similarly ambiguous endings. In the first story, ironically titled “The Last King,” Kubla Khan sails away with the wind—to where, we do not know. In the titular story, “A True Blue Idea,” a king has an idea, the first of his life, and it is so precious to him that he hides it in the Hall of Sleep. There it remains all his life, until he is old and visits it again, only to find that he no longer cares for it. He leaves it there, untouched. In “News and Honey,” a king chooses to hear only good news and finally stops up his ears with honey and beeswax so he will hear only sweetness. These are not the sorts of actions we expect from kings in traditional tales, where the role of kings is generally to marry a heroine or reward a hero. Colasanti’s heroines also have unusual fates. In “Through the Hoop,” a girl is so enchanted by her own embroidery that she travels into it every day, until one day her older sister embroiders her into the canvas, trapping her forever. “Thread by Thread” also features two sisters, the fairies Nemesis and Gloxinia, who collaborate on embroidering a white silk cloak. Jealous of her sister’s work, Gloxinia turns her sister into a spider and completes the embroidery, only to find that she has become trapped in the spider’s web. The story ends with the lovely, frightening sentence, “All over the court, over the halls, over the castle and the gardens, patient Nemesis went on spinning and weaving, oblivious to her sister, forever a prisoner of her silver cocoon” (36). Kings who abdicate their responsibilities, sisters who trap each other in women’s work, love that can never be consummated—these sorts of themes permeate Colasanti’s stories.

In her introduction, Colasanti writes, “Perhaps it would have been more convenient and easier to create narratives apt to seduce with their modernity or impress with their everyday realism,” but these tales infuse a modern

sensibility into ancient imagery and form (1). They are very short, only two or three pages not including the illustrations, in the clean, spare, elegant language of a poet—I was not surprised to learn that Colasanti writes poetry as well. However, we must include the illustrations, because they are by the author herself, using a technique that resembles woodcut printing. After “The One and Only,” we see a girl’s face reflected in the fragments of a mirror—the mirror that the princess broke so she could have more friends, each one a reflection of herself. In the middle of “Among the Leaves so Green O,” we see the prince and his men out hunting for the doe princess who will eventually elude him when she decides that she would rather be a doe than a queen. In her afterword, translator Adria Frizzi points out that Colasanti trained in visual arts before turning to literature and journalism, and the stories themselves are filled with strong images. Reading them is like walking through a gallery of paintings by Remedios Varo or shuffling a deck of beautiful, enigmatic Tarot cards. Colasanti writes that her interest is in “that timeless thing called the unconscious,” and there is a sense in which her stories resemble dreams (1).

However, they are also very much about our waking reality. *A True Blue Idea* offers two significant pleasures. The first is of course Colasanti’s storytelling. The second is Frizzi’s afterword, in which she discusses Colasanti’s place in Brazilian literature and connects her fairy tales to their political and cultural context. Subtly and subtextually, these tales comment on issues of gender and power. Frizzi points out that *A True Blue Idea* was originally published “around the time when Brazil was beginning to emerge from an extended period of repression with *abertura*, the ‘opening’ to democratization initiated by the government of General Figueredo,” whose presidency ended the military regime, and that Colasanti has been committed to women’s issues since she began publishing in the 1960s (55). As Frizzi writes, “the association between fairy tales, fantasy, myth, and discourses of subversion is well known” (55). That link is certainly evident in Colasanti’s lovely, surreal tales. I was astonished to read that it took fifteen years for this translation to find a home. Thanks are due to Wayne State University Press for bringing it to us.

Theodora Goss
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Contemporary Fairy-Tale Magic: Subverting Gender and Genre. Edited by Lydia Brugué and Auba Llompart, Brill, 2020, 356 pp.

Contemporary Fairy-Tale Magic: Subverting Gender and Genre (2020) is a collection of fairy-tale scholarship edited by Lydia Brugué and Auba Llompart, both professors at the Universitat de Vic–Universitat Central de Catalunya. The title is volume 129 of the “At the Interface/Probing the Boundaries” series published by Brill Rodopi. Most of the contributors are affiliated with universities in Spain,

along with contributors from other European universities and the United States, bringing a welcome international perspective to contemporary fairy-tale studies.

This collection features a significant number of essays at thirty total, arranged in three parts: “Contemporary Subversions of Gender in Fairy Tales,” “The Darkness of Contemporary Fairy Tales,” and “Other Contemporary Subversions of Genre through Fairy Tales.” The organization of this collection is one of its strengths because the chapters speak in direct conversation with one another, both with their immediately adjacent chapters and within their sections. For instance, Jade Lum and Alba Torres Álvarez both discuss Neil Gaiman’s *The Sleeper in the Spindle* (2014) with different theoretical orientations in adjacent chapters, bringing necessary analysis to an understudied contemporary fairy-tale text. In fact, though there are occasional analyses of fairy-tale staples such as Anne Sexton’s *Transformations* (1971), Angela Carter’s corpus, and Guillermo del Toro’s *Pan’s Labyrinth* (2006), many of the chapters focus on texts of a variety of genres and media, making the content fresh and useful to the ever-expanding subfield of study on the retelling of fairy tales.

While the breadth and variety of fairy-tale texts covered in the collection is admirable, the weakness of the collection lies in the rigor of scholarship within the chapters. The chapters on staples of the contemporary fairy-tale genre (Sexton, Carter, and even del Toro) do not necessarily bring anything new to the conversation on these texts and creators. For example, while Claudia Schwabe’s chapter covering the appeal of the monstrous in contemporary fairy tales successfully used a del Toro film (*The Shape of Water*, 2017) to discuss monstrous imaginations in other films such as *Shrek* (2001) and *Lilo and Stitch* (2002), the following chapter on del Toro by Gema Navarro Goig and Francisco Javier Sánchez-Verdejo Pérez repeats well-established scholarship on the fairy-tale components of del Toro’s filmography, such as that found in Greenhill and Matrix’s collection *Fairy Tale Films: Visions of Ambiguity* (2010). Additionally, there were notable copyediting errors that included misspelling the titular character of 2002 film *Stitch*’s name as “Stich,” and this occurred multiple times in Schwabe’s chapter.

Other treatments of gender theory in the first third of the book also lack rigor. Although the chapter on empowered fairy-tale heroines by Lisa L. Ortiz and Sheila M. Rucki attempts to use feminist theory to discuss films such as *Snow White and the Huntsman* (2012) and *Shrek* (2001), the argument lacks some sophistication. While it is true that the Snow White as portrayed by Kristen Stewart in the former film is drastically different from her counterpart in the Disney adaptation of the story (1937), I disagree that the character is a “liberated young woman, free to construct her own happily-ever-after, without riding with any prince into the sunset” (103). The character is elevated in the film primarily by her rejection of femininity, in contrast to her wicked

stepmother (Charlize Theron). Further, all her helpers in the film are men. Snow White, despite donning armor of her own, reinforces patriarchal values in the film, whereas the villain explicitly reacts against sexually violent patriarchy, being a serial king-killer. Arguing that this film “empowers” Snow White simply because she is less feminine and does not marry at the end runs contrary to modern feminist thinking.

