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## Reviews

Marvels & Tales Editors

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## REVIEWS

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*Creation Myths of Primitive America.* By Jeremiah Curtin. Edited and with an introduction by Karl Kroeber. ABC-CLIO Classic Folk and Fairy Tales. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC CLIO, 2002. xli + 297 pp.

Jeremiah Curtin was the kind of nineteenth-century scholar and linguist whose personality and motives have been rendered enigmatic by the intervening century of folklore scholarship. Readers who plunge into the body of this work, the myths, without reading Kroeber's introduction may find themselves adrift in texts packed with multiple names—of places, forces, and spirits moving through action-packed sequences that recount the origins of the world according to the Yana and Wintu of central California. While Curtin worked in many indigenous-language communities, only in the notes does he present information about the general "Primitive America" of his title. He focuses on material recorded from a few culture bearers about California, where he had sought the last and least-changed frontier. A certain undifferentiated intonation in the telling of these myths may send the reader back to the introduction to unravel the conundrums of presentation and reenter the text with an expanded understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of Curtin's methods and interactions with his interlocutors.

Kroeber recounts Curtin's career as one emblematically American, from farm boy to Harvard scholar to entrepreneur. Curtin employed his impressive linguistic talents first to make a fortune by translating novels (such as *Quo Vadis*) whose Polish and Russian authors were unprotected by U.S. copyright law. His focus on translation and English publication allowed him to present both literature and oral culture to wide audiences, but unfortunately it has provided an impoverished linguistic archive for subsequent scholarship. With financial independence ensured and many friends in high places, he undertook to save the mythology of native peoples of California, whose numbers

were rapidly declining under the onslaught of American western expansion. His assessment of the Wintu and Yana plight led him, unlike many in the field, to use his Washington contacts to plead the cause of the remaining members of each group, even contacting President Theodore Roosevelt, but to little avail. His efforts did, however, earn the enduring trust and friendship of his interlocutors.

In his collecting, Curtin might well have cast himself as an “Earthdiver,” bringing the mud of primordial human thought to the surface of his “Turn of the Century” culture. His enterprise was to trace the origins of universal human spirituality. He held the conviction that the narratives he translated actually recorded early stages in the evolution of human religiosity, indeed the first completely systematic accounts of the cosmos. Paragraphs headlining each myth name the animal or plant that each spirit-being became as the world shifted radically from timeless, primordial paradise through chaos to the time of humans. Curtin was touched by the sacred nature of these accounts, and despite his strong editorial style, the ferment and energy of creation infuse the translations. Although he sought to describe a hierarchy of deities distinctly patriarchal in tone, the myths themselves contradict such an ordering. In “Olelbis and Mem Loimos” (28–38), Mem Loimos (Water) seeks out the Supreme Being, Olelbis, as her mate. When she is stolen away, he and his community are devastated, but she continues to travel on, bearing offspring to other husbands, disdaining the claims of Olelbis to being all-knowing, for he is unable to “see” her to find her. While woman’s reproductive power is extolled, the female potential for destruction is also portrayed, as in the Yana myth “The Flight of Tsanunewa and Defeat of Hehku” (235–46), a tale of a devouring female spirit who eventually loses her power while gambling with life and death in a bone game. Recurring, stable grandmother figures evoke the power and wisdom of women and elders, such as the elderly woman who adopted an orphan to shield him from destruction by Hehku. This narrative may be interpreted as one instance when myth, naming the primordial, also dealt with historical vectors and mortal problems troubling the peoples as they struggled to maintain a world where the Yana and Wintu might survive. Curtin’s purpose in collecting, to establish a genealogy of religion, ignored what might be called the world-making creativity of the narratives during the California genocide.

While Curtin detailed some of the massacres in the notes (259–86), the native experience of rupture emerges through descriptions of killings and of the flight of primordial beings as they sought to avoid the end of the world that they had always known. These sequences allude to the angst of the Yana and Wintu as kin, land, and spiritual ties were broken. Amid destruction and bitter travail, California peoples tried to find ground, often hiding as far as they could from the implacable wave of settlement and greed. The recurring motif

of the sweat lodge as the place of power and transformation, along with the fragments of dance and song, seem to be traces of the millennial Ghost Dance movement that had been played out before Curtin arrived on the scene. Both Kroeber and Curtin acknowledge that some myths tell how power and knowledge came to healers, the wise elders who were Curtin's primary and honored interlocutors. Thus, while this collection may not record the precise beauty and linguistic precision of the languages, or the details of social interaction that our palates now desire, the myths may yet contain seeds of healing. The rich geographies and names, the scale of actions, of battles simultaneously physical and mental, the warmth and power of kin networks—all set a stage worthy of study and evocation by both scholars and storytellers. The strong personalities of female spirits belie stereotypes promulgated by a century of exploitation. And, as with all recounts of primordial origins, the conditions of possibility are laid out, so that teller, listener, and reader sense an opening to make the world anew as the myths resonate in the present.

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***Féeries: Etudes sur le conte merveilleux XVIIe–XIXe Siècle.*** No. 1: “Le Recueil” (2003) UMR LIRE, no. 5611. Université Stendhal-Grenoble 3.

This inaugural issue of the annual journal *Féeries* testifies to renewed interest in the literary fairy tale among French scholars. *Féeries* promises to be an exciting venue for scholarly exploration of the genre, appearing in the wake of three important, recent French-language monographs devoted to d'Aulnoy and the *acta* of a major conference in France on the eighteenth-century literary fairy tale (Anne Defrance's *Les contes de fées et les nouvelles de Madame d'Aulnoy (1690–1698): Limaginaire féminin à rebours de la tradition* [1998]; Nadine Jasmin's *Naissance du conte féminin. Mots et merveilles: Les contes de fées de Madame d'Aulnoy (1690–1698)* [2002]; Jean Mainil's *Madame d'Aulnoy et le rire des fées: Essai sur la subversion féerique et le merveilleux comique sous l'Ancien Régime* [2001]; and *Le conte merveilleux au XVIIIe siècle: Une poétique expérimentale* [2002] under the editorship of Régine Jomand-Baudry and Jean-François Perrin). With a clearly defined chronological focus (from the seventeenth through the nineteenth century), the editors of this journal, led by Jean-François Perrin (Université de Grenoble), have proposed a comparatist approach to a period that witnessed the birth and mass diffusion of the European literary fairy tale. In an editorial, Perrin announces the themes for the next three issues: “Le conte oriental au XVIIIe siècle” (no. 2), “Politique du conte” (no. 3), and “Le conte, la scène” (no. 4). If the overall quality of the articles in this first issue is any indication, these forthcoming issues of *Féeries* will make significant contributions to the field.

