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Reviews

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Reviews

The Book of One Hundred Riddles of the Fairy Bellaria. *By Charles G. Leland, edited by Jack Zipes, University of Minnesota Press, 2018, 168 pp.*

Both in presentation and content, *The Book of One Hundred Riddles of the Fairy Bellaria* has the feel of a collector's find. This slim volume is, on the surface, a reproduction of the original 1892 publication of the Charles Leland tale. Leland's *Bellaria* recounts the battle between the Scheherazade-like Bellaria, a woman of wit and courage, and the evil King Ruggero. The battle itself is conducted with words—specifically riddles—rather than tactile weapons. Each riddle is accompanied by an illustration, engraved by Leland.

The original story has several common fairy tale elements of note—the powerless outwitting the powerful, simplistic characters, wit as a weapon, and the presence of both cruel and kind kings. Without the introduction, this is a carefully presented reissue of an enjoyable fairy-tale-type book. It is a light but enjoyable read that is easily accessible to the average reader. What makes this book stand out to serious readers, however, is the contextualizing information in the introduction by the incomparable Jack Zipes.

The introduction offers a fairly detailed ten-page biography and contemplation of American writer and folklorist Charles Leland (1824–1903), who was best known for *Hans Breitmann's Ballads* (1869). Through a mix of biographical and other information, Zipes adeptly positions this book not only in the perspective of Leland's interests and varied pursuits but also in the historical framework of events such as the suffragette movement in America, in the literary context of texts featuring "female protagonists who struggle to rectify injustices," and in the fairy tale and folklore renaissance of the 1880s and 1890s (17). Zipes also makes note of smaller nuances of potential interest in the formation of the character of Bellaria, such as Leland's time spent with an Italian witch and the detail that Leland's wife was typically referred to as "Bella." The result of all these minutiae is that when a reader begins the original Leland text, they do so armed with this contextualizing data as well as Zipes's prompting question: "Yet, why, during the last decade of his life, did

Leland choose to create this small book that made a strong statement against injustice and barbarous kings?" (17).

As readers move from Zipes's thoughtful introduction into the story itself, the narrative briefly (two pages) summarizes the pre-battle life of Bellaria. She is a fairy, who in the way of many fairies, is both clever and lovely. When she is discovered in an unnamed king's garden, he poses a question to her. If she fails to answer successfully, she will die. Bellaria answers so cleverly that this unnamed king immediately marries her.

The Scheherazade portion of the story, which takes up the bulk of the book, begins after the arrival of a second king, Ruggero, who arrives with an army to seize the kingdom of Bellaria's husband. King Ruggero offers to "depart in peace" and spare her husband if Bellaria can successfully "answer the hundred riddles he would pose to her" (23). If she fails, her spouse's life is forfeit. Bellaria rejects his terms, agreeing to the battle of wit only if her own life is the one at risk. Notably, in doing so, the fairy bride has arguably saved her husband before the riddles begin. Knowing Leland's education and study of folklore, one must assume that he was familiar with and intentionally calling to *Arabian Nights* in both his title and structure.

The story thereafter, rather predictably, is a repetition of Ruggero's "Off with your head, oh Queen, unless you can answer me this," followed with one hundred riddles. Of note, the riddles are each accompanied by an illustration. Readers will likely realize at this point that the poetry and intellect within Bellaria's replies is more compelling than the rote questioning of King Ruggero. Leland demonstrates the superior intellect and poetry of the female protagonist through his writing. A glance back at Zipes's introduction would offer evidence that the upholding of female intellect is intentional both historically and authorially.

No one should be surprised by Bellaria's defeat of the tyrant king. After one hundred such riddles, King Ruggero is defeated. His response is far from graceful. "He rose in mad rage, and drew his sword, and struck at the Queen-fairy to slay her" (167). Rather than succeed in his unjust attempt, he "fell upon the point, which passed through his heart." Perhaps the most interesting aspect of Leland's original narrative, however, is the concluding fate of the protagonist. During the melee, Bellaria vanishes. Her story ends with the contradictory note that she was not seen again and that "it is commonly believed that she often appeared to her husband and her son" (167). The final detail of the narrative is that her son became a good and wise king. This is followed by a brief twelve-line poem on the merits of riddling.

Read sans introduction, Leland's book is a highly readable fairy tale with a strong female protagonist that is an interesting artifact of its era. With the succinct but detail-laden introduction, Zipes has given modern readers of

Leland's fairy tale a myriad of useful jumping-off points for contemplating the reprint of this already enjoyable 1892 publication. The combination, *The Book of One Hundred Riddles of the Fairy Bellaria*, is a worthy addition to the libraries of both serious and casual readers.

Melissa Marr
Independent Scholar

Fabulous Machinery for the Curious: A Garden of Urdu Classical Literature. *By Musharraf Ali Farooqi, University of California Press, 2023, 408 pp.*

By appropriating a phrase from an orientalist reading of indigenous South Asian texts of the qissa—a predominantly oral Indo-Persian storytelling genre—in the title, Musharraf Ali Farooqi signals toward the need to revisit not only the stories contained therein but also questions the mechanics and the politics of translation. Disparaging the supernatural elements in the genre, Lewis Ferdinand Smith wrote: "wildness of imagination, fabulous machinery, and unnatural scenes ever pervade through the composition of every Oriental Author: even their most serious works on History and Ethics are stained with these imperfections" (qtd. in Farooqi 12). Smith prefaced his 1813 translation of the famous qissa *The Tale of the Four Durwesh* with this statement. This translation—among various others of canonical qissas—was then used to teach Urdu to the officers of the East India Company at Fort William College, Calcutta.

Fabulous Machinery for the Curious: A Garden of Urdu Classical Literature is the first complete and unabridged translation of six qissas spanning the Indo-Persian region but told and written in the subcontinent between the eighteenth and the twentieth centuries. Five of these translations were originally published alongside their Urdu versions in Pakistan in an effort to bring these stories back into public consciousness. The sixth and the last qissa in the collection, "A Girl Named King Agar"—a tale of complex gender roles and identities—is the only text that is exclusive to this collection. The translation of this tale employs the standard practice in qissa literature to refer to female characters as female when they represent themselves as such but if they disguise themselves as male, the telling will employ the gender pronoun specific to the moment in the story.

Each of the translated qissas in the collection is a commentary, in varying degrees, on the nuanced gender relations and power dynamics between men and women, kings and their subjects, retributive justice, and cautionary injunctions. The first qissa, "The Ingenious Farkhanda and the Two Conditions," was compiled by Rai Beni Narayan who never claimed its authorship, and various analyses have suggested that this was actually authored by a woman. When forced by fate and ploys to marry the king, Farkhanda uses her trickster

heroine strategies to fulfill the impossible tasks she is set. A tale that starts with Farkhanda in a position of power as a huntswoman who is fond of public spectacles, takes us on a journey where she both loses and regains control. While the loss is mitigated by fate, Farkhanda's regaining of control shows her ingenuity, subversiveness, intelligence, and power.

The second qissa, titled "The Adventures of a Soldier," is a story about vigilante justice against thugs. The essential component of the tale is cross-dressing through which the soldier who has been cheated into giving up his prized bull tricks the thugs by luring their old father, and thus, robs them of more than just the possession he had been cheated out of. The third qissa, "Chhabili, The Inn Keeper," pits the tenacity of the female characters (Chhabili and Bichhittar) against the sordid helplessness of the "hero" (Zaman Shah) for whom they fight. Here we see the ingenuity and trickery inherent in the women characters, who do not see their weakness as gendered but as a result of a difference in class and status within society. With recent publications such as *The Annotated Arabian Nights: Tales from 1001 Nights* by Yasmine Seale, questions are already beginning to be asked about how narratives by and about women, especially those who show agency and resolve, have been shunned from modern consciousness especially when it comes to stories from the Muslim world. These qissas are an apt example of such literary bias against the literatures of the Global South.