While it is important to see our toolbox of fairy-tale and gender scholarship applied to understudied texts, several chapters in this collection, such as the one just discussed, do not push boundaries, nor do they leave the reader with further questions to pursue. They engage with critical works of fairy-tale scholarship such as the corpus of Jack Zipes and Cristina Bacchilega’s work *Fairy Tales Transformed? Twenty-First Century Adaptations and the Politics of Wonder* (2013), but there is not much work done to build on the conversations these existing works of scholarship have begun (other than applying them to new texts). For instance, while Renáta Marosi’s chapter on *Mary Poppins* is interesting to read because *Mary Poppins* is not frequently examined in fairy-tale studies, there is nothing particularly groundbreaking in stating that *Mary Poppins* is a trickster figure.

A notable exception to this was María Jesús Martínez-Alfaro’s chapter on anti-tales and Holocaust representation. I am extremely interested in exploring this concept of the anti-tale further, and Martínez-Alfaro does an excellent job introducing the term as discussed by Catriona McAra and David Calvin and further developing it to her own ends in discussing fairy tales as a means of depicting experiences of the Holocaust. The author also diligently outlines the difficulty of producing and discussing literature about the Holocaust before beginning to analyze a few texts that intertwine fairy tales and depictions of the Holocaust in different ways. I found the statement “stories help us to remember, to think also of those that made it [the Holocaust] happen, to ponder on perpetration and evil; stories link experiences of violence, pain and trauma, and foster understanding as a relational task” to be accurate and moving. One of the strengths of fairy tales is the genre’s ability to tell the truth, even when that truth is inaccessible to the conscious mind.

I commend this collection on its variety and aim to apply the lens of fairy-tale studies to contemporary fairy-tale analogous texts, but the lack of scholastic rigor in several chapters led me to feel largely disappointed. Despite being published in 2020, the collection feels out of date. There are a few standout chapters (Schwabe, Martínez-Alfaro, Lum, and Torres Álvarez, as examples) which I will likely revisit and use in undergraduate courses, but overall, this text does not push the field of fairy-tale studies much further toward new horizons.

Sarah N. Lawson
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The Thousand and One Nights: Sources and Transformations in Literature, Arts, and Science. Edited by Ibrahim Akel and William Granara, Brill, 2020, 343 pp.

In the preface to *The Thousand and One Nights: Sources and Transformations in Literature, Arts, and Science*, after foregrounding the “dense and fluid textual networks” of the *Nights* due to its numerous sources, which have been widely translated and transformed, the book’s editors, Ibrahim Akel and William Granara, pose the question, “What must we have read, seen, or heard to claim to know the *Nights*?” (xii). By bringing together essays by nineteen different scholars from diverse areas of expertise who examine the *Nights* in a variety of contexts, such as early Arabic manuscripts, translations and traditions in French and English, economics and political theory in the *Nights*, its influences on Polish literature, Arabic theater, Italian film, and more, the editors will certainly succeed in broadening even the most avid reader’s knowledge of the vast textual web of the *Nights*. The main strengths of the book, therefore, reside both in its breadth of coverage and the depth of analysis in each individual essay. Although the majority of the nineteen chapters are written in English, readers with knowledge of French and Arabic will benefit most from the book as six of the chapters are written entirely in French and one contains large passages solely in Arabic, which mirrors the history of the diffusion of the *Nights* and several of the themes treated in the book.

Divided into four main sections, part 1 begins with four chapters, three of which are written in French, that address various sources and manuscripts of the *Nights*. Ulrich Marzolph’s excellent opening chapter explores the relationship between a work titled *Kitāb Laṭā’if aḥbār al-uwal* (“Les belles anecdotes des Anciens”) by Muḥammad Ibn ‘Abd al-Mu’ī al-Ishāqī and its correspondence to tales in the *Nights*. In contrast to Daniel Beaumont, who believed that Ishāqī had access to the *Nights*, Marzolph persuasively argues conversely that Ishāqī’s work was the source for certain stories in the *Nights*. Ahmed Saidy begins the third chapter with a nonexhaustive inventory of manuscripts of the *Nights* located in various libraries across Morocco in order to briefly discuss the reception of the *Nights* and to provide an account of the variations found in three “complete” manuscripts. Although the chapter is written in French, knowledge of Arabic is necessary to fully grasp the chapter’s significance as passages from the manuscripts as well as the comparative tables of the contents of each manuscript are provided solely in Arabic and little discussion is given in French of the particularities of these differences.

The shortest section, part 2, contains two chapters addressing Antoine Galland’s French translation and its influence in the eighteenth century. Anne E. Duggan begins by mapping out the diffusion and influence of Antoine Galland’s translation of the *Nights* in the eighteenth-century French literary

field before establishing the importance of the work for Enlightenment philosophers such as Montesquieu, Voltaire, and Diderot. By analyzing the print culture surrounding the publication of Galland's multivolume work, in chapter six, Arafat Abdur Razzaque illuminates the complexities involved in the "L'affaire du Tome VIII" and the question of Galland's authorship of *Les Mille et une nuits*. In examining the *Nuits* as an "object of negotiation between the author/translator and the editor/publisher," Razzaque proposes that "the expiration date of the bookseller's original *privilège* may explain the hasty anomalous eighth volume" (83). This brief yet illuminating section is indispensable for readers interested in a deeper understanding of the context in which Galland's translation was published and received.

The largest section of the book, part 3, contains nine chapters, three of which are written in French, on the influence of the *Nights* in world literature and the arts. In the opening chapter, the shortest of the book spanning less than four pages, Abdelfattah Kilito discusses the links between the tale of "les deux rêveurs" and Honoré de Balzac's *Eugénie Grandet*. More descriptive than analytical, the chapter lacks a discussion of the possible implications of these intertextual connections. Michael James Lundell contends, in chapter nine, that Richard F. Burton's publication of the *Nights* should no longer be viewed as a "translation," but rather it should be understood in light of Gerard Genette's transtextual matrix, as he presents strong evidence that Burton simply modified the poems and stories from Edward William Lane's English translation and borrowed most of the prose from John Payne's translation. In one of the most stimulating essays in the book, in this reader's opinion, William Granara compares two Nūr al-Dīn romances in the *Nights* to two modes, the sacred (al-'udrī) and the profane (al-ibāhī), of the classical Arabic love poem, or *ġazal*. Next, Adam Mestyán compares four musical plays in Arabic whose central themes are derived from Hārūn Al-Rašīd stories in the *Nights*, asserting that the plays exhibit "key political ideas" and "their contemporary political context" given that they were staged "in front of Ottoman Arab audiences in the late nineteenth century" (176). In the final chapter of part 3, Ilaria Vitali examines the hypotextual impact of the *Nights* on the "re-animated" silhouette films of Michel Ocelot. Vitali also provides a wonderfully detailed description of the techniques involved and an overview of the history and traditions of early animation and silhouette films.

Part 4 concludes the book with four chapters on the *Nights* in relation to the Humanities and the Sciences. In chapter sixteen, Rasoul Aliakbari examines the changing political and economic structure of antebellum America and the interconnections between the appearances of the *Nights* in the period's print culture and its use in the formation of American national subjectivity, particularly regarding mass consumerism and economic elitism, at times

due to the use of Aladdin as a metaphor for the middle-class experience. In the final chapter of the book, Eyüp Özveren evaluates the functioning of the bazaar and the economic phenomena such as wealth, finance, credit, markets, production, and innovation in the *Nights* as well as the economics of Karl Marx and Joseph A. Schumpeter in the two tales of “The Story of Ḥasan of Basra,” and “The Story of Abu Kir the Dyer and Abu Sir the Barber.”