The first issue of *Féeries* is devoted to the topic of the collection (“le recueil”) and explores in particular its interpretive and narratological effects on the literary fairy tale. Although these articles concentrate on examples from the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century *contes de fées*, the theoretical questions they address—over and above the literary historical importance of this specific corpus—make them highly useful to anyone interested in the genre. The eight articles demonstrate above all the constitutive effect of anthologization on the literary fairy tale. At this decisive moment in the history of the genre, these essays show, the practice of embedding stories in frame narratives and collections is not only a sign of an evolution toward generic autonomy but also an occasion for both paratextual and diegetic commentary on the *conte de fées*.

In the stimulating opening article, Jean-Paul Sermain lays out much of what is at stake theoretically in the topic of the collection. Asserting that folk and fairy tales by definition invite reuse and thus anthologization, Sermain contends as well that these practices implicitly refer back to the act of enunciation that produced the detachable tales in the first place. While referring to (and creating) an originary storytelling for their collections, seventeenth- and eighteenth-century writers, Sermain suggests, necessarily effected a transformation of memory, appropriating the past and reworking language. Sermain then examines some of the paradoxical effects of fairy-tale collections. They emphasize both the oral storytelling scene *and* its inscription into print. More specifically, they present the literary fairy tale as an extension of—but also a stranger to—oral storytelling: anthologies and frame devices posit a fundamental similarity between written and oral stories, all the while attracting attention to what the literary tale no longer is. As Sermain astutely observes, such collections and frames generally do not highlight the transformations they effect in the narratives they assemble. Equally revealing about seventeenth- and eighteenth-century fairy-tale collections, according to Sermain, is the conception of the writer they display. No longer content to inscribe oneself in a tradition, the writer is concerned above all with telling what has been excluded from literary discourse.

The next two articles concentrate on late-seventeenth-century collections. Anne Defrance studies how these employ an “aesthetic of the collection,” their reference to writers’ work of compilation and “purification,” and their illustration of a “national patrimony.” As Defrance shows, however, collections and frame narratives in this period use tales to explore characters’ psychology far more than any sort of “popular wisdom.” Defrance then turns to the dialectic between fairy tales and their frame, the result of which, she concludes, is to “overfictionalize” the tales and to “defictionalize” the frame. Jean Mainil focuses on Marie-Jeanne Lhéritier de Villandon’s 1695 anthology *Bigarrures ingénieuses* (aka *Oeuvres meslées*), in which she includes several of her tales alongside a

theory/justification of the genre. Mainil argues that Lhéritier's collection—and her fairy tales in particular—constitutes her unique perspective on the “quarrel of women” that famously opposed Nicholas Boileau and Charles Perrault in 1694. Rather than aligning with one side or the other, Lhéritier proposed a third alternative that she develops in detail through her tale “Les enchantements de l'éloquence.” Both this tale and its frame, Mainil demonstrates, mount a multifaceted defense of women, reading, and the novel.

The next four articles study the uses of the fairy-tale collection in the eighteenth century. Raymonde Robert proposes a twofold typology of frame narratives: on the one hand those that are “static” (a storyteller regaling an assembled audience with tales), and on the other hand those that are “dynamic” (a narrator encountering a series of storytellers who often recount their own adventures). Using Lhéritier's *La tour ténébreuse* (1705) as an illustration of the former variety, Robert asserts that the frame is a pretext for the embedded narratives but that it also allows Lhéritier to reflect critically on medieval literature and her own writing. Through the “dynamic” example of Jean-Paul Bignon's *Les aventures d'Abdalla* (1712–15), Robert contends that the frame and the inserted tales are equally important. She then shows that the difference between the two sorts of frames has a bearing on the conception of the fairy tale's marvelous setting: whereas Lhéritier accentuates its particularity, Bignon assimilates it into an ethical opposition of good versus evil.

Christelle Bahier-Porte examines the thematic unity of the tales in François Péti's *Mille et un jours* (1710–12). Although this collection ostensibly defends the notion of male fidelity, Bahier-Porte argues it is the deferral of desire through storytelling/reading that gives the volume its most fundamental coherence. Freely appropriating and modifying tales from an authentic Arabic manuscript, *Mille et un jours* illustrates both the faithfulness of male suitors and the quest for a happiness that is not of this world but which is nevertheless one to which characters and readers aspire. In a conclusion that could be applied to many eighteenth-century collections, Bahier-Porte declares that the way *Mille et un jours* frames its tales questions their use and purpose. Catherine Langle further examines the unity provided by the eighteenth-century fairy-tale frame through the example of Thomas Gueullette's *Les sultanes de Guzarate* (1732). For Langle, the frame narrative in Gueullette's collection distances readers from wholesale belief in the *merveilleux* with a range of techniques: skeptical authorial notes, the reduction of magic to the oneiric, the organization of tales from the most realistic to the most fantastical, and the opposition between a “true” and a “false” marvelous, among others. According to Langle, through his ironic critique of the marvelous, Gueullette affirms the imaginary powers of language and the primacy of pleasure through reading.

Sophie Latapie turns to the relationship between embedded fairy tales and the frame narrative in the oft-cited but curiously understudied *Magasin des enfans* by Jeanne-Marie LePrince de Beaumont (1758). Latapie demonstrates that the tales are part of a pedagogical system whereby a large compendium of knowledge is presented to children in order to transform them into critically autonomous, “cultivated” readers. Ranging from the most entertaining and magical to the most serious, moralistic, and realistic, the fairy tales of this collection illustrate the pedagogical principles of the dialogues in the frame. The girls in the dialogues become readers by first identifying with fairy-tale characters and then learning critical distance from them. At the same time, they learn to distinguish among various genres and between “good” and “bad” tales before becoming tale-spinners in their own right. Ultimately, Latapie argues against the suggestion by some critics that the dialogue frame in *Magasin des enfans* is a superfluous mechanism to connect the tales and lessons of the volume, claiming instead that it is an integral part of LePrince de Beaumont’s overarching pedagogical strategy.