"Azar Shah and Saman Rukh Bano"—the fourth qissa in the collection—is about the use of stories in healing physical and emotional maladies. There's a long tradition in qissa literature of first being told as stories to heal the kings of the time. The most famous and widely acknowledged qissa in this category is *Qissa Chahar Dervish* (The Tale of the Four Dervishes), which is said to have been narrated by the famous Sufi poet Amir Khusro to cure the renowned saint and his teacher, Nizamuddin Auliya. In a Scheherazade-like endeavor, Azar Shah employs "a holy man called Sheikh Sanaan" to cure his wife Saman Rukh, who has been poisoned by his rivals. The Sheikh asks his disciples to narrate various stories to Saman Rukh and stops them just short of the climax to begin narrating a different story until her faculties are slowly revived.

"The Victim of Malice" is the fifth qissa of the collection. This is about how the questioning of "chastity" can have dire consequences. Belonging to the cautionary tale subgenre in qissas, this dissuades the reader and the listener from kindling jealously by anything they may say. The vizier's bragging about the qualities his wife possesses makes the couple "victims of malice" at the hands of another jealous vizier. The narrator's voice cautions thus: "Had he not boasted about his wife's chastity before the king, he would not have seen such humiliation and disgrace. The World is not a place where one should vaunt."

What is asserted through a sampling of these translations is the theorization of the qissa's "non-genre nature" (1). By deciding not to use Anglophone approximations or theoretical categories for an indigenous genre, Farooqi asserts the independent and abiding nature of this genre through centuries in the Indo-Persian context. This reclaims the "fabulous machinery" of these tales as an important component and reverses the negative connotations of the phrase when employed to study genres of colonized cultures. These qissas—involving djinn and human interactions, fate and power, trickster women, fantastic beasts, human ingenuity—are a gift to storytellers and readers interested in the variety of subject matter dealt with in these tales. The collection will also be a welcome addition to courses in South Asian literature where there is currently a dearth of translated works in the qissa genre that are short enough to read in the classroom.

Mariam Zia
Lahore School of Economics, Pakistan

Folk & Fairy Tales, Second Concise Edition. *Edited by Martin Hallett and Barbara Karasek, Broadview Press, 2022, 203 pp.*

The second concise edition of *Folk & Fairy Tales* offers an efficient and useful starting point for those studying fairy tales. At times, the structure and reduced options fight Martin Hallett and Barbara Karasek's mission of exploring "current issues that surround the fairy tale in contemporary times" (8), but for those seeking to enter the world of folklore, the editors offer a comprehensive guide to European storytelling.

The introduction provides an engaging and accessible exploration of how scholars struggle defining fairy tales and offers useful commentary on oral and literary traditions. Hallett and Karasek explore how those who gathered the stories often attempted to "improve" folk tales and how some audiences have always seen the genre as dangerous even before these stories were altered, moralized, and associated with children. The editors also include a brief historical look at the complexities of fairy tale authorship and its evolving discourse before showing how the genre continues to be part of popular culture.

The next three segments, focused on Little Red Riding Hood, Cinderella, and Sleeping Beauty, are supplied to facilitate comparison, and while useful, these sections show the editors' struggle to create balance. Modern retellings have been included to show the range and complexity of each tale in addition to brief overviews that offer a starting point to understanding each tale type's rich history. The Little Red Riding Hood collection contains a diverse range of tales by age and country of origin that serves the editors' plans well, but the Sleeping Beauty sample includes only four entries. This subset is the most gendered because Hallett and Karasek are also trying to cross-pollinate with a later

discussion on maturity as they suggest sleeper tales serve as “a metaphor for growing up” (81). This size disparity grows more noticeable when the seven Cinderella tales dominate the first half of the edition. This section tries to support too many comparisons, for the Peau d’Âne tradition receives a single representative, “Catskin” by Joseph Jacobs, before the editors focus on the traditional Cinderella more carefully. This focus, however, includes a solid international representation of Cinderella stories and a modern retelling, “The Wicked Stepmother’s Lament,” that fits well with the editors’ objectives.

The pieces in “Growing Up Is Hard to Do” mean well as Hallett and Karasek explore generational conflict alongside historical, social, and inter-family anxieties, but the extreme inclusion of mostly stories from the Brothers Grimm (“Hansel and Gretel,” “Snow White,” and “Rapunzel”) does little to show maturity as a fairy tale theme instead of a particular component of German folklore. These stories are joined by “Jack and the Beanstalk” by Joseph Jacobs to suggest that the subdivision is more about the common classics. The inclusion of “Beauty and the Beast” by Madame Leprince de Beaumont and Emma Donoghue’s “The Tale of the Rose” further weaken the message and highlight the difficulty of deciding what tales serve as the best introduction to the genre. Donoghue’s LGBTQ+ retelling is a wonderful addition to any textbook, but it does not sit comfortably alongside stories about fighting over resources and mother-child rivalry.

Much more useful is the diversity of clever protagonists in “Brain over Brawn (The Trickster).” The editors provide a useful overview on the power of story and how audiences identify with trickster figures. Their analysis of talking animals and clever heroines grounds the offerings well, and with entries from Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm, Patricia C. McKissack, Charles Perrault, Julius Lester, Philip M. Sherlock, and Hans Christian Andersen, students will gain a solid understanding of these characters as well as gain a sense of their larger mythic origin.

The unit on “The ‘Cauldron of Story’” provides a well-considered foundation for historical discussions of storytelling and trope development, and the edition offers a compelling and powerful array of seven fairy tale illustrations from classics such as Gustave Doré to more recent work from John Scieszka and Jane Smith. The editors’ insightful comments offer students an entry point into the images while also modeling how to connect the stories and scholarship.

The edition’s other weakness occurs in the final section on criticism. With only three entries (“The Struggle for Meaning” from Bruno Bettelheim, “Feminist Fairy-Tale Scholarship” by Donald Haase, and “Techno-Magic: Cinema and Fairy Tale” by Marina Warner), the book reflects a more traditional and, at times, dated approach to the field than the rest of the edition implies. While Bettelheim’s

inclusion is almost expected and supports a psychological understanding of fairy tales, it counters Hallett and Karasek's initial desire to show how readers interact with fairy tales today. Haase's and Warner's pieces reflect ongoing issues regarding gender and cinematic adaptations and the pressures of the boardroom and public perception.

The second concise edition of *Folk & Fairy Tales* faces a formidable task. It seeks to be an affordable introduction to the genre whether one is teaching about children's literature, fairy tales, or cultural studies, and it mostly succeeds. While a few stories from Africa or Asia appear, the collection is heavily focused on European fairy tales, so while the book is fine for beginning-level courses, it will leave readers with much to explore on their own.

Martha M. Johnson-Olin
Truckee Meadows Community College

The Pomegranates and Other Modern Italian Fairy Tales. *Edited and translated by Cristina Mazzoni, Princeton University Press, 2021, 226 pp.*

The Pomegranates and Other Modern Italian Fairy Tales is a collection of fairy tales written by Italian authors during the political unification of Italy. This is the first time all but one of these Italian fairy tales have been translated into English. Cristina Mazzoni has retained the charm and idiosyncrasies of the Italian language and culture in these translations. The book is organized by author, with one to three stories represented for each, and contains historical illustrations for seven fairy tales. An introduction by Mazzoni provides context for the stories in the time period and the ATU Index of tale types. The bibliography lists the earliest available editions for each fairy tale in the collection and recommended sources for further research. A short biography for each author is provided at the end of the volume.

Cristina Mazzoni is a Professor of Romance Languages and Culture at the University of Vermont and has a PhD in Comparative Literature from Yale University. She has contributed to fairy-tale studies in several articles, including those on stories in this volume, such as "A Fairy Tale Madonna: Grazia Deledda's 'Our Lady of Good Counsel'" (2019), "Gender and Sexuality in the Fairy Tales of Straparola and Basile" (2021), and "The Fairy Tales in Cristina Campo's 'Della fiaba'" (2021). As a native Italian, Mazzoni brings her personal and academic knowledge to the endeavor of translating these modern Italian fairy tales.