The diversity of scholarship in the book is sure to satisfy a wide variety of readers from those who are rather unfamiliar with the *Nights* to those who already can “claim to know the *Nights*” well. *The Thousand and One Nights: Sources and Transformations in Literature, Arts, and Science* is thus a welcomed edition to previously published collections of essays from *Nights*’ scholars, such as Ulrich Marzolph’s edited volumes, *The Arabian Nights Reader* (2006) and *The Arabian Nights in Transnational Perspective* (2007) and *The Arabian Nights in Historical Context: Between East and West* (2008), edited by Saree Makdisi and Felicity Nussbaum. Furthermore, given the scope of the essays in the book, the reader, whether interested in the *Nights*’ sources, the influence of the *Nights* across languages, mediums, and cultural contexts, or economic and political themes in the *Nights*, is sure to find numerous chapters, if not all, extremely interesting and informative.

Adrion Dula
Wayne State University

War, Myths, and Fairy Tales. Edited by Sara Buttsworth and Maartje Abbenhuis, Palgrave Macmillan, 2017, 243 pp.

Buttsworth and Abbenhuis offer in this volume an impressive and expansive collection of ten essays that examine the complex interchange between fairy tales and war or violence. The thread holding these essays together, as laid out in the first chapter, which also functions as the introduction, appears to be twofold. First, they suggest that “Fairy and folk tale tropes offer modern authors . . . ideal frameworks and well-known terms of reference through which to explore the meanings and mythologies of war” (2). At the same time, the collection is metacritical in that “Fairy tales can offer a constructive medium through which to explore, explain, and possibly critique not only this war [WWI], but war in general” (4). The strength of the collection lies in this broad scope and the wide range of topics in the individual essays, focused primarily on texts and media in North American and European traditions.

Readers of this journal will no doubt be comfortable navigating this variety as the essays alternate between rediscovering folk traditions, as Dannelle Gutarra does with Abelardo Díaz Alfaro’s stories of Puerto Rican resistance to US colonialism, and reinterpretations of fairy tales in popular culture, as Buttsworth’s own contribution does with “Hansel and Gretel” and *The Hunger*

Games novels (2008–10). Thus, as the editors themselves state, part of this volume's purpose is to remind us of the "power of the fairy tale to transcend categorization—and conflict" (18). While some of the essays offer brief forays into definitional theory, such as Charlotte Beyer's work with myth in A. S. Byatt's *Ragnarok* (2011) or Peter Burkholder and David Rosen's analysis of child soldiers in what they term medievaesque films, the volume largely avoids taxonomy, which allows the essays themselves to demonstrate the pervasiveness of the entanglement of war with folktales and fairy tales.

On the other hand, if there is one challenge that the book presents, at least to this reader, it is in extending this lack of taxonomy to the concept of war. The two chapters that frame the volume are demonstrative in this regard as both of them focus on the Holocaust. Giacomo Lichtner presents an engaging and insightful reading of the ways in which Holocaust films employ fairy-tale themes in order to deal with the historical trauma, from the dream-like fairy-tale structure of *Life Is Beautiful* (1997) to the visceral realism of the Hungarian film *The Notebook* (2013). In the final essay, Simon Heywood and Shonaleigh Cumbers offer a unique account of an Anglo-Dutch Jewish storyteller (Shanaleah KhyMBERG) known as a drut'syla and her series of oral performances drawn from the tradition known as "The Ruby Tree" (2014–15), analysis of which demonstrates how "living oral cultural tradition sustains contemporary relevance in conditions of war and attempted genocide" (221). This framing of the volume offers an intriguing, if unexplored, commentary on the nature of war itself, as it positions the Holocaust as the "ultimate experience of wartime violence" (13). Yet some elaboration on that claim would have been helpful.

If the Holocaust is an expression of the conflict in war, it is decidedly one-sided. Can, or should, we envelope within the purview of "war" an act of violence that is primarily enacted by one party against another, that is, with one party who is so clearly the aggressor? This is an important question, especially for a volume published as an American regime under Donald Trump was notoriously filling camps with migrant children, or for readers today, as the Israel Defense Forces is once again leveling parts of occupied Gaza. It seems, perhaps, one missed opportunity of this book. Still, in another sense, the emphasis is more appropriate as several of the essays within suggest that the focus of fairy-tale renderings of war tend to focus on the domestic experience of wartime, as Beyer's essay again notes, and several of them specifically explore issues of childhood and children's experience of war. In particular JoAnn Conrad's analysis of children's books focused on World War II notes an "American tendency" to produce books that "avoided the realities of the war's European refugee crisis, complicated as it was by ideologies of race and isolationism" (140). And Lindsay Thistle's analysis of the Canadian wartime

legends (e.g., Johnny Canuck and Billy Bishop) emphasizes that even portrayals of war abroad were about the development of myths for domestic conception, for the establishment and reinforcing of national identity.

All this is not to say that the essays do not deal with war directly, but that they present as the central challenge that war is mediated through fictional media, imbued with fairy-tale structures and motifs, that tend to distance us from warfare. This is true in Buttsworth's analysis of *The Hunger Games* series. Paul E. Blom's essay on Mark Twain's *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* (1889), however, summarizes nicely the central tension teased out in this volume: that between the capacity for fairy tales to represent a means to deal with the realities of war (and subsequent trauma) and the tendency of fairy tales to oversimplify the complexities of war. At the end of this analysis is the recognition of "the fairy tale of the 'just war' for 'civilization' or the military intervention to 'promote democracy' as just that, a fairy tale" (189). Obviously, however, as it ends with the essay on "The Ruby Tree"—on the persistence of folk traditions through the turmoil of war and attempted genocide—the book also ends on a note of hope.

While I have presented the chapters in this book thematically, it is worth noting at last that this is a finely curated volume and the attention to the presentation and ordering of the essays is evident. Buttsworth and Abbenhuis have taken great care to ensure that these essays dovetail with one another thematically, making the book an enjoyable read. The strengths and limitations of taxonomy (or lack thereof) aside, the essays would—individually, or in many cases, in conjunction—serve as excellent case studies for research or in the classroom, and scholars interested in the complex relationship between fairy tale, folk tale, myth, and warfare or violence should take note.

Derek J. Thiess
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Craving Supernatural Creatures: German Fairy-Tale Figures in American Pop Culture. By Claudia Schwabe, Wayne State University Press, 2019, 334 pp.

In *Craving Supernatural Creatures: German Fairy-Tale Figures in American Pop Culture*, Claudia Schwabe persuasively counters Jack Zipes's lament that mass media retellings of fairy tales exploit the long history and power of the stories to the tales' detriment. Rather, she argues, reinterpretations of difference and Otherness and the redemption or humanization of the monsters and villains of German folklore in North American mass media productions point to a cultural shift toward embracing diversity as a positive trait rather than something to be feared.

In engaging prose, Schwabe takes on four groupings from German folklore: uncanny creatures such as the automaton, golem, and doppelgänger;

archetypal female villains such as the evil queen and fairy-tale witch; monstrous Others such as the Big Bad Wolf; and characters with non-normative bodies such as the fairy-tale imp or dwarf. For each grouping, she details the creatures' antecedents within the Grimm corpus of writings and with literary fairy-tale writers within the German Romantic tradition. These meticulously researched histories provide context for her argument that there has been a shift in how these characters are portrayed.

Schwabe performs close readings of characters from North American film and television series of the last several decades who are connected to these creatures through transtextual references. The uncanny figure of the automaton, a soulless facsimile of life, is made alternately ridiculous and tragic. The golem, a mud-creature co-opted from Jewish folklore, becomes a figure of tragic romance, a surrogate father, and the subject of satirical commentary. Though the doppelgänger, a shadow double of the protagonist, remains consistently linked to characters' experiences of the uncanny in the television series *Grimm* (2011–17), this example does not undermine Schwabe's argument that a shift is occurring in these figures' representation overall, as she also gives examples of the doppelgänger taking a comedic turn and as the subject of frequent defeat.