The final article in this issue of *Féeries* is an ambitious and wide-ranging essay by Jean-François Perrin on what he calls the “anthology effect” in the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century *contes de fées*. As Perrin explains, evoking the period’s anthologies of fairy tales was an important feature of the genre’s self-referentiality. Numerous *conteurs* and *conteuses* employed the “anthology effect” to situate the literary fairy tale vis-à-vis other genres such as the epic, the fable, the novel, and history. But the “anthology effect” could be used in radically different ways. Some writers, such as Crébillon, exploited it to question the genre, while others, notably Gueullette, asserted its stability and portrayed the collection as a tale-producing device. In his commentary, Perrin demonstrates that some eighteenth-century writers (Crébillon again, for instance) made a decidedly political use of this “effect” by underscoring the social dimension of the collection and transmission that precede anthologization. Whatever the uses to which it is put, the “anthology effect” reflects the conviction by fairy-tale writers that the story of the genre’s constitution is itself worthy of collection, preservation, and transmission. But, as Perrin reveals, telling this story also leads writers to question the veracity of their stories, to attest to the difficulty of transmitting them, and to evoke a mythic ur-collection of fairy tales, a sort of Borgesian *aleph* that orders all *contes de fées*. Thus, Perrin shows that seventeenth- and eighteenth-century French writers used their collections of fairy tales to reflect on the nature and limits of literary discourse.

At the very end of this volume readers will find a series of in-depth book reviews and abstracts of each article in both French and English. Alongside the articles, the book reviews provide a valuable overview of the methodologies

and topics in French fairy-tale studies today. But scholars everywhere will benefit enormously from this and upcoming issues of *Féeries*. The topic of the collection as it is addressed in this volume deserves to be pursued, for the French *contes de fées* and other fairy tales alike.

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***Here Be Dragons: A Fantastic Bestiary.*** By Ariane and Christian Delacampagne. Translated by Ariane Delacampagne. Princeton: Princeton UP, 2003. 200 pp. 186 color plates.

This lavishly illustrated, multicultural study of fantastic animals depicted in art spanning over five thousand years covers an ambitious territory. In their introduction, the authors identify three large themes: the symbolic or religious function of fantastic animals; their genesis and their formal transformations; and the ambiguous relationship between man and animal. Beginning with the depiction of animals in sacred art, the work moves to a study of the medieval bestiary and then to a historical overview of various creatures organized by type. From there it offers a discussion of the relationship between diffusion and independent genesis of types, citing certain cultural circumstances that tend to lead to the proliferation of fabulous animals, and concludes with a discussion of modern creations. It purports to be “the first book to explore this subject with such cross-cultural and chronological range” (book jacket), although emphasis leans heavily toward Western art, with solid attention to Middle Eastern traditions and some Asian. Pre-Columbian, Native American, and African art are briefly represented, but only brief, passing references are made to Pacific Island art.

The first chapter (“Symbols, Dreams, Religions”) discusses fantastic animals as “embodiments of the sacred, or . . . intermediaries whose function is to help humanity communicate with the sacred” (18). The discussion, largely focused on ancient cultures and medieval Christianity, of the way these creatures function in “the endless conversation between religion and the sacred” (21), lays a solid foundation. The overview that follows then distinguishes between those animals that have an educational function and those that have a magical function, as repositories of “supernatural energy” (36).

I would like to have seen these crucial distinctions developed in more depth in subsequent chapters, but in chapter 2 (“Inventing a Bestiary”) the authors turn to a historical overview of the medieval bestiary as a way of illustrating “the Aristotelian postulate that all works of art result from some type of imitation” (45). The authors argue that medieval bestiaries of the Christian West result from the “imitation” of erroneous perceptions or misleading descriptions, going back as far as Ctesias of Cnidus (fourth century BC), although the main



source for the Middle Ages was the Hellenistic compilation the *Physiologus* (second century AD). Throughout the Middle Ages, symbolic interpretations of fantastic creatures served as a “basis for Christian moralization while also providing believers with a lexicon that could help them find meaning in the slightest details of daily life” (60). The discussion of bestiaries and the section on medieval travelogues provide a useful introduction to these genres.

The two following chapters (“Unicorns and Human Hybrids” and “Flying Quadrupeds and Dragons”) turn to a sustained discussion of fantastic creatures by type. Although they do not provide an exhaustive list, the authors focus on five “structures”: the unicorn, the animal-headed human (e.g., the Minotaur and Egyptian deities of pharaonic Egypt), the human-headed animal (e.g., the sphinx, the centaur, the siren), the flying quadruped (e.g., Pegasus and the griffin), and the dragon. The discussions are largely structured as chronological catalogs of the various creatures, with special attention given to diffusion. The territory is tantalizing, the limitations being twofold. First, one would like to see more application of the foundational discussion in chapter 1 of the role of the sacred and the way fantastic creatures negotiate between the natural and the supernatural. Second, the brief discussions would be considerably enriched by more specific discussions of the illustrations as a way to draw implications from the large framing ideas. A few discussions do move to important unfolding of larger issues. Especially insightful, for instance, is the section on the medieval *Lady with Unicorn* tapestries. Thought-provoking as well is the authors’ speculation that the genesis of the flying quadruped is related to “the appearance of the centralized state embodied by the figure of the all-powerful leader, exercising strong spiritual as well as temporal power” (120). The section on differences between Eastern and Western dragons is also engaging, discussing the Western dragon as the embodiment of evil to be vanquished, while the Eastern dragon represents power, wisdom, prosperity, and perfection. The authors see the dragon as capturing the essential quality of fantastic animals, the possibilities for ambivalence whereby “the dragon reconciles the most irreconcilable opposites” (138).

The last two chapters provide an important analysis of the genesis of fantastic creatures as reactions to specific cultural circumstances. Chapter 5 (“Influences or Coincidences?”) looks at the relationship between borrowing and cultural norms (cultural recycling) on the one hand, and psychological factors, on the other. Borrowings (such as the assimilation of Islamic influences in Christian art) are complex but logically comprehensible. More elusive are explanations for the occurrence of certain creatures, such as the dragon, in cultures with no contact. Here the authors look to researchers who attempt to establish an “inventory of the basic formal structures that are at work while drawing” (154). These are structures for formal possibilities inscribed in each

human brain, with different cultures favoring a selected number (much as children are born with the innate ability to learn any language—the process being the atrophy of certain possibilities as much as the reinforcing of those particular to one language). Thus one sees in fantastic animals of diverse cultures both foreignness as well as “the unity of the human spirit underlying such diverse artistic manifestations” (158). A fascinating illustration of the dynamic involved in artistic creation is Picasso’s debt to African art in his development of cubism, and his famous statement that he knew nothing about African art. This was not a denial of the influence of African works but rather a statement that his work was not mere imitation: an awakening of previously submerged perception of “certain possibilities in the realm of formal expression that are common to all humanity” (157).