The Pomegranates contains stories of wonder, danger, and adventure within the cultural aesthetic of an Italian world. Stories such as "The Song of the Bloodied Ricotta" and "The Borea's Daughter" by Gabriele D'Anunzio feature princes who see blood fall on the Italian soft cheeses ricotta and giuncata and decide they can only marry a girl who is "as white and red" (91) as the

"blood and milk" (97). Other tales demonstrate the importance of Catholicism in Italian life, as in "Our Lady of Good Counsel" by Grazia Deledda and "The Madonna's Veil" by Emma Perodi, wherein a young woman is protected from an evil man through prayer to a heavenly female figure. In "The She-Mule of Abbess Sofia" by Emma Perodi, Catholicism is liberating for a princess who would be better suited to rule than her brother and is able to protect her kingdom by becoming a warrior abbess. Other tales channel the magic of the Italian landscape, as in "Fiery Eyes" by Cordelia (Virginia Tedeschi Treves), wherein a queen seeks help for her cursed daughter from the Nymph of the Wood, or "Sunbeam" by Luigi Capuana, in which a baker girl marries a prince after rescuing him from a wizard's hut in the woods. Set in lands full of forests, mountains, and seas, the stories in this collection feel inspired by Italy, even when they are set in foreign or imaginary countries.

Many of the stories in this collection are different versions of common European fairy tales. In the introduction, Mazzoni identifies "The King's Son, A Pig" by Domenico Comparetti as The Animal Bridegroom type (ATU 425A), "The Pomegranates" also by Comparetti as The Three Oranges type (ATU 408), "Sunbeam" by Luigi Capuana as the Cinderella type (ATU 510A), and both Grazia Deledda's and Guido Gozano's "The Three Talismans" as versions of the Knapsack, the Hat, and the Horn type (ATU 563) (6–7). Mazzoni reveals that some of the tales are Italian translations of well-known French fairy tales, including "Donkey Skin" translated by Collodi (Carlo Lorenzini) and "The Fairies" translated by Yorick (Pietro Coccoluto Ferrigni) from Perrault's originals (9). The Donkey Skin tale type (ATU 510B) is repeated in "Bad Pumpkin" by Domenico Comparetti, and there are two additional versions of The Kind and Unkind Girls type (ATU 480): "Lavella's Stepmother" by Emma Perodi and "The Dance of the Gnomes" by Guido Gozzano (6, 9). They are not the only tales inspired by foreign stories, as both "Golden Feather" by Luigi Capuana and "Goldenfeather and Finestlead" tell of a young woman who becomes progressively lighter until she floats away into the sky, sharing similarities with "The Light Princess" by Scottish writer George MacDonald (17). In "The Borea's Daughter" by Gabriele D'Annunzio, an ancient wind called "the Borea" is personified in the style of George MacDonald's *At the Back of the North Wind* into a motherly captor from the Rapunzel story type (ATU 310) (11). Considering that *The Pomegranates* contains only twenty tales, and thirteen of them already exist as other versions in English, somewhat diminishes the impact of this collection being translated into English for the first time.

Cristina Mazzoni mentions in the introduction that there is an "astonishingly large number of Italian fairy tales published in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century," but it is not clear why she chose these specific tales to

translate into English (18). Their quality, content, and style vary widely, with "The Doves" by Gabriele D'Annunzio and "Prince Valorous's Doll" by Cordelia standing out as strangely whimsical. In "Sunbeam" and "The Song of the Bloodied Ricotta," having "dark" skin or being "Saracen" is equated with ugliness and results in either the dark-skinned woman's brutal murder or transformation into a light-skinned "beauty" (61, 69, 94, 96). One of the authors, Gabriele D'Annunzio, is revealed in his biography to have been "among the first to sign the manifesto of fascist intellectuals in 1925" (225). Considering the historical relationship between fairy tale imagery and white-supremacist propaganda (e.g., Nazi Germany and Richard Wagner's *The Ring of the Nibelungen* or the KKK and T. H. White's Arthurian novels), contextual analysis is needed to illuminate the relationship these tales may have to fascism.

This volume would be useful to scholars looking for versions of fairy tale types from different countries or for those studying nineteenth-century Italy through a literary lens. If the volume had been organized with Mazzoni's insights on each story as a preface to the tale and each author's biography at the end of their section, the stories could have been more clearly placed within their historical and literary contexts for a casual reader. Footnotes illuminating the tales with contextual analysis and insight from Italian history could have made the collection more accessible for a broader audience and provided embedded critiques of potentially problematic elements. As it is, *The Pomegranates and Other Modern Italian Fairy Tales* is a collection of fairy tales ripe for analysis by fairy tale scholars.

Kelsey Olesen
Independent Scholar

Troll Magic: Hidden Folk from the Mountains and Forests of Norway. *By Theodor Kittelsen, Translated by Tiina Nunnally, University of Minnesota Press, 2022, 91 pp.*

The neoromantic Norwegian painter and illustrator Theodor Kittelsen (1857–1914) had a repertoire including landscapes and portraiture; his landscape oil painting *Ekko* (Echo), for example, was displayed in the 1889 Paris World Expo. But he is best known and celebrated for his evocative illustrations of several late nineteenth-century Norwegian and Swedish folktale collections assembled by Peter Christen Asbjørnsen and Jørgen and Moltke Moe. Working with these collectors, Kittelsen developed a distinctive style for folktale illustration, and he was inspired to put his own hand to writing stories and reflections based on folktale and legend motifs. In 1892 his *Troldskab* (Troll Magic) combined writings and illustrations in a unique volume that has been admirably translated to English by Tiina Nunnally in a 2022 reissue by University of Minnesota Press.

Nunnally is recognized as an accomplished translator, having undertaken the massive 1997–2000 PEN-award-winning translation of Sigrid Undset's *Kristin Lavransdatter*, which rendered the trilogy in a plain style closer to Undset's than the previous archaic-language-ridden translation of 1923–27. She is also the translator of University of Minnesota Press's *The Complete and Original Norwegian Folktales of Asbjørnsen and Moe* (2019). In *Troll Magic*, Nunnally displays her ability to write clear and lively prose based in the styles of Scandinavian texts. She comments in her introduction to *Troll Magic* that "when I was asked to translate *Troldskab*, I assumed that [Kittelsen's] stories would be quite similar in style to the tales collected by Asbjørnsen and Moe. In fact, they turned out to be very different, and it was challenging to translate them into English" (ix–x). She notes that not only are Kittelsen's stories different in style from oral and oral-derived Norwegian folktales but they are also widely varied in tone, tense, point of view, and degree of narrativity.

Readers will notice this variety immediately. The volume's first selection, "The Forest Troll," is a descriptive piece with little action in which anonymous children walking through a wild forest encounter a "rocky outcropping," which turns out to be a forest troll. "It … ambled in towering silence straight toward us! And we were gleeful with fright" (3). In the second selection, "On the Way to a Feast at the Troll Castle," Kittelsen switches to third person for an equally descriptive piece in which we get a little more action as a group of trolls traveling to a festivity are held up by mishaps until "they realized that they had been walking in a circle for a hundred years" (8). What unifies these stories and reflections, and is most effective, is their descriptive power, as if Kittelsen's purpose is rendering his illustrative vision via words.

Although the title of the book can be translated as "Troll Magic," Kittelsen's pieces are inspired by varied characters and accompanying motifs from both folktale and legend sources, making the book useful to scholars interested in literary adaptations of folk narrative. We encounter trolls, the fossegrim (a nature spirit who plays his fiddle by a stream, enticing humans to "feel an urge to fling yourself down into the swirling tones" [11]), a dragon sleeping on its treasure, the hidden folk living in the mountains, "a terrible ugly infant" that is a changeling (23), the nisse who both pulls pranks on people and animals and cares for a farm's welfare, a hulder in the guise of a young woman with a cow's tail, a mermaid, a witch, a sea troll, a nøkk with the power of transformation, a draug that pulls a fisherman into the sea, a sea serpent, trolls that can transform into birds, and Thor wielding Jotunheim to produce thunder. We experience a meeting of witches with the devil on Mount Kolsaas and a battle of two giants (jutuls) that brings about landslides and storms. Kittelsen bookends this sequence of creatures with a final piece that returns to mountain trolls, "The Dying Mountain Troll," in which a twelve-headed troll

desires to see the sun, and when he succeeds, "fainted, stumbled, collapsed," and burst (84).