Indeed, Schwabe can afford examples that do not realize the overall trend taking place, as readers will likely find themselves pulling additional supportive examples for each of her chapters. Since publication of the book, sympathetic golems and doppelgängers have appeared in major roles within the diegesis of *Legacies* (2018–), a spin-off of *The Vampire Diaries* (2009–17). *The Vampire Diaries* also featured humanized doppelgängers as a major plot thread, along with sympathetic witches and werewolves.

The chapter on the humanization of evil queens and witches, focusing particularly on retellings of “Snow White,” highlights the ways in which traumatic backstories are used to recast the villainess's actions and motivations. Through film and television case studies that range across comedy (*Mirror, Mirror* [2012]), drama (*Once Upon a Time* [2011–18]), action (*Snow White and the Huntsman* [2012]), *The Huntsman: Winter's War* [2016]), and horror (*Snow White: A Tale of Terror* [1997]), Schwabe traces common themes of violence against women and traumas around maternity, and in one case, implications of narcissistic personality disorder, that provide nuance and depth to the queens' actions. Some of them even seek redemption for past misdeeds.

Similarly, the monstrous Other in the form of the Big Bad Wolf from “Little Red Riding Hood” stories is consistently humanized. While portrayals of the evil queen challenge audiences to consider if there is more to the story, portrayals of the Big Bad Wolf tend to undercut his monstrosity through comedy (*Grimm, Hoodwinked!* [2005]), identifying the Other as a part of the self that

must be embraced (*Once Upon a Time*), or giving him his own redemptive arc (the long-running comic book *Fables* [2002–15] and associated video game *The Wolf Among Us* [2013–14]). Either of these chapters would make a useful assignment for an undergraduate gender and media class as well as for fairy-tale studies.

Schwabe is not the first to look to mass media for insight into the culture producing it. Mythologist Wendy Doniger (2005) writes, “the worse the film, the better the metaphysics. . . . What we call mythemes when they occur in myths, we call clichés when they occur in B movies” (5–6). The very shallowness that Zipes laments is what makes these films and series so rich with meaning about the culture that produced them.

Indeed, Schwabe notes, “within North America’s capitalist socioeconomic structures, the Disney Corporation, which has managed to gain a cultural stronghold and corporate monopoly on the fairy tale, is at the forefront of the new trend of embracing Otherness in pop culture” (287). By foregrounding Disney’s financial investment in the fairy tale, Schwabe bolsters her claim that the way these portrayals alter and humanize traditional villains is reflective of a wider social shift: fairy-tale diversity is what sells. However, perhaps because Disney sets the terms for what counts as diversity and because this study focuses on mass media portrayals, the diversity of representation in these portrayals is often superficial and infrequently extends to diversity of opportunity or even point of view in terms of production. This dissonance is most apparent in the cases discussed in “Dwarfs, Diversity, and Deformation.”

Focusing on the dwarfs in “Snow White” and “Rumpelstiltskin,” with a nod to the casting of Peter Jackson’s *Hobbit* trilogy of films (2012–14), Schwabe points to a shift away from evil in the portrayal of dwarfs and toward a more individualistic and nuanced depiction. However, I am troubled by the extension of this argument to claim it represents a reduction in disability bias or a true valuing of diversity, as the “dwarfs” in these case studies are frequently played by regular-sized people who may or may not be made to look smaller via CGI effects (the *Hobbit* trilogy, *Snow White: A Tale of Terror*, *Once Upon a Time*, *Sydney White* [2007]).

Even in *Mirror, Mirror*, in which the dwarfs are played by people of small stature, the director describes how he used typically sized actors for the fight scenes. The implication of casting choices in most of these films is that humanizing dwarfs goes hand-in-hand with representing their bodies through ableist ideals of movement, proportion, and physical capacity. Schwabe acknowledges the problematic nature of these casting choices—citing actor Mickey Abbott’s comparison of the practice to blackface, a racist practice in which white actors covered in dark makeup performed Black characters, and dryly noting that producers who claim there are not enough actors of small stature to fill their

roles do nothing to change that dynamic when they cast regular-sized actors in the role of dwarfs.

It is less that I disagree with Schwabe that there has been movement around ableism in depictions of dwarfs than that her argument makes clear how much higher the bar is for representing diversity than realizing it. Schwabe aptly captures this tension, “Whereas the fairy-tale adaptations that I analyze suggest that Otherness can and should be fully embraced, they also highlight the yawning gap that still exists between the representation and the reality of embracing diversity wholeheartedly in twenty-first-century America” (11).

Shannan Palma
Independent Scholar

Disfigured: On Fairy Tales, Disability, and Making Space. By Amanda Leduc, Coach House Books, 2020, 160 pp.

Amanda Leduc’s *Disfigured* weaves together the many threads linking fairy tales, storytelling, and disability in a way that is both sensitive and informed. Although not from a university press and hence not as scholarly as other books typically reviewed in these pages, I highly recommend Leduc’s book to fairy-tale scholars nonetheless for its keen insights about the genre we study.

After I had read and been blown away by Ann Schmiesing’s work on disability in the Grimms’ tales (*Disability, Deformity, and Disease in the Grimms’ Fairy Tales*, 2014), I figured that it was the seminal work applying disability studies to fairy tales. But Leduc’s book complements Schmiesing’s in truly wonderful ways. Leduc is one of the rare writers outside the field of fairy-tale studies who takes into account much of our existing scholarship (she cites Schmiesing, Jack Zipes, Maria Tatar, and others) when writing about her own approach to fairy tales, and that alone is a delightful novelty. Further, Leduc synthesizes existing work on fairy tales by putting it into dialogue with personal narrative and lived experience, sharing extensive portions of her own medical history and life as well as including excerpts from interviews with other disabled people. Leduc covers many of the basic tenets of disability studies—the medical model of disability versus the social model of disability, ableism, inspiration porn, and so on—thereby continuing Schmiesing’s quest of bridging the long-overlooked gaps between fairy-tale studies and disability studies.

Leduc’s case studies overlap with Schmiesing’s to some degree; Hans My Hedgehog and the maiden without hands make appearances, but so do the Little Mermaid and other Hans Christian Andersen creations as well as modern-day superheroes, often the kind best identified as supercrips. Beast bride and bridegroom tales play a large role in Leduc’s analysis, in part due to Leduc’s framing mission of unpacking the longevity of symbolic connections between

beauty and goodness, ugliness/deformity and badness. I found much of value in these segments, for instance when Leduc reminds readers of a quotation from Villeneuve's "Beauty and the Beast" wherein Beauty, not knowing she had initially disenchanted a prince, says: "When I accepted him . . . I believed that I was taking pity on something below humanity" (quoted at 140). Immediately after this segment, Leduc shares excerpts from her interview with a Canadian artist and activist who has a face that formed differently in utero, relating how she was dehumanized in school and how she used stories for escapism until she realized that she was different enough from the norm that she was not guaranteed a happy ending. This juxtaposition of tale materials with lived experience is striking, and Leduc does it throughout the book.