This chapter continues to explore the processes by which imaginary creatures emerge by examining the relationship in Western art between certain particularly rich revivals of fantastic animals and periods of cultural upheaval, most notably the “collective psychosis” (162) of the late Middle Ages, and the tumultuous period beginning in 1789 with the French Revolution and the accompanying crisis of religious belief. The subsequent “convulsions of Romanticism” (168) are exemplified in artists as varied as Goya and Blake and, with the added explorations of the unconscious, move into the symbolist and later dadaist and surrealist movements. The authors conclude that it is “crisis—at once social, moral, and religious—[that] was the cradle of modernity” (168).

The final chapter (“The Fantastic Today”) is a pessimistic look at the implications of imaginary creatures of the West produced in recent decades. As underpinning, the authors cite Georges Bataille’s “prophetic” ideas in *The Accursed Share* (1949) about the loss of spiritual aspirations in a consumer society and the subsequent alienation (as described by Marx and Marcuse) produced by a world fixated on things and on the here and now. In looking at such various genres as body art, folkloric revivals, corporate logos, internet art, cinema, and recent fine arts, the authors note that “ancient, medieval, and traditional mythologies continue . . . to offer a formidable set of images and symbols that can fire the imagination” (177), but these are now more influenced by the vapid media industry than the sacred, offering “far less power to make us dream than do the creations of the great medieval, Aztec, Persian, Chinese, or African artists” (189).

Given the view that “a shoddy supernatural—half frightening, half entertaining—has supplanted religion” (193) in the West, the authors’ conclusion regarding the political implications of this deterioration is not surprising. Juxtaposed with Muslim, Hindu, and black African revivals of traditional religions, representations of Western fantastic creatures reflect the global confrontation that implicates the “destiny of all humanity” (193).

This conclusion is dramatic but unfortunately not illustrated by representations of the Muslim, Hindu, and black African revivals alluded to. This abbreviated suggestion of a complex idea reflects the most problematic aspect of this work. Large, richly suggestive ideas, issues, and categories are introduced throughout but sometimes are not developed. To be fair, this is probably an unavoidable result of attempting a project of this complexity and sophistication in such a limited space, a constraint that the authors readily admit. Furthermore, although substantial, well researched, and intelligent, this work is not intended as an academic text. It is adequately indexed, but it includes no footnotes and only a minimal bibliography. However, the larger issues identified point to important and exciting directions for further serious inquiry, both by students of the genre as well as a general audience. *Here Be Dragons* is a fascinating, sometimes tantalizing, gorgeously produced, and consistently engaging work.

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***Das Buch, das wir sind: Zur Poetik der Kinder- und Hausmärchen, gesammelt durch die Brüder Grimm.*** By Jens E. Sennewald. Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2004. 375 pp.

Jens Sennewald's hypothesis is that a close connection exists between the form (*Gestalt*) of a book and its reception (*Wirkungsgeschichte*) (15). Born of perceptions that have grown out of book history studies, his hypothesis leads directly to the Grimms' own framing of their collection with a lengthy explanatory preface. Sennewald treats the preface in terms of its conscious intention rather than in terms of its essential content. With this novel angle of entry into the Grimms' *Kinder- und Hausmärchen*, he then resituates the *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* within traditional framed-tale collections like those of Gian Francesco Straparola and Giambattista Basile.

Sennewald's tactic may surprise readers of *Marvels & Tales*, who have learned that the Grimm collection differs from those earlier collections precisely because it is not framed. Sennewald, however, postulates a theoretical *mentalité* frame for the *Kinder- und Hausmärchen*, and does so with reference to a visual frame designed and executed by Philipp Otto Runge for one of his paintings, the *Lehrstunde der Nachtigall* (82–92). Runge's elaborate gold trompe l'oeil surround for the *Lehrstunde* (reproduced 84, 91) both repeats and extends the picture's content. This, Sennewald claims, is precisely the function performed by Wilhelm Grimm's preface to the *Kinder- und Hausmärchen*.

Sennewald's reasoning requires discussion of Straparola's preface to the *Piacevoli notti*. He is one of the rare authorities to acknowledge and emphasize the fictionality of Straparola's frame-tale situation (95–96). As is well known,

Wilhelm Grimm used Straparola's frame tale to support and further his own agenda when he wrote: "Straparola got [the stories], as it says in the preface to the second volume (before the sixth night) from the mouths of ten young women and [he] expressly declared that they were not his own [creation]" (cited 95). Sennewald finds it amazing that Grimm would abstract precisely this passage as credible proof of authenticity, when he had characterized parts of the collection as not only indecent (*unanständig*) but also obscene (*unzüchtig*) to the point of a shamelessness that couldn't be excused even, as Grimm continued, by the looser social standards current in Italy at that time. Grimm's reason, Sennewald concludes, is that he wished to align his own collection with Straparola's, the oldest available European collection that included folk and fairy tales. Sennewald provides concrete parallels for his view: Grimm's reasoning allowed him to present himself, like Straparola, as simply a gatherer and disseminator of oral tales. However, this also required Grimm to overlook Straparola's subsequent statements claiming ownership of the stories (96).

Sennewald understands Straparola's ten fictive narrators in more sophisticated terms as a "poetological component of his creation" (97). His assumption frees him to pursue the question of why Wilhelm Grimm misread Straparola's preface. He concludes that it is a case of (Freudian) misrepresentation (*Entstellung*) and suppression (*Verdrängung* 98). The majority of scholars in the nineteenth, twentieth, and twenty-first centuries have likewise accepted Straparola's fiction as a fundamental folkloric truth, so Grimm is not alone in this misunderstanding.

According to Sennewald, Grimm's misperception of Straparola produced a noble result: in the Grimms' texts poetic suppression functions constructively, making their original liveliness visible in the reconstructed mythological text (98). After examining similar questions in Basile's *Lo cunto de li cunti*, Sennewald concludes that the "we" of the *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* preface that referred to the Grimm brothers was meant to be read as an "*Instrument einer Poesie*," which—like the female contributor(s)—guided their pens (101). Central to the Grimms' project was the assumed authenticity of other "collectors'" tales. Accordingly, the "obvious" relationship of "the French tales with the Italian and the German" as well as visible evidence of their undeniable independence from those traditions "proves undeniably" that their content was taken from oral tradition (qtd. 101).