Readers interested in fairy tale may be taken aback, however, if they expect Kittelsen's work to be based in folktale plots and oral storytelling strategies. While some of the prose captures an oral style, using occasional interjections and some dialogue, most of the pieces focus much more strongly on describing creatures and landscapes rather than putting characters into action. They maintain the slow pacing of close description. A few exceptions stand out and will be of more interest to fairy tale scholars. Through sequential action and dialogue, "A Sea Troll" tells the story of a fisherman barely escaping a sea troll that he has taunted. "The Nøkk" similarly relates the interactions of a farmer with a shape-shifting nøkk. The nøkk appears as a horse to lure the farmer into the sea.

In addition to this wealth of motifs and some story line drawn from folklore, the volume includes beautiful reproductions of Kittelsen's original drawings and illustrative prints. At least one print accompanies each story or essay, some tinted. Kittelsen provides readers with views of the Norwegian coastal landscapes that inspired him to write the book. Into these landscapes he places magical creatures. Some burst out of the landscape; some are obscured, rendered vaguely as part of the landscape. In the cover illustration a sea troll bursts out of the sea near a rocky coast, its mouth menacingly gaping. In the illustration of fighting giants, they are nearly indistinguishable from the mountains (78). The line drawings interspersed throughout the book, by contrast, are spare, cartoon-like depictions of single characters and creatures.

The book includes an informative translator's note by Nunnally and a chronology of Kittelsen's life. More information about his illustrations and drawings, and the processes he used to create them, would be useful. This excellent translation of Kittelsen's work will be especially interesting to scholars of folktale, legend, myth, fairy tale, literary adaptation, and Scandinavian studies. Bridging general, generational, and scholarly audiences, it will be an excellent addition to public and academic libraries as well as private collections.

Jennifer Eastman Attebery
Idaho State University

The Watkins Book of English Folktales. *Collected by Neil Philip, Foreword by Neil Gaiman, Watkins Publishing, 2022, 400 pp.*

The opening story in Neil Philip's collection, *The Watkins Book of English Folktales*, is the most famous telling of Jack, his beanstalk, a hen that lays golden eggs, and a harp that sings on command. This endless store of treasures and a stream of diversion at one's fingertips is not a poor metaphor for the collection itself. The re-release of Philip's anthology, thirty years after its original

in 1992, includes nearly 150 stories from English history, each followed by an editor's note that sometimes matches and even occasionally exceeds the original story in length.

Neil Gaiman's foreword expresses a familiar sense for many that the English folktale has persisted in a corner of our cultural consciousness relatively underrepresented compared with German or French varieties. Gaiman argues that collecting, reading, and recognizing the tales enriches our view of them as "more than a fossil record," and "more interesting than localized jokes in pantomimes" (xvi), identifying the unexpected pleasure of seeing the sources whose echoes reverberate in our shared literature, from William Shakespeare to Neil Gaiman himself.

Philip's updated introduction positively glows with pride at the upswing of interest in the folktale, including new scholarship, creative reimaginings of its stories, and a resurgence of communities of oral storytelling in England. If anything, the primary thrust of this new introduction is nothing less than a promise that there is still more to tell and discover. Just as these tales, in Gaiman's reference to G. K. Chesterton, might astound us anew on the thousandth view, so too do undiscovered tales lie waiting to be remembered and told.

The original 1992 introduction provides a rich and persuasive history of the genre, such as insight into why English tradition lagged behind neighboring regions, including "more informal" (xxi) storytelling traditions, "mass semiliteracy," and "the wide circulation of cheap reading-material" (xxii). What is more, the original introduction provides an indispensable tool for understanding the texture of oral traditions in England, how folktales differed from the ballad, the importance of individual storytellers to communities and generations, and the regional differences that color the collection's variety. Finally, the introduction illuminates the heroic work, dispersed across more figures than the familiar Grimms' story, of those who strove to collect, catalog, distinguish, and differentiate these remarkable works.

Two key ideas stuck with me. First, the degree to which collected records are evidence not of a folktale but of a folk-telling, "not a story but a narration" (xxiv). The context in the introduction and notes helps underscore this truism, despite the insistent singularity of the hardbound book in hand. And second is the idea captured in the memory of a referenced author's mother who told these stories, and "said it was easier to make up a tale than to try to remember one" (xxxvii). This recollection challenges the familiar hierarchy of artistry in our own time, rethinking the recitation of a traditional story *not* as inferior to the creative genesis of the artist but as the more difficult and sometimes more important task.

The book in hand is beautiful with its silver-etched cover and internal stylizations. Philip Pullman's blurb says that texts such as this should be treated

in two ways: "bound in gold and brought out on ceremonial occasions" and "printed in editions of hundreds of thousands [and] given away free to every young teacher" (frontmatter). And indeed, this publication seems to aspire to both. But there is some tension between these purposes, and the decorative style and size of the text appear destined to fray, imperfectly suited to academic annotation and transportation.

The tales themselves, however, seem impervious to wear—taken by sips and quaffs, at turns they delight, terrify, humor, and provoke the reader. Revisiting again those stories that one cannot even recall hearing a first time, or in what number one has seen them in cartoons, plays, and rhymes, stirs a recognition of their vitality, their intense imagery and raw narrative force. Some, like "Tom Tit Tot," a version of Rumpelstiltskin, deliver on that familiarity, others, like the Cinderella story, "Sorrow and Love" provoke intriguing comparisons to their morphological archetype.

The Jack stories that open the collection perfectly demonstrate the care with which different enough tales were chosen to entice a reader with novelty, even as their resonances demonstrate the oral threads that bind these stories into a regional tapestry. The adaptation of Snow White includes distinctive attributes from the English countryside, while the versions of Beauty and the Beast, "The Small-Tooth Dog," and Cinderella, "Sorrow and Love," are different enough that their archetypal references emerge with the sort of subtlety stimulating to a college discussion course.

The diversity of tellings, not just of stories, is partially captured in the various dialects of the tales. It is worth noting that some dialects are lighter than others, some so heavy as to be off-putting to a casual reader. "The Flyin' Childer," however, is worth special attention despite the challenge of its phonetic rendering; Philips aptly describes its plot as a "laudanum-drenched fever-dream" (xxviii).

Despite the thoroughness of Philip's contextualizations, many small echoes go unannounced in the collection, letting readers discover them for themselves. The titular "Pear Drum" in one story recalls the pear music box from "Sorrow and Love." In "Jack and the Beanstalk," a line reads: "the ogre fell down and broke his crown, and the beanstalk came tumbling after" (6), recalling the familiar nursery rhyme the more meaningfully for being unmentioned in the notes. Plenty of unfamiliar stories supplement familiar favorites like "Chicken-Licken" and "The Three Little Pigs," whose notes do still manage surprises—such as Philip's reference to scholarship that points out that a pig's lack of "hair on their chinny-chin-chins" (182), likely denotes this as an adaptation of a story of three brothers.

It is in the notes that so much of the collection's treasure is stored away, or perhaps unlocked. Philip calls out the humor, gruesomeness, bawdiness, that

students in particular might suppress in their own immediate experience of such old and familiar stories, his confidence validating those emotions sometimes tamped down when treating with history. Like the expansive Further Reading that ends the collection, this anthology feels more like a beginning of a journey than its completion, the "once upon a time" rather than the "happily ever after."