As Leduc notes in her conclusion, the heart of her study is this: "If society is not used to seeing disabled people in stories, society becomes used to not seeing disabled people in real life" (230). Of course, representations that are so highly patterned as to become stereotypical are also problematic, and Leduc does a thorough job of exploring the nuances of disability representation in fairy tales and their popular culture forms (many Disney characters such as Scar and the Hunchback of Notre Dame are brought up throughout the book). Intersectionality informs Leduc's approach as well, since she is careful to note how much a disabled person's positionality can affect their access to resources that nondisabled people may take for granted.

I can envision teaching excerpts of this book, as the language is accessible throughout, and I imagine students would be familiar with the more recent case studies, especially those drawing on Disney. But Leduc has done her homework and seems just as at home writing about the French conteuses and the Grimms as about modern-day pop culture phenomena. Even if you are not teaching a fairy-tale class anytime soon, I highly recommend reading this book, especially for nondisabled scholars who are still learning about the variety of conditions associated with disability, as Leduc includes a number of visible and invisible conditions in her writing, as well as both physical and mental conditions. I would also like to point out that many areas of higher education and the scholarly world are steeped in ableism, so the more we are conversant in its terms and ideologies, the more we can advocate for egalitarian treatment for all (and I doubt I need to point this out to pattern-seeking folks like fairy-tale scholars, but policies that benefit disabled people also benefit nondisabled people, such as the ability to work from home in a pandemic year). Like fairy tales themselves, Leduc's writing is striking and illuminating, helping attune us to themes of fairness and justice, the human body and its varying forms.

*Jeana Jorgensen
Butler University*

Fashion in the Fairy Tale Tradition: What Cinderella Wore. By Rebecca-Anne C. Do Rozario, Palgrave Macmillan, 2018, 316 pp.

In this richly detailed and thoroughly researched book, Rebecca-Anne Do Rozario links fairy tales with fashion, redefining the genre's history in order to highlight the sartorial connections that weave in and out of many texts and traditions. With careful attention to historical context, Do Rozario asserts: "What Cinderella wore matters because the shoes she has lost, the gowns layered beneath her latest sartorial scoop, reveal how Cinderella exists in living culture, how she has evolved, and just why those glass slippers are so incredibly tenacious and turn up again and again" (282). Indeed, Cinderella dances in and out of multiple chapters of the book, resplendent in the mantles of her many variants.

The introduction alone presents a number of stimulating reframes. Do Rozario deftly dodges the pitfalls of weighing in on fairy-tale origins, instead proposing that if we read fairy tales through the lens of fashion and view the origins of both fashion and fairy tales as inextricable, we will reach a fuller understanding of both. Fashion may be defined not just as trends in clothing, art, and such, but also as temporally inflected material culture, as "identity embodied in clothing," which provides "an ideal lens through which to view how fashion has influenced fairy tale, since fairy-tale identities are so frequently constructed and deconstructed through clothing" (3). Though Cinderella gets her own chapter later on, and is revisited in a subsequent chapter on fairy-tale footwear, her character provides an initial glimpse into the utility of this analytical frame. Do Rozario contends that although Cinderella tales are often interpreted solely as a rags-to-riches classic story, attending to the powerful nature of the dress can help us tune in to important moments in fairy-tale and fashion history alike. This is a helpful reminder to folklorists that we can sometimes be too attuned to abstract analytical categories like tale types and motifs; we should, in short, say yes to the dress.

The range of texts analyzed is impressive. In the introduction as well as throughout the book, Do Rozario draws on classic fairy tales and their histories (such as asserting that the French women salon writers of the late 1600s conceived of fairy tales as fashions in their own right, 11), and also brings in contemporary fairy-tale retellings where relevant. Disney casts a long shadow here, too, leading to insights such as how today, "Girls are encouraged not simply to watch stories of princesses, but to *become* princesses themselves," a transformation that is of course facilitated by purchasing just the right costume (34).

Chapters 2 and 3 follow the characters of ATU 510A and 510B respectively, though the latter chapter broadens its scope to analyze all sorts of visibly abjected protagonists, from pig kings to other ash-coated domestic princesses. Lining up various Cinderella figures, from d'Aulnoy's "Finette Cendron" to

Basile's "La Gatta Cenerentola," allows Do Rozario to speculate on the influence of sumptuary laws on these tales, positing that these underdog heroes cannily transgress against social norms of class-permitted dress in order to catch the eye of wealthy suitors, much like early modern sex workers might have done. Chapter 4 focuses on the production of clothing, which lays bare numerous social inequalities: those between the genders, between the ruling class and the working class, and so on. In chapter 5, footwear takes the stage, ranging from the Perrault glass versus fur slipper controversy and Puss in Boots to Andersen's doomed red dancing shoes. Chapter 6 turns the focus onto fairies themselves, determining that these donor figures may look plain, but the more wicked the fairy, the more outlandish the outfit. Storytellers themselves also come under the lens, with representations of Mother Goose crossing into peasant woman and witch territory, while male storytellers are depicted in ways that are "clearly literary" and paternal (249).

Gender is a persistent theme, and for good reason: Do Rozario comments while closing her introduction that "both fashion and fairy tales are viewed as feminine spheres of concern" (37), with both realms being demeaned as trivial even as they display the intense centuries-long debate over women's sexuality and power. Do Rozario's clever turns of phrase inject the compelling analysis with sparkle and wit, as when she observes of situations where cannibalistic ogres accidentally eat their own children, lacking golden crowns or chains to tell them apart from regular human children: "Without sartorial markers, the body is only so much meat" (276). This sack of meat concurs, and henceforth recommends Do Rozario's book as one of the more stimulating contributions to fairy-tale studies in a good long while.

Jeana Jorgensen
Butler University

The Feminist Architecture of Postmodern Anti-Tales: Space, Time, and Bodies. By Kendra Reynolds, Routledge, 2021, 254 pp.

In *The Feminist Architecture of Postmodern Anti-Tales: Space, Time, and Bodies*, Kendra Reynolds aims to reignite scholarship of the "anti-tale" as an "essential genre in its own right" by examining an array of twenty-first-century postmodern fictions for their feminist conceptualizations of "corporeality, temporality, and spatiality" (1, 5). For Reynolds, anti-tales occupy the space outside "established male-authored and often misogynistic stories" and the contemporary texts that often masquerade as feminist in their revisionist approach but, in reality, do little to challenge the patriarchal legacy of the traditional narratives they profess to disrupt (1). The anti-tale has instead, she argues, a "unique architecture" that differentiates it from a mere retelling, as well as having a "feminine form—both in terms of its conceptual or philosophical architecture

in which it suggests alternative spatial, temporal, and corporeal forms and in its material/textual form” (2, 5).

Tapping into current theoretical preoccupations with materiality, while keeping one foot firmly in what Reynolds says we mistakenly think of as the “outdated” past of postmodernism, she draws on theories of *l'écriture féminine* and various aspects of corporeal, material and eco-feminisms to uncover the radical potential of feminine otherness (10). Key to this analysis, as the title suggests, is Elizabeth Grosz's “Architecture from the Outside” and its aims to construct “alternatives to existing patriarchal realities and logistical frameworks” (5). Reynolds sees the feminine form of the genre as one of “plurality and multiple possibilities” from which such frameworks can arise (190). The result of which is a study that emphasizes the ways in which “feminine” fluidity, nonlinearity and “leakiness” can overcome patriarchal rationalism in its varied manifestations (184).