Neither Jacob nor Wilhelm Grimm had access to the kinds of data that have emerged in the last generation in conjunction with the study of book and publishing history. The scholarship of Manfred Grätz, for instance, has brought forward hundreds of details incontrovertibly outlining publishing paths that French tales followed into Germany in the eighteenth century. The

previous stage of distribution via print involved the role of sixteenth-century Italian tales that were translated and published in France in the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries, which is currently under study.

Sennewald continues his penetrating discussions of Straparola and Basile, with analyses of the *Volksmärchen* of Musäus, who also claimed not to have altered the tales he published (103–4). The second half of *Das Buch, das wir sind* comprises close analyses of four Grimm tales, three of which have received relatively little attention: KHM 32, “Der gescheidte Hans”; KHM 118, “Die drei Feldscherer”; and KHM 86, “Der Fuchs und die Gänse.” The fourth, KHM 200, “Der goldene Schlüssel,” has attracted much more theoretical consideration.

By the end of Sennewald’s study, it is clear that the “wir” of the title refers to the two Grimms along with female contributors, who together represent the “Volk in seiner Breite” (346). Sennewald’s book is demanding of the reader. Some sections require multiple readings, which even then do not always lead to a clear understanding of his intent. That can be said of many academic studies, however, not many of which attain the degree of originality that Sennewald achieves. In his addition to the vast oeuvre of works devoted to the Grimms’ *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* he sets a valuable new direction.

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***An Inquiry into the Purposes of Speculative Fiction—Fantasy and Truth.*** By Graham Dunstan Martin. *Studies in Comparative Literature* 58. Lewiston, Queenston, Lampeter: Edwin Mellen Press, 2003. xxii + 284 pp.

This *Inquiry* argues that the best imaginative narratives of any era challenge prevailing modes of thought. Martin uses the term “ultrafiction” to define such narratives, which are nonrealistic and include literary modes that are not commonly considered together, such as fairy tales and science fiction. The author not only condemns the undervaluing of such fiction by most literary critics and theorists but also claims that “if a theory produces boring results, then it can not possibly be true” (146, 150). In accordance with these principles, Martin generally disparages realistic fiction as well as exclusively metafictional works produced in the wake of the French *nouveau roman*. Literary critics singled out include Todorov and Frye, who are blamed for focusing too narrowly on purely literary and textual features of imaginative works and for sealing them off from real human experience.

For Martin, “speculative fiction” (ultrafiction) imagines scenarios that transcend normal reality, but such works always reflect the real world and encourage readers to consider psychic, philosophical, and metaphysical truths or assumptions that we normally pass over without reflection. Such fiction

remains forever ambiguous in its meaning and capable of endless and multiple interpretation. It is not limited to science fiction (SF) and modern works of heroic fantasy (FF) but includes religious and other myths, folktales, and fairy tales as well as later revisions of such archaic narratives. Given such a wide scope, Martin's choice of texts is necessarily eclectic and partial, although he focuses on writers and works that may be relatively unfamiliar to many readers: "I do not wish to offer you the customary parade of the usual masters, such as Tolkien, Borges, Mary Shelley or Ursula LeGuin" (xx), he explains. Borges and LeGuin are frequently alluded to and given a few pages of sustained analysis in the penultimate chapter, but otherwise Martin's subjects are a miscellany of works, including Genesis, Plato's *Laws*, the *1001 Nights*, Perrault's "Bluebeard" and its revisions, Kieslowski's film *Le double vie de Véronique*, and the work of Stanislav Lem. Martin's career as a lecturer in French literature at Edinburgh has determined his focus on the French fabulists Jules Supervielle and Michel Tournier, the latter of whom he regards as "probably France's most important living writer," one who "works quite deliberately with myth and the fantastic" (118).

The work, which contains thirteen chapters and an afterword, begins with a preface, "The Train in the Mind," in which Professor Roger Cardinal (University of Kent) notes that the world exceeds our ability to comprehend it linguistically and yet "our linguistic potency exceeds the dimensions of our material experience . . . and its propensity to deviate from enshrined notions of objective truth is staggering" (xiii). This paradoxical combination of ultimate uncertainty and mystery with endless linguistic fabrication is the domain of ultrafiction, which Martin defines in his foreword and further justifies in "Why Fantasy?" (chapter 1). Chapter 2 examines a wide variety of Bluebeard narratives from Charles Perrault to Italo Calvino, Angela Carter, and the Grimm brothers, and chapter 3 similarly summarizes and then exfoliates "Le Grand Louis" (Tall Louis), a folktale collected in Jean Markale's *Contes populaires de toute la France*, with literary and speculative excursions on the significance of the number three and the motif of the transformational chase (AT 313, 314). After considering various interpretations of Sheherazade's situation in chapter 4, Martin discusses possible origins of the double figure (ch. 5) and some examples in Kipling and Kieslowski (ch. 6). Chapter 7 considers fantasy narratives by Supervielle ("Les suites d'une course" ["The Sequel to a Horse-Race"]) and Tournier ("La fugue du petit Poucet" ["Little Thumbkin Runs Away"], "La Famille Adam," and "La Mère Noël") together with a discussion of Tournier's own remarks on fiction in *Le vent paraclet*. Chapter 8, "Advice on How to Ruin a Novel, Or, Modernism, Realism and the Fantastic," combines criticism of realism and the *nouveau roman* with analyses of Emmanuel Carrère's *La moustache* and Christopher

Priest's *The Glamour*, novels that transcend mere metafiction and remain open to multiple interpretations, according to Martin. In Chapter 9 ("How Big Is the Mind?"), Martin champions fantasy novels by contemporary English writers (Iain Banks, Michael Holdstock, and Jonathan Carroll) that raise questions about the powers and dangers of the human imagination. Chapters 10 and 11 examine and ultimately condemn the ideal of Utopia, using writers from Plutarch and Plato to B. F. Skinner and Marge Piercy. In his final two chapters, Martin considers the importance of awe (Burke's and Kant's sublime) in fantasy and science fiction. Chapter 12 instances relevant works by Asimov, Arthur C. Clarke, Borges, LeGuin, Hesse, and David Masson and includes a brief comment on Martin's own novel *Time-Slip*. The final chapter, "Fantasy as Philosophy, or, Stanislaw Lem," examines four of the fifteen chapters of Lem's *A Perfect Vacuum*, a collection of reviews of imaginary novels. A conclusion uses Lem's life and work to validate the philosophical and metaphysical power of fantasy and science fiction. Martin's Afterword sums up his argument for the value of ultrafiction: "compared with 'realist' fictions, FF relates to reality in more ways than they do, and 'refers' to the world in a less reductive, more comprehensive manner. The function of SF and FF is to stimulate the mind to new understanding, not to rehearse the already known. That it revolves in a world of imaginary or speculative events is no objection to its having a bearing on truth. For there can be no doubt the Universe must include things now thought to be impossible" (262).