Justin Cosner
University of Iowa

Grimm Ripples: The Legacy of the Grimms' Deutsche Sagen in Northern Europe. *Edited by Terry Gunnell, Brill, 2022, 591 pp.*

There is no doubt that the Grimm's *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* (1812 and 1815) has received ample scholarly and popular attention. The fairy tales featured in this collection have been infinitely examined, adapted, and reproduced, reflecting relevant historical, cultural, or generational discourse. Contrary to the success of this collection, the Grimms' follow-up publication, *Deutsche Sagen* (German Legends, 1816 and 1818), has been largely overlooked. A fascinating and timely read, Terry Gunnell's edited anthology, *Grimm Ripples: The Legacy of the Grimms' Deutsche Sagen in Northern Europe*, sheds light on the Grimms' lesser-known book, and early folklore collectors' pursuit of folk legends, not fairy tales.

Nationalism and the cultivation of national identity are intimately connected with the Romantic period and early folkloric collections. In the introduction of the second volume of *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* (1815), the Grimms claimed the importance of discovering the neglected literature of the "fatherland," and how it would allow for them to better understand their cultural—and increasingly national—origins. Soon after this, the brothers published their "Circular, Die Sammlung der Volkspoesie" (Circular Letter Concerning the Collection of Folk Poetry) (1815), which in addition to advising on the collection of folk poetry, referred to Germany as a nation. The distinctively nationalistic term "*Deutsche*" in the title of their collected legends, combined with the assertion that folk literature contained within it a collective memory, ignited the cultural movement that Gunnell describes as a "Grimmian cultural tsunami" (9). This book presents *Deutsche Sagen* as the initial move that caused the series of waves, or rather "ripples" to spread across Northern Europe inspiring similar folklore collection efforts. Gunnell and the other contributors are greatly concerned with how the collection of "national literature" set in motion not only the cultivation of national and regional identity, but discussions regarding standard language, and the introduction of folklore as an academic field of research.

The book is divided into an introduction by Terry Gunnell and seventeen chapters written by scholars of cultural history, literature, and folkloristics. The chapters featured do not necessarily employ theoretical literary analyses, like Andrew Teverson's *The Fairy Tale World* (2019), but rather discuss the historical analysis of how the Grimms' collection of legends influenced the cultivation of national literature across Northern Europe. Material used in the analyses include prefaces, introductions, and reviews related to the relevant collection between the years of 1816 and 1870. The second chapter of the book, "The Grimm Brothers' *Deutsche Sagen*: Collection Plan, Sources, Critiques, Reception," by Holger Ehrhardt is the primary article dedicated to discussing the Grimms' own collection in detail. In addition to presenting the evolution of the brothers' project, it gives a thorough account of the supernatural and historical legends featured in the two-volume collection. After this foundational article, the book's focus moves outside of Germany to investigate the effects of the wave and the work of those who felt the "ripples that came from the south" (105).

In the first chapter, Joep Leerssen's article "Topo-Narratives" highlights the era's fascination with literature and the people's association with the land. What he terms "Past and Peasant" epitomizes the interest of early folklore collectors and prepares the reader for the ensuing chapters. One way he does so is by defining and contextualizing terms, as they are used generally by early and contemporary scholars of folklore and literature. Leerssen clarifies that before the Grimms' work, "saga" (*Sage*) was used as a generic term for folklore and stories but later became distinguished from fairy tales (*Märchen*) "on the basis of the fact that it has a nationally territorial setting" (30). Territory is seen to take on an increasingly significant role in folklore collection and the analysis of cultural literature throughout *Grimm Ripples*. Built on the idea that an "*Ur*-vocabulary" found in folk literature reflects an ancient "*Ur*-society," Leerssen argues that these linguistic expressions therefore reflect "the nations' original character, temperament, and world view" (43). He goes on to say that "Past and Peasant" becomes linked further to narrative and location by "developing a sense of tradition and a sense of place" (28). This theory neatly exemplifies the interest that the Grimms inspired in early scholars through a linguistic and archaeological approach. While the Grimms saw fairy tales as poetic, legends were believed to be more historical, a remnant of a cultural memory, and therefore belonging to a territorial location. Leerssen's piece is an excellent introductory chapter to the book and exploration of a culture's relationship to land, literature, and ultimately identity in the age of Romantic Nationalism.

Outside of the aesthetic use of moving water to describe the spread of the cultural movement, the scholars also frequently reference a web. The networking web and scholarly community that the early folklorists maintained

is a fascinating insight explored throughout the book. A prevalent and enriching aspect of *Grimm Ripples* is how Gunnell and the contributors communicate the vast network that connected each folklorist analyzed while seemingly having established one of their own. Each chapter builds on the next seamlessly and enriches the readers' understanding of the folkloric scholarly community—Romantic and contemporary. The contributors' references to other scholars' work within *Grimm Ripples* emulates the network that these early folklorists seem to have had themselves. A chapter that highlights this web extremely effectively is Ane Ohrvik's "Mapping the Knowledge Network of the Norwegian Folklore Collector Peter Christen Asbjørnsen in the Nineteenth Century." In her innovative research, Ohrvik analyzes the approximately 1,621 letters and personal correspondence from Asbjørnsen's private archive and how he used his vast social circle to exchange folkloric material, discuss academic theories, and generally "contrib[ute] to the knowledge-making which would form the basis for the establishment of Folkloristics as a scientific discipline" (183).

A refreshing and timely read, *Grimm Ripples* convincingly explores the spread of folklore research and collection efforts in Northern Europe, influenced by the Grimms' much neglected book *Deutsche Sagen*. Gunnell's anthology is a meaningful and critical contribution to the ongoing analysis of the Grimms' work, not only regarding their development of German folklore but of their advancement of national culture, pride, and identity throughout Europe.

Rebecca Davis
Independent Scholar

Fairy Tales 101: An Accessible Introduction to Fairy Tales. *By Jeana Jorgensen, PhD, Fox Folk Press, 2022, 362 pp.*

If you're looking for an accessible and engaging introduction to fairy-tale studies, *Fairy Tales 101* is the place to start! Jorgensen's conversational prose is aimed at students in general education English, humanities, and language classes. It addresses definitions, genre, history, analytic approaches, and even academic debates in fairy-tale studies in a way that early college students can both understand and embrace. It makes fairy-tale studies fun for new readers.

The book is divided into four sections: basic concepts and history, short essays and blog posts, academic articles, and resources and recommendations. The first and final section are particularly useful in a classroom setting because of their generalized focus, while the short essays, blog posts, and academic articles reflect Jorgensen's expertise in the intersectionality of gender, sexuality, and fairy-tale studies. Jorgensen's "Introduction" sets up the reader to follow different sections and understand the landscape of the textbook.

Jorgensen's definition of fairy-tale studies and her introduction to analytical approaches are an excellent resource for students. Her writing is accessible and engaging without being bogged down with scholarly references. With a humor that is reminiscent of her fiction, Jorgensen breaks down decades of fair-tale scholarship, inviting students to join debates about the uses and abuses of fairy tales in modern culture. Some of the chapters start out with rhetorical questions:

> "What the heck is a fairy tale?!" (9)
> "How many fairy tales can you think of that actually have fairies in them?" (24)

Jorgensen keeps the conversational tone up throughout each chapter, addressing her own struggles or experiences while inviting the reader to think about their own experiences with fairy tales. All of these factors combine to make the reader feel like they are a part of the history of fairy-tale studies that Jorgensen lays out rather than an outsider looking in.

Another way Jorgensen invites readers to share her insider perspective is with her storytelling. The chapter "A Super Brief History of Fairy Tales" opens with a story about a conference panel presentation that "devolved into a shouting match that then migrated to the hotel bar with continuing raised voices" (35). Jorgensen's readers experience the tension and humor of the situation through her descriptive narrative. Both scholars and historic fairy-tale authors become characters in this narrative: the medieval author Straparola is "a dude from Caravaggio who moved to Venice" (41), and the scholar who reoriented fairy-tale studies around her work is described as "a Straparola fan" (43). These tags make the litany of scholars and writers in the condensed history chapters relatable for undergraduates, while the rich details that Jorgensen uses to contextualize these characters keep tags from becoming limited stereotypes.