Reynolds takes a thematic approach to the chapters in this text, weaving her analysis of each topic through the novels, stories and films of her study, giving a multilayered experience of anti-tale media and creating web-like connections between the narratives. In chapter 1, “‘Psycho’-Geographies and Gendered Maps: Reimagining the City in Feminist Anti-Tales,” she considers the ways in which Tanith Lee's *Cruel Pink* (2013), Helen Smith's *Alison Wonderland* (2011), and Ekaterina Sedia's *The Secret History of Moscow* (2007) disrupt traditional depictions of the city that uphold dominant (particularly patriarchal) ideological structures, exploring urban space as an “emerging focus” of such narratives to “reflect upon the existing architecture of social relations” (17). The architecture parallel works particularly well here as the “magic” of anti-tales and their focus on female psychology enables powerful disruption to the supposed rationality of cities constructed almost entirely by men.

Moving from urban to rural, in chapter 2, “Feminist Journeys ‘Into the Woods’: The Use of Ecofeminist Landscapes in Postmodern Anti-Tales,” Reynolds turns to ecofeminism as an aspect of postmodern thought that is often discredited for its essentialism, but that, she suggests, has the power to “effect feminist social change” (66). This chapter examines Atwood's *MaddAddam* trilogy, Michael Faber's *Under the Skin* (2000), Disney's live-action musical *Into the Woods* (2014), and *Maleficent* (2014) and the ways in which the narratives complexify the woman-is-nature debate without distancing her from “nature” itself.

Chapter 3, “‘Once Upon Many Times’: Subversive Temporalities in Feminist Anti-Tales,” looks again at *Cruel Pink*, but alongside Disney's *Alice Through the Looking Glass* (2016). This is the first of Reynolds's chapters about time, and in it she draws on arguments that view “temporality as feminine”

to imagine time as “nonlinear, multidirectional, subjective and polytemporal,” assessing the texts for the ways in which their rejection of the mechanical clock “liberates characters from heteronormativity” as well as the patriarchal hold of Father Time (12). While in chapter 4, “Intergenerational Time: Feminist Revisions of Youth and Ageing in Postmodern Anti-Tales,” Reynolds examines Kate Bernheimer’s *How a Mother Weaned Her Girl from Fairy Tales* (2014), Atwood’s *Stone Mattress* (2014), and Nalo Hopkinson’s *Skin Folk* (2001) for their depictions of youth, aging, and cross-generational engagements. By disrupting the expectations of age posited by the traditional fairy tales, Reynolds argues, these texts reveal that “generational tensions” are “socially constructed” (180), undermining the pervasive stereotypes laid on both youth and aging. (180).

The study of bodies comes in chapter 5, “Embodying the ‘Inbetween’: Subversive Bodies in Feminist Anti-Tales” as Reynolds explores the ways in which “embracing the leakiness of the female body,” or the “inbetween”—that is, “a feminine conception of the world” beyond dualistic frameworks—enables the anti-tale’s subversive exploration of bodily autonomy (184). In this final chapter, Reynolds looks to Matteo Garrone’s *Tale of Tales* (2015), Betsy Cornwell’s *Tides* (2013), Han Kang’s *The Vegetarian* (2007), and Marissa Meyer’s *Cinder* (2012) and returns once again to *Cruel Pink* for their visions of female bodies mutilated, with eating disorders, transformative, cyborgian or performative, highlighting the anti-tale as a genre positioned to challenge patriarchal assumptions and boundaries about female bodies through its rich subversive magic.

The exploration of space, time, and bodies in contemporary fairy-tale retellings is a worthwhile pursuit, with the potential to bring to life the materiality that is so vital and luminous in traditional fairy tales. What has fascinated readers more in the fairy tale than the flesh that is carved open, the clock that strikes midnight, and the woodlands so many have lost themselves to? Reynolds has certainly proven these themes ripe for exploration in the anti-tale genre, with considered analysis of her thoughtfully chosen texts.

The weakness here though, I would argue, is a lack of clarity. At times Reynolds favors long paragraphs and definitions laden with technical terms where more transparent and concise explanations are needed. For example, in the case of her use of “feminine” rather than “feminist,” that is, the seeming conflation of feminist subversion with the *feminine* in anti-tales, which is a complex and somewhat controversial link to forge. Similarly, the centrality of postmodernism to her argument often feels at odds with the use of material feminist theory, but the justification for this combination feels sparse. However, as the first of Reynolds’s solo book publications, it is a promising start, and the contribution to scholarship on those lesser-known subversive

fiction, particularly through the lens of these undoubtedly fascinating themes, still leaves plenty for readers to discover here.

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Folklore in Baltic History: Resistance and Resurgence. By Sadhana Naithani. University Press of Mississippi, 2019, 115 pp.

Though slim, the book by Sadhana Naithani has several goals. The opening sentence claims that this “book should be seen as a nuanced representation of the relationship between folklore studies and a socialist-totalitarian state” (vii). The state in question is the Soviet Union, and folklore studies are represented by the Baltic countries. The focus is on the years 1944 to 1991, when Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania were part of the Soviet Union. Naithani says that exploring Baltic folkloristics of this era contributes to a better understanding of the diversity of folklore studies across the globe (vii). Since Naithani knows neither the three local languages nor Russian, she had to make do with whatever she did have access to. Besides familiarizing herself with some relevant research and sources accessible in English and in German, she visited the three countries and recorded conversations with twenty-five Baltic folklorists.

The book’s seven chapters are built around similarities between the Baltic countries. As the first chapter explains, the keyword is “dramatic.” Naithani calls “the period from 1944 to 1991 dramatic because it was full of not one but several sudden and striking changes”: loss of independence, brutal Sovietization and restoration of statehood (4). “Dramatic” should be understood here also as a narrative device because the history of Baltic folkloristics is narrated as a drama of sorts, complete with acts, stages, and dialogues.

Naithani begins with “a flashback” (chapter 2) to the emergence of folkloristics as a discipline. Like in the rest of the book, Estonia receives more attention in this chapter than its neighbors, and its mistakes and gaps suggest that the author is on thin ice. The University of Tartu was established in 1632, but German did not continue “to remain its official language of instruction until World War II” (16). The history of the Estonian-language university goes back to 1919, which is also the year the Department of Estonian and Comparative Folklore was established. Curiously, this fact is skipped over, and readers are left to their own devices to figure out how Oskar Loorits, who soon would play a crucial role in the establishment of the Estonian Folklore Archives, could begin his folklore study in Tartu in 1919 (14–15). There is no mention of Walter Anderson, the first professor of folkloristics in Tartu. This omission and the highlighting of Loorits make Estonian folkloristics of the interwar years more self-absorbed than it actually was. However, keying on Loorits enables Naithani to refer to parallels between anticolonial struggles in South Asia and

in the Baltics in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (17). I hope she will elaborate on this comparison in the future because such a step beyond methodological nationalism could prove fruitful. Her argument that one has “to see the context of nationalism to understand its contours and to determine whether it is a positive or a negative force” is an important one (17).

The year 1944 is a somewhat arbitrary starting point, given that drastic events started unfolding earlier. Chapter 3, “The Drama Begins,” identifies the censoring of folklore collections, purges, and the preoccupation with ideologically correct Soviet folklore as the hallmarks of the immediate postwar years. While Naithani rightly emphasizes the sense of “a latent threat” that permeated the Stalin years, I doubt that Baltic readers would agree that “this feeling is actually far more important than the actual acts of repression” (28), including executions, imprisonment, forced labor, and deportations.