This brief overview may help readers locate those sections most relevant to their own interests. Unfortunately, despite its focus on revaluing nonrealistic fiction, the book is an overly digressive, poorly organized collection of plot summaries, analyses, and interpretations. The selection of books and writers frequently seems arbitrary (e.g., Why choose only four sections of Lem's *A Perfect Vacuum*, and why these four sections? What governs the choice of modern heroic fiction and science fiction texts throughout individual chapters?)

As a professor of French literature well acquainted with the hypotheses and speculations of postmodern science who has published in the fields of philosophy and aesthetics and has written fantasy himself, Graham Dunstan Martin seems an ideal author for an *Inquiry* into speculative fiction. Too often, however, general observations are overly casual, judgments overly idiosyncratic. Martin dismisses text-centered, stylistic literary analysis and interpretation as tedious and relatively insignificant, but his own interpretations are so open-ended and narrowly thematic or parabolic that they are not always compelling or satisfying. His style sometimes takes informality too far, resembling when it does so a series of lecture notes rather than a sustained argument. On the whole, Martin's expertise is not as effectively utilized as a reader might

wish: despite his strong apologia for speculative fiction, metaphysical speculation and personal taste too often substitute for literary interpretation.

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***La seconde préciosité: Floraison des conteuses de 1690 à 1756.*** By Sophie Raynard. Tübingen: Gunter Narr, 2002. 512 pp.

The title of Sophie Raynard's study of the French fairy tale is indicative of her central objective: to tie the late-seventeenth- and early-eighteenth-century fairy-tale vogue to the precious movement of earlier decades. That she calls the fairy-tale vogue "second preciousity" is a strategy to firmly inscribe fairy tales authored by women within the precious movement, pointing furthermore to the continuation of this movement beyond the temporal confines literary historians traditionally have given it. Raynard carries out her objective by, on the one hand, comparing female-authored fairy tales to the tales of other precious writers, and on the other, by contrasting these tales with those written by Charles Perrault, whom Raynard decidedly characterizes as not being a precious fairy-tale writer. The first section of the book seeks to redefine preciousity, and it considers the precious context in which the French literary fairy tale emerged. Raynard then moves into a stylistic and thematic analysis of female-authored tales in order to justify their belonging to the larger precious movement. In the third section Raynard situates both preciousity and the literary fairy tale within the sociocultural context of the period, and in the fourth section she concentrates on the question of feminism.

Raynard opens her book with a discussion of the methodological problems related to defining preciousity, providing a critical overview of scholarship on the subject. Attempting to delimit what would constitute a "precious woman," Raynard concludes that one must consider the historical, social, literary, aesthetic, and political aspects of the movement in order to fully appreciate its significance within and impact on French society. Raynard then provides short biographies of all of the female authors she will consider in the book, which include Mme d'Aulnoy, Mlle L'Héritier, Mlle Bernard, Mlle de La Force, Mme de Murat, Mme Durand, Mme d'Auneuil, Mme de Lintot, Mme de Villeneuve, Mlle de Lubert, Mme L'Evêque, and Mme Leprince de Beaumont. These biographies tie the tellers to the larger precious movement from a historical perspective, taking into account relations between the *conteuses* and between the latter and prominent salon women and writers such as Madeleine de Scudéry, Mme de Villedieu, and Mme de Lambert. Toward the end of the section Raynard considers precious women's and women writers' connection to the Quarrel of the Ancients and the Moderns, contrasting women's modernity with that of Perrault.



The second part of the book is primarily a thematic and stylistic study that looks at the ways in which female-authored fairy tales could be considered precious texts. Raynard's analysis moves from more general issues, such as the importance of the art of pleasing and the "aesthetics of gentleness," to more detailed analyses of the use in precious and fairy-tale language of stylistic devices, such as adverbs ending in *-ment*, the superlative, hyperboles, gradation, neologisms, personification, and allegory. Raynard points out that women use the marvelous, and in particular metamorphosis, more than Perrault. While metamorphosis has multiple functions in the works of women writers, Raynard argues that Perrault uses it primarily in an ironic way that is subject to the logic of the narration. Raynard suggests that these different uses of the marvelous correspond to Perrault's more realistic approach to the genre, on the one hand, and to women writers' desire to create ideal universes in which women enjoy an improved status and there is freedom in love, on the other. Regarding the narrative structure of the tale, Raynard concentrates on the tales' endings, arguing that Perrault's happy endings revolve around material success, whereas women writers hesitate between idealism and cynicism about, in particular, happiness in marriage. Raynard then compares the values of Perrault and his female contemporaries. The values put forth in Perrault's tales revolve around social success, whereas those advanced by female authors often question traditional values and social norms, particularly as they regard women. Another main difference between Perrault and women fairy-tale writers is that love is negligible in Perrault, whereas it is a necessary theme in female-authored tales.

In the third and fourth sections of the book, Raynard considers her corpus of tales from the perspective of the limits of gender roles in the areas of education, genre, morality, and marriage. She associates women's aspirations to preciousity with their desire for knowledge, and she situates the fairy-tale genre within the larger context of genres available to women, such as the novel, epistolary writing, and memoirs. Through their writing, precious women challenged—in both the novel and the fairy tale—patriarchal institutions such as education and marriage. Raynard considers whether we might consider writing by precious women subversive. By highlighting the latent subversive content of tales and women writers' "techniques of camouflage," Raynard concludes that, although the tales and more generally precious writing may not represent a call to action, they incite women to reflect on their condition.

This is a well-documented and informative study that convincingly ties the fairy tale to preciousity. While I found this book to be a valuable contribution to fairy-tale studies, I felt that it could have been streamlined in order to better highlight the author's major arguments concerning the relation between

preciosity and female-authored tales. I also feel that, because Perrault was taken as the male fairy-tale writer par excellence, this study implicitly overstated differences between elite men and women. Inclusion of analyses of tales by Jean de Mailly, whose style and sense of worldliness resembled that of many of the women fairy-tale writers, would have complicated Raynard's argument on this particular issue. These remarks notwithstanding, Sophie Raynard's book provides a nice overview of the writers, issues, and contexts of the early modern French fairy tale, which is rightfully situated within the larger context of the precious movement.