The blogs are brief and opinion-based, tying the topic of fairy tales to current events. This section makes fairy-tale scholarship fun and even a bit edgy, dealing with socially charged issues. Blogs respond to both scholarly articles, like Laurence Talairach-Vielmas's "Moulding the Female Body in Victorian Fairy Tales and Sensation Novels" (2007), and popular articles, like Jude Doyle's "Ivanka Trump Will Not Fix 'Women's Issues'—She Will Distract from Them" (2017). The blogs are distinct from the more formal section devoted to Jorgensen's academic articles, which are reprinted from earlier publications, such as *JAF* and *Marvels & Tales*. Together, these two sections demonstrate different ways that fairy-tale scholarship can be applied for different audiences.

The chapter “Exploring a Tale Type: Sample Paper on ATU 510B” in the blog section is a particularly useful teaching tool because of the way it models the process of constructing a comparative fairy-tale paper. Jorgensen coaches the reader on selecting evidence as she builds the argument. In an era of AI generated student papers, Jorgensen demonstrates the importance of critical thinking and walks students through creating their own, original work.

Fairy Tales 101 could pair well with critical readers like *Marvelous Transformations* (2012) or a focused, journalistic text like *Little Red Riding Hood Uncloaked* (2003) as well as more foundational fairy-tale texts like Jack Zipes’s *Fairy Tales and the Art of Subversion* or Maria Tatar’s *Hard Facts of the Grimms’ Fairy Tales*. The final resources section makes it possible to pair this text with open-access fairy-tale texts online as well. *Fairy Tales 101* is an accessible, engaging, and humorous introduction to the world of fairy-tale studies for general education courses. It positions fairy-tale studies within folklore studies for students beginning to explore these topics. The example papers and step-by-step writing and research instructions encourage students to participate in scholarly and popular conversations in the field. Jorgensen bridges the gap between fairy-tale studies and general education courses in composition or humanities in ways that are particularly useful for new instructors trying to build hybrid general education courses. I highly recommend this text for anyone consider developing a new course in fairy-tale studies within a general education curriculum.

Abigail Heiniger
Lincoln Memorial University

The Folklore of Devon*. By Mark Norman. Illustrated by Rhianna Wynter, University of Exeter Press, 2023, 256 pp.*

As Mark Norman himself says in the introduction, his new treatise on Devon folklore “can be considered as an expansion of and an update to the ethos” of Ralph Whitlock’s *The Folklore of Devon* (1977). This approach not only reflects but also expands on its chapter structure, providing a deeper analysis and drawing “on folkloric parallels across both time and geographical space in order to compare and contrast examples” (2). Norman’s book is by nature still selective, however, because to cover every aspect of Devon folklore would require several book-length studies. Although slightly longer than Whitlock’s book, Norman’s edition is still on the briefer side at a page count of 256 pages.

The first chapter, “Folklore Collection in Devon,” lays the foundation by surveying the history of folklore associations and institutions operating in Devon and provides brief biographies of key folklore collectors, acknowledging their vital contribution to the preservation of folklore texts and artifacts.

This chapter thus explains the "misapprehension that Devon is especially rich in folklore and custom" when in reality it is the amount of preserved folklore in Devon that is exceptional compared to other regions (5).

Chapter 2, "Stories from the Moors," explores those folkloric stories that have roots specifically in the moorland. Exmoor and Dartmoor take a significant part of Devon's land; it is only natural that they play a significant role in its folklore. The chapter also includes real people living in the area who might have served as a basis for some of the tales. The third chapter, "The Calendar Year," explores some of Devon's calendar customs, that is, "those traditions which take place regularly at fixed times of the year, or on particular dates" (38). The chapter progresses chronologically from the New Year to Christmas and lists important dates and the customs and festivities connected to them, such as wassailing and divination customs, some of which are still in use today. Food and a lack thereof takes prominence in this chapter, as this was an important part of the festivities, from a mothering cake to hot cross buns and pancakes to soul cakes.

Closely connected to the calendar customs is the following chapter, "Farming and the Weather," because a lot of the superstition tied to weather is also tied to particular holidays, for example, Midsummer's Day, and vice versa. Devon is a predominantly agricultural county, and the need to secure favorable weather and thus successful harvest generated "many and varied folk beliefs" (64). Norman does not just describe the beliefs and their origins but also considers whether there is any scientific explanation behind the weather-related ones, which are often based on observance of phenomena in the sky and animal behavior. He employs the same approach in the later chapter on witchcraft, in which he considers the scientific soundness of herbal remedies.

Chapters 5 to 9 focus thematically on specific folkloric figures and practices: the Devil, the Black Dog, fairies, ghosts, and witches. In the chapter on the Devil in particular, Norman observes the tension between and sometimes the fusion of religious cautionary folktales and comedic folktales where the dangerous entity is outwitted by a commoner. There is also an important notion of the environmental impact of some fairy-related customs that have been revived or newly developed, for example, fairy doors in trees or "hammering of coins into tree trunks for luck" (116). In "The Black Dog" chapter, readers get to play detectives, searching with Norman for the folkloric inspiration behind Doyle's *The Hound of the Baskervilles*. Norman is an expert on this subject as he has been collecting Black Dog sightings for years and authored a book on the phenomenon, *Black Dog Folklore* (2016).

Aside from the historical folklore research overview, the most significant contribution of the book is its last chapter, "Modern Folklore," which draws attention to the constant reinventions of folklore in the age of global internet

communities. Its inclusion in the volume debunks the "misconception that something cannot be considered as folklore if it is not old" (3). The chapter contains an eclectic assortment of modern folkloric elements related to Devon, such as cream tea, UFO, satanic rituals, and paranormal investigation television. It shows the role of mass media, the internet, and especially social media in rapid folklore creation, alteration, dissemination, and, inevitably, distortion.

The especially noteworthy element about *The Folklore of Devon* is that aside from providing a thorough overview of Devon folklore Norman takes pains to debunk several folkloristic misconceptions not related to Devon in particular but to historical folklore research in general. He discusses the problematic usage of the expression *pagan*, highlights "the frequent underlying suggestion by higher-class writers and collectors in the nineteenth century that superstitious, rural people believed fervently in notions which were ridiculous to the educated" and warns against misinterpretation of a single story as a common practice (52–53). He also untangles real legends from those invented, embellished, or conflated by Victorian tourist guidebook authors.

Norman's writing is informative, engaging, and generally easy to follow, save perhaps for instances where he mentions competing theories of the origin of folktales and events to demonstrate that folklore research is rarely unequivocal and definite. This makes the text more interesting but, in places, somewhat convoluted, as it follows several trails at once and the jumps between them are not always clearly signaled.

Accessible without being simplistic, *The Folklore of Devon* is not only a useful resource for folklorists by profession but also a worthy addition to the library of every lay Devon folklore enthusiast. It provides if not exhaustive then a well-balanced selection representative of Devon folklore. Rhianna Wynter's evocative, atmospheric illustrations, which play with lights and shadows in black and gray, contribute greatly to readers' immersion in Devon folklore.

Monika Markéta Šmídová
Masaryk University

Making the Marvelous. Marie-Catherine d'Aulnoy, Henriette-Julie de Murat, and the Literary Representation of the Decorative Arts. *By Rori Bloom, University of Nebraska Press, 2022, 235 pp.*

The contemporary reader delving into the fairy-tale world often focuses on the action sidelining descriptions, as this is generally the way we conceive of the genre. Rori Bloom prompts us to slow down, redirecting focus toward the ingenuity of Marie-Catherine d'Aulnoy's and Henriette-Julie de Murat's writing techniques, prioritizing the descriptive over narrative elements. In this exploration, Bloom unveils the modernity of their works that celebrate human

artistry in decorative arts, redefine the marvelous within the Grand siècle's identity, and give the reader a pause to contemplate the analogy between visual images and their own verbal craft.