Few would object to the overall gist of the book: the idea that Soviet-era folkloristics was part of the resistance movement against Soviet rule. Chapters 4–6 discuss the university, folklore archives, and the countryside as respective “resistance sites.” The countryside is meant to be understood as “the common people”: those “whose folklore was being collected and taught” (59). Their experiences are represented via life stories, and chapter 6 also provides an overview of the collection and study of life stories in the post-Soviet Baltics. A small selection of narratives is accessible in English, and Naithani uses some of them “to show the larger context in which the study of folklore was evolving in the Baltic countries during the Soviet period” (63). The thing to bear in mind here is that the life stories collected since the late 1980s do not offer an unmediated access to the “larger context.” They also reflect the understandings and values of the scholars who formulated the competition calls for life stories, picked the interviewees, and chose the accounts to be published and translated into English. In a similar vein, I wish Naithani had explained her handling of the conversational data she induced: how did she choose her interlocutors in the Baltics? Are Baltic folklorists as homogeneous in their assessments of the Soviet era as the book suggests? Being one of them, I am quite sure they are not.

The mere fact of existence can become an act of resistance in a totalitarian state and can be presented as such in hindsight. As various studies not cited in this book have shown, Soviet authorities used the concepts “folk,” “folklore,” and “national” in many ways, some of which were in line with local research traditions and nurtured a sense of ethnic particularity. Resistance is thus the easy part. Asking how folklorists accommodated to the Soviet system and how Soviet ideologies shaped their understandings of themselves, of folklore, and of nationality is more difficult, but probably just as important.

As Naithani admits in the preface, her representation of Baltic history and folklore studies is not complete, comprehensive, or even (vii), but it is intriguing all the same, not least because of her prior research into colonial and post-colonial folkloristics involving non-Europeans. The book is an idiosyncratic contribution to the growing body of research on socialist-era folklore studies in Eastern and Central Europe. It is best read in dialogue with other, more carefully researched accounts of this topic.

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Forms of Enchantment: Writings on Art and Artists. By Marina Warner, Thames & Hudson Ltd., 2018, 288 pp.

In her creative writing and interdisciplinary approach to art criticism, Marina Warner presents her writings on art and artists. An acclaimed novelist and nonfiction writer for popular and literary magazines and several monographs, Warner's work reveals her steadfast fascination with the role of mythology and gender in culture. Her most cited books include her feminist take on the Marianne cult with *Alone of All Her Sex: The Myth and Cult of the Virgin Mary* (1976; 2013), on female imagery more generally in *Monuments and Maidens: The Allegory of the Female Form* (1985; 2000), and on the tellers of and female figures in fairy tales in *From the Beast to the Blonde: On Fairy Tales and Their Tellers* (1994). Warner's latest book highlights her long-standing interest in art, especially by women artists; this book brings together her art criticism, published between the 1980s and 2017 in exhibition catalogs and magazine articles.

Four sections—"Playing in the Dark," "Bodies of Sense," "Spectral Technologies," and "Iconoclashes"—loosely frame Warner's art criticism. Each of the twenty-one short chapters focuses on a given artist from well-known historical figures, such as Hans Baldung Grien (1480–1545), to mid-career and established contemporary artists, including iconic Damien Hirst (1965–1965), Frans Masereel (1889–1972), Janine Antoni (1964–), Richard Wentworth (1947–), Kiki Smith (1954–), Zarina Bhimji (1963–), Tacita Dean (1965–1965), Joan Jonas (1936–), Sigmar Polke (1941–2020), Jumana Emil (1971–), Cristina Iglesias (1956–), and Julie Mehretu (1970–) are among the artists. Examining the structure, the section "Playing in the Dark" marries the idea of child's play with the darkness of nightmares. This subtheme most clearly comes together in Warner's chapter on Portuguese artist Paula Rego's (1935–) haunting prints of childhood memories and bedtime nursery stories. "Bodies of Sense" looks at body parts, limbs, fluids, and the senses. Whereas French American artist Louise Bourgeois (1911–2010) gives space

to the body's corporeality with her large-scale sculptures of plush mannequins with missing limbs, the chapter on British sculptor and installation artist Helen Chadwick (1953–1996) emphasizes external and internal body parts. Human hair, animal fur, animal intestines, and strong-smelling fluids come together in Chadwick's work to elicit the senses of taste, smell, touch, and sound. "Spectral Technologies" combines the spectral found in "dreams, visions and apparitions" with the technological in the form of moving images and digital media such as in the computer-generated environments of the British filmmaker duo known as AL and AL (active from the 2000s onward) (139). *Iconoclash* is a term from Bruno Latour describing the tension between the love of images and iconoclastic tendencies found in the creative destruction and visual clashes that characterize much of contemporary art.

The chapters unevenly support the overarching theme of enchantment. The introductions of one to three pages to each section leave little space to explain the pairing between historical and contemporary artists or to describe the groupings within their subthemes. The chapter on Henry Fuseli's (1741–1825) Shakespeare-inspired nightmarish scenes reside in "Playing in the Dark" even if the playful quality of his fairies, Bottom, and Puck—otherwise discussed by Nicole Brown's *Fairies in Nineteenth-Century Art and Literature* (2001)—goes unaddressed. Warner focuses on snippets of the artist's biography for an interpretation of misogyny and chauvinism to the detriment of bringing the playful qualities of the figures to light. Later, in the "Iconoclash" section, Warner meticulously examines the sixteenth-century iconography of Hieronymus Bosch (1450–1516). She makes a case for how the panels in *The Haywain* altarpiece present human pleasure across various walks of life into the afterlife as perverse. While "Hieronymus Bosch: Trumpery, or, The Followers of the Haywain" stands on its own, the jump between Bosch and the next chapter on millionaire Damien Hirst's hallowed symbolism is jarring, which would not be the case if there was more of a discussion about the continuities and discontinuities between the historical and the contemporary. Where iconoclashes describe any number of tendencies in contemporary art, it is hard to say why Hieronymus Bosch, Damien Hirst, and Felicity Powell are placed in the "Iconoclashes" section and not such artists as Christian Thompson (1978). An Australian artist who plays with identity stereotypes related to his sexual orientation and Indigenous Bidjara heritage, Thompson's photographic self-portraits are stunning because of their visual clashes. In other words, the chapters are uneven in how they speak to the overarching theme of enchantment—perhaps because Warner did not initially write the chapters for the subthemes, which might explain why the occasional reference to enchanting sources such as specific fairy tales appears in passing.

The primary source of enchantment in the book is its writerly charm. Warner's eclectic style of art criticism generates appealing moments that allude to her firsthand experience of the artworks and, in some cases, her encounters with the artists. Her approach typically includes snippets from the artist's biography and personal memories of the paintings, prints, installations, video works, glasswork, and sculptures. Warner emphasizes the potency of the reworking Felicity Powell (1961–) did of the medal of dishonor in the multisided relief sculpture titled *Hot Air*—describing how “the obverse shows a Medusa head with a serpent's forked tongue, while on the reverse a powerful pair of buttocks rise out of the ocean and explodes in a blast of carbon emissions; round the rim she wound a tape measure embroidered with politician's lies about climate change” (221). Warner's skill in visual description occasionally extends to those she has met and interviewed. She writes of Paula Rego, “Her smile is like her work: it is exuberant and infectious, open and warm, but mysterious, too, and sometimes unsettling. The dress, the brilliance, the lavishness goes with the art as well” (19).