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***Framing a National Narrative: The Legend Collections of Peter Christen Asbjørnsen.*** By Marte Hvam Hult. Detroit: Wayne State UP, 2003. 260 pp.

In the disciplines of folklore and fairy-tale studies, the name Peter Christen Asbjørnsen is intimately connected with that of Jørgen Moe. As coauthors of one of the earliest experiments in folklore fieldwork and publishing, the classic nineteenth-century tale collection *Norske folkeeventyr* (1841), Asbjørnsen and Moe have heretofore stood inseparable, seemingly indistinguishable, in the annals of folklore's historiography.

One of Marte Hvam Hult's prime objectives in her recent book, *Framing a National Narrative: The Legend Collections of Peter Christen Asbjørnsen*, is to focus critical attention on Asbjørnsen himself and, more specifically, on his independent collection of Norwegian supernatural legends, published in 1845–48 as *Norske huldreeventyr og folksagen*. As Hult indicates early on, her study seeks to “‘dust off’ Asbjørnsen and his legend collection and position it as a text of great importance in the establishment of the Norwegian national narrative, a critical link in the development of the modern Norwegian novel, and a work relevant in its themes to modern Norwegian society” (15–16). Indeed, the strength of this book resides in Hult's attention to Asbjørnsen's textual practices, most especially his experimentation with narrative voice and the representation of Norwegian dialects, and his use of frame narration—attention that is sure to spark new or renewed interest in *Norske huldreeventyr*.

Inspired by the Grimms' German translation of Thomas Crofton Croker's *Fairy Legends and Traditions of the South of Ireland* (1825), Asbjørnsen crafted his own work from composites of stories remembered, collected, or “contributed” by friends and colleagues. Hult argues convincingly that the framing passages Asbjørnsen developed for this work serve at least two significant functions. First, they draw readers into an imagined relation with a frame narrator—an urban Norwegian who serves as an educated, skeptical, and sometimes condescending guide to Norway's rural topography and people, customs

and beliefs, dialects and stories. Second, these highly descriptive and firmly localized framing passages give the work an aura of verisimilitude—using the same techniques employed by storytellers when narrating legends—to render this national metanarrative persuasive and believable.

It is unfortunate that Hult limits the reach of her study by assuming from the outset that her readers are already familiar with both Norwegian literature in general and Asbjørnsen's corpus in particular. Despite the author's repeated declarations of Asbjørnsen's deserved place among the literary giants of nineteenth-century Norway, it takes readers a fairly long while to get a clear sense of what makes *Norske huldreeventyr* so compelling. Instead, the first two chapters of Hult's study would seem to continue the established tradition of marginalizing Asbjørnsen's solo efforts, engaging with, first, a survey of scholarship on nationalism in Norway and beyond, and second, the legacy of Asbjørnsen and Moe's collaborations. There is no question that these matters are relevant to the project as a whole, but the focus, thesis, and promise of the book lack clarity in these early chapters.

One also begins to suspect that Hult's engagement with literary and cultural theory—particularly recent scholarship on print culture and nationalism, narratology and genre theory, folklore and critical ethnography—is not as deep or as nuanced as it could be. For example, Hult frames her study with clear statements of her commitment to textual analysis, on the one hand, and examination of “the cultural *work*” performed by Asbjørnsen's text “at the time of its reception and in the decades following” (194), on the other. Nevertheless, a number of self-contradictory statements (slips, perhaps) make it unclear whether the author herself views the print entextualization of oral traditions as an ideologically charged construct—a crafted representation of storytelling events intended to “reveal”/delineate national character—or as an unclouded mirror of culture. “It was to be Jørgen Moe and Peter Christen Asbjørnsen,” she writes in Chapter 2, without a hint of irony, “who would shape the Norwegian folk tales into an incomparable style that reflected the realities of the Norwegian national landscape and character” (27). Fifteen pages later, Hult acknowledges that the tales “selected for inclusion were those that conformed, or could be made to conform, to Moe and Asbjørnsen's ideas about what constituted the uniquely Norwegian” (42). In a similarly self-contradictory fashion, Hult's intriguing analysis of the racist underpinnings of Asbjørnsen's *huldreeventyr*—specifically the “created image” of the Gypsy as a dangerous ethnic Other (132)—is marred by the unsupported assertion, just one page later, that in such stories “it is evident that Asbjørnsen is not only relating legends but also describing actual practices and belief systems that were still extant in the countryside of his time” (133). Hult thus hovers on the verge of insight to the circular logic of nationalistically motivated, nineteenth-

century folklore collections. Shaped by preexisting visions of national identities and differences, crafted to stand as “authentic” representations, claiming an authoritative and objective perspective, these early and frequently experimental collections continue to be read as direct reflections of cultural identities and worldviews.

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**Corpus.** By Ann Hamilton. Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art. North Adams, MA. 2003–4.

“The secret power of the folktale lies not in the motifs it employs, but in the manner in which it uses them—that is, in its form,” wrote Max Lüthi in his introduction to *The European Folktale*. *Corpus*, a haunting, site-specific installation by artist Ann Hamilton commissioned by the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art, eerily embodies the art of the folktale as enumerated by Lüthi in so many of his writings, but particularly in the gorgeously persuasive volume *The European Folktale*. The half-magical, elliptically formal *Corpus* is divided into three spaces—a version of beginning, middle, and end—and turns you into the character of a sensual story. The story is familiar, but you’ve never seen it quite like this before. An oversized stairway leads to a glowing pink room of hope. Next, a tiny black room of threat. And at last, up toward a cathedral of light. Voices, paper, machines. An expectation of transformation.

The chapter headings of *The European Folktale* refer to the formal elements of the art of folktale: “One-Dimensionality,” “Depthlessness,” “Abstract Style,” “Isolation and Universal Interconnection,” “Sublimation and All-Inclusiveness.” As literary interpretations of the aesthetics of fairy tales these have always struck me as perfect, and it is through their lens that I write my own novels. And they easily, at least to this viewer, refer to Hamilton’s *Corpus*. When I stepped into the luminous, liturgical hall of *Corpus*, and immediately—as in a spell—thought, “Lüthi Lüthi,” exhilaration set in. It was the exhilaration of recognition, what some readers of fairy tales call “early rapture.”