Seventeenth-century France, guided by Louis XIV, witnessed an array of advancements in craftmanship. From the Gobelin tapestry manufactures to the fabrication of French mirrors or semi-industrial lace, a burgeoning industry revolved around portraying France's glory under Louis's reign. D'Aulnoy and Murat, the most prolific fairy-tale writers of the time, redirected the Sun King's glory by shedding light on the skilled craftsmen behind the scenes. Their focus extended beyond raw materials to the finished product, accentuating the creative process and its aesthetic value. This, in turn, informs the reader of their own textual creation and the aesthetic value of their own craftsmanship. The book comprises five chapters, the first three delving into d'Aulnoy's and Murat's fairy tales, while the last two concentrating on the descriptive techniques within their novels. Additionally, it includes an introduction, conclusion, an appendix featuring tables of the novelists' publications, thirty-five pages of notes, a bibliography, and a useful index.

Chapter 1 escorts the reader through a palace tour, highlighting the wonders of contemporary architecture, lighting, waterworks, gardens, and decor. However, both d'Aulnoy and Murat shift the masculine authority of French architecture to the female authority of fairyland. This transformation, more aesthetic than sociopolitical, remodels glorious palaces built to impose the image of the king onto his subjects into exquisite, feminine spaces skillfully crafted to inspire the delicate sentiments of lovers. The marvelous, enchanted space redefined as man-made, showcases this creative process. Citing numerous examples from both author's tales, Bloom vividly portrays the infinite ways in which the writers transform the genre into a record of material culture where decorative arts embody the marvels born from the delicate tastes of women coupled with skilled craftsmanship.

Chapter 2 directs the reader's gaze to visual representations of the human or animal world, in paintings, *singeries*, portraitures and miniatures, tapestry, mirrors, stained glass. Introducing a pause in the narrative structure of their tales, painting often portray a still heroine, compelling admiration. Remarkably, Bloom notes that these illustrations draw inspiration not from literature but from visuals, allowing d'Aulnoy and Murat to recreate these images with words. This highlights the gap between the visual representation and its reality, evaluating the painter's artistry and the potential trickery of portraiture. Therefore, a character will fall in love not with a person, but with their representation in portraits, reassessing the source of the marvelous as a work of art, and as man-made. Magic, therefore, becomes a skill, with painting and their tales both enhancing the source, emphasizing the artistry involved. In

d'Aulnoy's tales, visual representation often references her own texts, providing a glimpse of the author at work.

Chapter 3 scrutinizes the ideal of beauty via objects, accessories, dolls, and fashion, demonstrating that marvel equates to craftsmanship, even in the minutest details. Starting with fashion, which at the time signified class identification rather than exclusively a woman's preoccupation, Bloom shows that d'Aulnoy and Murat celebrate both the creator and the user, viewing beauty as an artistic process of embellishment. Beyond mere descriptions, the fashion narratives in Murat's tales guide readers in composing outfits or hairstyles, offering at the same time insights into the tale's composition. D'Aulnoy's tales showcase how a shoemaker embellishing Finette-Cendron's ball shoe with pearls parallels the writer embellishing the narrative with carefully chosen adjectives (97). In Murat's tales, a jeweler's work mirrors the writer's art, providing a mise en abyme of her craft (117). Ultimately, both accessories and tales emerge as works of art to be admired, emphasizing the transformative work and effort as the source of the marvelous.

Chapters 4 and 5 could almost stand alone but integrate the writing techniques of fairy tales within the authors' broader body of works. Chapter 4 focuses on d'Aulnoy's *Relation du voyage d'Espagne* (Relation of Spain's voyage, 1691), showcasing similar descriptive techniques in a technically nonfictional work. Here, the tangible world replete with sounds, smells, sights, and physical discomfort establishes a sense of reality, emphasizing the cultural superiority of the French over the Spanish and highlighting the excellence of French craftsmanship. Chapter 5 centers on Murat's late novels, *Voyage de campagne* (Voyage to the countryside, 1699) and *Les lutins du château de Kernosy* (The ghosts of Kernosy castle, 1710). Bloom illustrates how Murat employs the same techniques of descriptive over narrative in the frame stories of these works, akin to her fairy tales. The marvelous occurrences within the novel are attributed to the host's hospitality and the industry of a skilled craftsman, aimed at astonishing the company. Murat thereby affirms the elite Parisian consumers' superior taste against the perceived vulgarity of aspiring new nobility from the provinces. In both chapters, Bloom shows that the supernatural and superstitions come from the simplicity of credulous people (the Spanish for d'Aulnoy and the provincials for Murat) who cannot deconstruct the craftsmanship that creates these illusions.

In conclusion, Rori Bloom's crucial research elucidates the intricacies of d'Aulnoy's and Murat's writing skills, showcasing their avant-garde contributions to the genre. From their understanding of beauty and artifice—precursors of Baudelaire's aesthetic—and their anticipation of fast fashion with the advent of consumerism in fashion and accessories, to their highlights of the (proto)

capitalist *invisible hands*, d'Aulnoy's and Murat's foresight and influence are well worth a pause in the action of their tales, as Bloom's monograph reminds us.

Charlotte Trinquet du Lys
University of Central Florida

Fearless Ivan and His Faithful Horse Double-Hump. *By Pyotr Yershov, retold by Jack Zipes, University of Minneapolis Press, 2018.*

An enjoyable romp for adults and children alike, Jack Zipes's *Fearless Ivan and His Faithful Horse Double-Hump* (2018) should also be of great interest to scholars of folklore, Russian culture, fairy-tale reimaginings, and satire. Presented as a prose Russian folktale, the book is not only an engaging reimagining of *The Little Humpbacked Horse* (1834) by Russian poet Pyotr Yershov (1815–1869) but a convincing satire of the folly of tyrants, both of pre-revolutionary Russia and those that persist in the contemporary. While the narrative functions as your standard fairy-tale quest at surface level, the interwoven political and ethical themes in the book demonstrate clear parallels between Yershov's tyrants of the past and Zipes's of the present, facilitating provocative discussion into the value of retelling older tales and offering insight into how satire transcends time as well as form and genre.

Yershov's *The Little Humpbacked Horse* was and remains the poet's most famous work, springing from both his familiarity with Russian and Serbian folklore and his admiration for the Decemberists, the Russian nobility who tried and failed to throw down the autocratic Tsar Nicholas in 1825. Such is the staying power of the poem that Jack Zipes, professor emeritus of German and comparative literature at the University of Minnesota, would one day choose to rewrite the tale for contemporary audiences. In addition to being a prolific scholar and widely published author on folklore and fairy tales, Zipes has worked in children's theaters in both Europe and the United States, most notably founding the acclaimed children's storytelling program "Neighbourhood Bridges" at the Children's Theatre Company in Minneapolis. Zipes is clearly eminent not only in academic fairy tale and fan culture studies but also in literature aimed at younger readers, and his loving reimagining of the foolish peasant boy Ivan who defeats a cruel tsar and his scheming follower with the help of his loyal and magical pony Double-Hump is just one example of his passion and expertise in these areas.

It is obvious from the outset that Zipes holds Yershov's original work in high regard. Despite changing certain plot points, Zipes has done his utmost to maintain what he considers to be the story's most important themes: that "compassionate depiction of friendship between a young peasant and his wise, magical horse; the notion that kindness begets kindness; and a critique of rulers who exploit their people as servants" (87). Given the satirical attitude

toward the ruling classes throughout the book, I feel comfortable asserting that the theme is both the most important to Zipes and the reason he decided to make Yershov's poem accessible to the contemporary audience. His "hope that tyrants will be exposed and deposed" in the modern day is patent in the themes of his reimagining (it is also very telling that the timelessness of Yershov's satire holds center stage in the blurb of the book, calling the story "a taunt to tyranny that transcends time"). Zipes pulls no punches in his critique of the stupidity and cruelty of tyranny, illustrated most potently through the character of the tsar. The outlandishness of the several quests the tsar demands and the physical punishments Ivan must endure while in his service, "You're to bring this bird to my royal chamber within three weeks, or you'll be tortured on the rack and torn apart limb from limb!" all serve to emphasize the absurdity and cruelty of his station (33.) The ease with which Zipes has transported the core satirical themes and messages across form and context makes the point that these themes are universal: that a satire of autocracy from 1834 still resonates now is a testament to how timeless satire is.