Interspersed within her reflections of the artists and their works are references to literature (the Bible, Angela Carter, Shakespeare, the Grimms, Brontës), philosophy, history, and non-English-language concepts (*unheimlich*, *maleficium*, *tempus*, *ingenium*, *diabolus*). The quick transitions between engaging with artists and artworks and the web of interconnected ideas are suited to the exhibition catalog. The graphic design, creative spacing, image-heavy qualities, and the liberty to work both within and outside of the expectations of academic writing are typical of this publication genre. To this end, Warner provides the sources for the chapters otherwise published in exhibition catalogs, art books, and art magazines (277–78). When small print runs can be hard to track down, holding the compilation of Warner's art criticism in hand is a convenience for art lovers.

After an art exhibition, it is common enough to hear “I liked it” or “that was not for me” murmuring in the background. Primarily written for a general audience who goes to art exhibitions and collects exhibition catalogs and art books, *Forms of Enchantment* pushes the conversation toward the interesting. Written for those who enjoy looking at art and the world through a feminist lens, Warner's essays point to details in the works themselves, the lives of the artists, and her bookshelves of philosophy, literature, and history. Rhizomatic in its threads and topic jumps, the energy of the individual chapters resonates with what the pub hour that follows a compelling exhibition's vernissage sounds like. Among specialized readers, art historians may find it handy to have the texts compiled together for their research on the reception of individual artists, and fairy-tale scholars of diverse disciplines may have a lot to

add to the discussion on how the selected artists' practices are informed by enchantment.

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Reality, Magic, and Other Lies: Fairy-Tale Film Truths. By Pauline Greenhill. Wayne State University Press, 2020, 265 pp.

Pauline Greenhill's wide and pioneering scholarship on fairy-tale media already contains a wealth of applied research on the social relevance of magical narratives. Her most recent monograph more directly probes ways in which fairy tales speak to reality and how magic intersects with science, factuality, or the "realm of empirical possibility" in fairy-tale media (128). The imperative is situated in the present "dystopian times" when magic and wonder "can be as necessary as science, the ordinary, and reality" (29). While acknowledging that fairy-tale films are somewhat in the "eye of the beholder," and that the specific examples reflect her "personal enthusiasms" in the field (17, 14), Greenhill offers a range of angles on reality and fairy tale: collisions of magic and science in LAIKA Entertainment's stop-motion animation (chapter 2) and the fairy-tale cinema of Tarsem (chapter 3); ethnography of the fictions of the Quebec storyteller Fred Pellerin (chapter 4); and reality interfaces in many mediations of "Hansel and Gretel" (ATU 327A, chapter 5), "The Juniper Tree" (ATU 327A, chapter 6), and "Cinderella" (ATU 510A, chapter 7).

The case studies are critically rich, thought-provoking, and valuable repositories of Greenhill's virtuosic scholarship. At times, the central premise about fairy-tale truths is elusive, like a swinging trapeze to catch and ride, although not for want of explanation. The first chapter of introduction provides generous context and several precedents that illuminate Greenhill's aims, among them, Suzanne Magnanini's (2008) exploration of fairy tales as prescientific knowledge and Dorothy Noyes's (2015) work on fairy tales and social science (22–23). Instances of gender and cultural change that make former "impossibles thinkable" also foreshadow how fairy tales can, in words from Pellerin, "overcome the real" (9, 229). The "contested" terms "reality and science," which are broadly aligned, as she notes, in post-Enlightenment thought with what is "objective and true," are flexible scaffolds that, at times, topple the discussion into more generalized terrain of fiction and reality rather than fairy tale specifically (15). When Greenhill insists that a "scientific system" for unmasking fairy-tale truths is not the aim, some irony emerges (for me at least)—given how "science" figures in the book—considering the rigor and method of the project at hand (14).

The first section, "Studio, Director, and Writer Oeuvres" concerns "scientific or factual approaches to truth and reality" (14), beginning with close

scrutiny of the credit sequences and trailers from four LAIKA features: *Coraline* (2009), *ParaNorman* (2012), *The Boxtrolls* (2014), and *Kubo and the Two Strings* (2016) (chapter 2). LAIKA's "science" of production is shown "in the service of magic" as Greenhill analyses the uncanny (illusion of the) agency of puppets through the creators' playful exposure of the production technology in these sequences (65). The auteur Tarsem's use of historical cinematic technologies in fairy tale mise-en-scène and his regimes of costume, casting, and transnational location-chasing in *Mirror Mirror* (2012) and *The Fall* (2006) evoke "hetero-temporalities" and "heterospatialities," which, Greenhill argues, transcend the separation of diegetic and production realities (71–84), while "science versus magic" is "directly thematic" (84) in his television series *Emerald City* (2017). The ethic of transculturalism and science-magic interplay in Tarsem's cinema "literalize[s] the politics of fantasy," she argues (92).

A highlight of the book is the discussion of Pellerin and Luc Picard's fairy-tale films of his stories, *Babine* (2008) and *Ésimésac* (2012). A master class in the folkloristic paradigm of ostension, Greenhill's expertise as a folklorist and a Canadianist enlivens the nuances of magic, realism, and legend in the reputation among Quebecois of Pellerin and his village of Saint-Élie-de-Caxton that is fictionalized in the stories, which, in Pellerin's own words, "surrealizes itself" (99). Narrative variety and methodological departure from film analysis accompany Greenhill's account of a field trip to Saint-Élie-de-Caxton where she finds herself interpellated into the stories. I wanted more of this magical ethnography.

The reality/magic relation in "Hansel and Gretel" films is traced to the history of the tale for dealing with "actual historical problems," particularly child abandonment and abuse (128). Eight films are discussed at length plus a host of other adaptations, with contemporary reality motifs of "queer death" and "queer failure" (derived respectively from Jack Halberstam and José Esteban Muñoz) traced in some of the films. Science and magic meet in the perceived science-fiction appropriations in *AI* (2001) and *I, Robot* (2004), although neither of these examples convinced me as "Hansel and Gretel" stories (nor the horror-genre satire *The Cabin in the Woods*), and the recasting of science fiction as fairy tale did not lead me to the real, only back to the residual fictions of the tales. Other readers may well experience different outcomes, and as for science fiction as fairy tale, the disclaimer about the eye of the beholder applies.

A shift in aesthetic repertoire of films that focus on "women coping with crime and harm" in versions of the "The Juniper Tree" (chapter 6) yields a more compelling discussion of women characters directed by feminist filmmakers in *The Juniper Tree* (1990), *La piege d'Issoudun* (2003), *The Babadook* (2014), and *The Moth Diaries* (2011). A conceptual distinction throughout the book between "preternatural" and "supernatural" sources of uncanniness acquires

a depth of relevance to the protagonists who are all witch-like “preternatural” seers of visions (164). The interface with reality is finessed through the alignment of audience perspectives with the subjective visions of the women (189–190) and hence “makes audiences witches” (188, to adapt the subtitle). The final case studies concern intersectional realities of a large number of diverse, realist appropriations of “Cinderella,” which proceed from a fairly broad definition of queer (224) in contesting the Disneyfied expectations of “Cinderella.”

Apart from the assets of its bibliography and filmography, this book presents a fascinating range of less-trammeled fairy-tale films and a valuable vein of attention to Canadian and Quebec productions, which rarely receive prominent exposure in transnational media studies. Some questions linger about “science and reality,” and, with exception of the Pellerin experience, the reality interface, for me, did not greatly exceed that of any materialist film analysis, fairy tale or not. Yet, in working with peers and students since reading the book, I have at times found myself aboard the flying trapeze, unexpectedly “overcoming the real,” and referring readers to the book. It must be the work of some magic—or science!

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