*Corpus* embodies a narrative style that, like Lüthi’s analysis of form, becomes “a sort of phenomenology.” Strictly formal, both are also strangely emotional too. Reading Lüthi, one feels the monolithic in the miniature; one feels the miniature in the monolithic in *Corpus*. I suppose in some ways this art review is an exploration of how an art installation can be a fairy tale, and how a literary analysis of fairy tales can be an art form.

I. Once upon a time, there was a vast hall lined with windows. The windows were dressed in pink silk, and the light that came in held promise. Above, from the ceiling, heaving machines sigh down onionskin pages. Pure,

they float through the air; dirty, they lie on the ground, piled at the room's edges like bodies. Like some divine reverse, pneumatic devices lower with voices coming from them, sometimes in unison, sometimes not, and what are they saying? (They're bell-shaped, like creepy, oversized versions of arms for Marina Warner's girl with bells for her hands in her retelling of "The Armless Maiden.") You must press your ear in to discover—and as soon as you do, the speaker floats off toward the ceiling, taking its hushed confidences from you. You wish to follow. You walk through this airy onionskin forest, sometimes coming across other women, children, and men. Through a trail you devise among machines and voices and paper, through pink light you go. Toward the wall just ahead, toward a portal, a hole. From this magical world, do you need escape?

"Curiosity, or a sense of transgressing limits grips the person who comes across the trace of an otherworld being," writes Lüthi of one-dimensionality. As the onionskin paper falls, viewers of *Corpus* tentatively reach down to touch them. I saw at least one person furtively scrawl, then hide her writing in a corner underneath a huge pile of pages. I resisted the temptation—out of fear?—to go see what she'd written. Lifted up by this strange, mechanized world, seemingly governed by those in unison, I was also tentative, frightened. I knew I was meant to walk toward the end wall. I was meant to enter the next room. The machines continued their labor above, sending empty pages that sometimes landed upon my head. The machines that had voices sometimes got alarmingly close—I resisted an urge to console them; I did not want to strike other museum-goers as strange. But I watched as they too peered at the wires, and leaned toward them with hope, tinged by fear. Yet, as in a folktale, we museum-goers existed side by side with these strange contraptions and in this supernatural world; and "[i]t is in this sense that we may speak of the one-dimensionality (*Eindimensionalität*) of the folktale."

II. Along the path is a doorway, and it leads to a room. The room looks forbidden, but we are meant to go in; and once in, we feel trapped. This is a depthless room, for it is very dark. The room is small—or it seems smaller than it is, perhaps?—and the room is filled with real mechanical threat. Or is it filled, rather, only with air, a dark air that mechanical arms bring about, like the dark wing of a bird, or disembodied machine? Armlike devices swing from the ceiling, and swing fast. Women's voices, atonal but high, in contrast (or union?) with that low, ominous ceiling. But is the room small or is it large? Is the ceiling high or is it low? You're in a Wonderland, it seems, and dimensions collapse. Sounds emerge from the arms or the ceiling, and the sounds, like the arms, swing toward you and away. The sound is near. The mechanical arms go about and about. People enter the room and cling to its edges, or quickly traverse and glance back—curious, scared—from the stairway beyond. This is

where we could end if we did not go on; here in the thick of the bad forest of witches. Or of lovely friends? Those voices: ethereal if also alarming.

This dark, scary room is not so much an environment where we experience our own reality as it is a temporary place to which we've been banished, a "depthless world" that also lacks "the depth of time." And "with mechanical precision" viewers alight on the single "right course of action": leaving the room. No one spends much time in there, though sometimes people leave the room to go back to the pink room (where it's safe), but then inevitably they skitter back through the arm-room because it is the only, the right, path. This dark room "represents spiritual or psychological distance in terms of physical separation" from the airy room we've just left. But alas, our arrival and departure hold no proof of our own cleverness! We've been impelled merely to "act with composure," whatever we're secretly feeling. Characters in fairy tales don't generally exist to express emotions; likewise in a museum we self-contain. This room is one thing. It is dark, it has arms (like Baba Yaga's hut they swivel around and alarm). The folktale "metamorphoses interlayered reality (*das Ineinander*) and sequential reality (*das Nacheinander*) into juxtaposed reality (*das Nebeneinander*). With admirable consistency it projects the materials of the most varied spheres onto one and the same plane." We've left the air for the blackened, the onion forest for the arm forest. We want to go back but we know we can't. We depart.

III. In the end, we're back at the beginning. For now it's words swinging around my head, typed out on the wall, up here in the atmosphere. At last I'm free from the mechanical arms and now I'm above the pink room where, if I choose, I can lean over the balcony—a princess, a king—watching new travelers come . . . but where am I? What do I know? I know nothing except where I am, which is up here, up above, in a church or a balcony or kingdom or heaven or floating room. I crane my head around, aching to read what's being typed out, projected, upon the walls.

i n t h e b e g i n n i n g

This is a space full of absence. This is where the story begins, but it's also the end. Some people are sitting in pews. Something's being transcribed in a circle. In the beginning there was an end that is a beginning—and here we have black and white (white walls, white benches, black, inky words) and also the pink rising up from below, and the memory of the total dark we've just left.

As in a folktale, we've been conveyed to this final place, to this end that is a beginning (Hamilton's "forever after"). The means of transportation was frequent and took us where we wanted to be—up here, up above, we could see it as soon as we entered that very first room. And here, in this silent castle, "only what is essential to the plot is mentioned; nothing is stated for its own sake, and nothing is amplified. As a rule only one attribute goes with each

noun”: a hall bathed in pink, a box of swinging arms, a balcony, a journey, arrival. “The world is captured in a word” (the beginning).

As Lüthi says of folktales, *Corpus*'s abstract stylization gives it that luminous, incredible sensation. Throughout this installation, an “astonishing insensitivity to the distance between the everyday world and the ‘other’ world” is paired with an astonishing sense of isolation. In *Corpus* strangers at a museum “meet, associate, and part; there is no sustained relationship between them.” We interact, but as participants—not as known creatures of Earth. We do not express interest in one another. We do not know what others feel. Yet this isolation is oddly fulfilling; and while we take away from the installation no sense of anything learned, particularly, we share something more. We’ve suffered “not the product of a wild imagination” but rather a visionary, confining expanse. Like a fairy tale, art.

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