These ideas are further developed in the afterword section of the book in which the author's in-depth interrogation of his own motivations serve as the foundation for comparative work with the original poem, adding to the suitability of this text for scholars. Zipes begins his reflections with a detailed examination of the life of Yershov the poet, examining the many influences and successes that drew him to write about the unfairness of autocratic Russia and the plight of the abject peasant. He remarks that a key part of Yershov's success was his willingness to embrace the "vernacular, humor, and perspectives of the common people" in his writing (84). Yershov's *The Little Humpbacked Horse* would be spread in Russian oral tradition despite being banned for its inflammatory content, becoming so beloved that a twenty-first-century scholar would one day transform the original poem into a prose fairy tale, since, as Zipes notes, "times have not changed for the better" since tsarist Russia (87). Zipes's honest reflections in this book as a modern scholar provide insight into the importance of contemporary fairy-tale retellings, and of the moral imperatives their origins explore.

On a more rudimentary level, the book itself is attractive in hardback, easy to navigate and to read, and its colorful and original illustrations would be useful to encourage the engagement of younger readers. The fact that *Fearless Ivan* is a reimagining of an existing text in Russian oral tradition is also made helpfully obvious by the claim on the inside cover that the adaptation captures "the full charm of the original," reducing the likelihood that readers would miss the opportunity to make a comparison between the book and the poem.

I would like to conclude with the observation that there is a moral goodness to this reimagining. *Fearless Ivan* is fiercely respectful of the original poem

in which it finds its origins, seeking not to change the essential style, idiom, or to rewrite central themes for contemporary purposes. Instead, it seeks to help the poem transcend its original context and form, ensuring the timeless Russian folktale remains unchanged at its core while also being accessible, relevant, and entertaining. If you are interested in fairy-tale reimaginings, Russian culture, or satire, *Fearless Ivan* may prove an invaluable reference text.

Sarah Richardson
Royal Holloway University of London

Haunting and Hilarious Fairy Tales. *Illustrated by Rolf Brandt; edited and translated by Jack Zipes, Little Mole & HoneyBear, 2022, 225 pp.*

How often is it that we see fairy tale anthologies with art that highlight particular moments of the tale? And how often do such anthologies highlight a particular artist's work in order to both retell fairy tales and tell the story of an artist themself? Published by Jack Zipes in 2022, *Haunting and Hilarious Fairy Tales* is as much an anthology of fairy tales as it is a celebration of artist Rolf Brandt (1906–1986) and his artistic vision. The book contains thirty-two fairy tales, each embellished with Brandt's illustrations, as well as an afterword and epilogue where Zipes provides some background on Brandt's life and work.

Brandt himself was an artist whose interests ranged from painting, illustrating, acting, and teaching. Zipes describes his life as "a dazzling fairy tale that could be compared to any of the magical fairy tales of the Brothers Grimm" because he had to reinvent himself throughout his life, and he had many different interests as a painter, a professional actor, a teacher, and an illustrator (Zipes 210). As such, Brandt underwent many different transformations as he took on various types of work, paralleling many of the characters featured in this collection and other collections of fairy tales he illustrated while working on fairy tale and story anthologies with Peter Lunn Publishers from 1943 to 1946. Some of these books include Grimms *Fairy Tales* in 1944, *Why the Sea Is Salt and Other Fairy Tales* in 1946, and *Russian Stories I: Pushkin to Gorky* and *Russian Stories II: Ljeskov to Andreyev* in 1946.

Some of the tales in this collection are taken from these previous works, with Zipes noting that *Haunting and Hilarious Fairy Tales* itself is a combination of German and Norse fairy tales and folktales. Some of these stories may be more well-known to a general audience, such as the Grimms' "Rumpelstiltskin," "Hansel and Grethel," "Ashputtel," and "Snowdrop," but others, such as "The Nose," "The Blue Belt," "The Lad Who Went to the North Wind," and "The Giant Wizard with Twelve Heads" may be new to those who are looking to read and learn more about fairy tales. Zipes also states that Brandt altered some of the texts so that they were different from more popular retellings of

certain tales, which he may have done in order to "emphasize conflicts and to question, critique, and play with various plots and ideas through his magical pencil illustration" (Zipes 212). In particular, Zipes discusses Brandt's retelling of "Hansel and Grethel," in which the witch has a fairy wand that Grethel steals so that she and Hansel can escape her clutches instead of Grethel killing her by pushing her into an oven. The witch eventually finds the children again in Brandt's retelling and transforms Hansel into a faun, and the two siblings live in the woods together until a king attempts to hunt Hansel. However, when he finds Grethel, he takes her as his wife and orders the witch to transform Hansel back into a grown, handsome young man. In Brandt's retelling, the witch is not punished, and some of the other stories in this collection that usually end with a villain being punished or killed do not include the punishment or death at the end of them.

While some of these stories have alternate retellings—and in return, alternate endings—it was particularly interesting how many of these stories featured have endings where the villain's punishment or death is omitted—or at least, left more ambiguous. For instance, in Brandt's retelling of "Rumpelstiltskin," while Rumpelstiltskin still does stick his right foot deep into the earth, he does not tear himself in two in an attempt to get his foot out; rather, three strong men pull him back out of the earth and he runs away from the castle, never to be seen again. Similarly, in "Ashputtel," while Ashputtel's stepsisters cut off part of their feet to fit the slipper to be wed to the prince, they are not punished by having their eyes pecked out by birds at Ashputtel's wedding. The tale "Snow-Drop," in contrast, does mention the death of the evil queen who tried to kill Snow Drop, but in this retelling she dies after she attends Snow-Drop's wedding and "[chokes] with malice" and "[falls] ill" at the sight of her—not by being forced to dance to death in red-hot iron shoes like in some other variants (Zipes 130). Brandt's choice to change some plot points of certain stories like "Hansel and Grethel" and to opt for variants of tales that omit the villains' punishments (or at least leave them more open-ended) could be his way of further emphasizing how absurd—or as Zipes puts it, "preposterous"—fairy tales can be from both a plot and character standpoint (Zipes 212).

Fairy tales are in and of themselves fantastic, taking place in a fictional, enigmatic world all their own with different rules from our lived reality, and Brandt's surrealist pencil illustrations further emphasize this characteristic. Inspired by the surrealist art movement in the 1930s and the writings of Franz Kafka, his illustrations are not the kind that one may associate with, for a lack of better words, "mainstream" or "traditional" fairy tale anthologies. It could be argued that Brandt's "contorted and distorted images" reflect the absurd and even the grim aspects of fairy tales and subverts them by helping the reader see these tales in a different light—something that is especially powerful

considering the current trends of commercializing fairy and folk tales so that they are more "child friendly," such as the Disney retellings many people are now most familiar with (Zipes 213).

Zipes adds that Brandt gained attention for his "uncanny abstract, and weird creations" in the 1970s but that there is still a gap in research about the "haunting and hilarious illustrations that he drew in the 1940s" (Zipes 212). With this in mind, this collection seems to be a way to help fill this research gap, and as a reader who is familiar with many of the tales, I found that seeing the surrealist illustrations and reading the different retellings was refreshing and gave me more to think about as someone who does research in the fairy and folk tale genres. Zipes's afterword and epilogue also provided a bit of biographical information about Brandt that helped me appreciate the art even more.

There is so much more that could be said about this collection, especially considering how conflicts surrounding World War II may have influenced Brandt, but that could be a whole topic of research in and of itself. For those interested in fairy tales, though, Brandt's surrealist art adds a whole different dimension to the tales featured in this collection by highlighting and embracing the nonsensical and fantastical world of fairy tales as well as the characters who live within it.

Allie Stanich
Independent Scholar