

10-1-2004

Reviews

Marvels & Tales Editors

Recommended Citation

Editors, Marvels & Tales. "Reviews." *Marvels & Tales* 18.2 (2004). Web. <<http://digitalcommons.wayne.edu/marvels/vol18/iss2/13>>.

REVIEWS

Old Deccan Days, or Hindoo Fairy Legends. By Mary Frere. Edited with an introduction by Kirin Narayan. ABC-CLIO Classic Folk and Fairy Tales. Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2002. 261 pp.

Folktales from Northern India. By William Crooke and Pandit Ram Gharib Chaube. Edited and with an introduction by Sadhana Naithani. ABC-CLIO Classic Folk and Fairy Tales. Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2002. 427 pp.

The two volumes under review are part of a series from ABC-CLIO, Classic Folk and Fairy Tales, under the editorship of the ever-zealous Jack Zipes. The series, according to the publisher, “brings back to life [some] key anthologies of traditional tales from the golden age of folklore discovery,” the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. I recognized the title *Old Deccan Days*; I had a copy, published in 1897 in Albany, New York. Other readers may remember it as an aging volume on a library shelf; as Kirin Narayan says in her introduction, “By now every library with a substantial South Asian or folktale collection has a copy of *Old Deccan Days*,” which has also been many times translated to other languages (vii). The new series “provides a freshly typeset but otherwise virtually unaltered edition of a classic work and each is enhanced by an authoritative introduction by a top scholar.” Though both volumes offer old wine in new bottles, they differ in materials and intention.

Kirin Narayan’s detailed and comprehensive introduction to *Old Deccan Days* identifies it as “the outcome of a remarkable collaboration.” Mary Frere, daughter of the British governor of Bombay, wrote down stories told by her servant, Anna Liberata de Souza, and published them in 1868, with her notes on the teller and her father’s ethnographic commentary. Kirin Narayan discusses the tales and Mary Frere’s editing; she recounts the unexpected success of the book. She then reconstructs the biography of the teller and points out a recurrent

theme in her tales: “working for a living—after all, this is the substance of the relationship between herself and Mary Frere” (xvi). In a third section, she explains the role of “the famous and well-connected Sir Bartle Frere” in fostering the publication of his daughter’s book. Through his introduction, he put the tales “to the service of the larger colonial project of typifying and generalizing about India” (xxi). Then Kirin Narayan discusses Mary Frere, “salvaging stories that were being distorted or forgotten” (xxiv), and her challenge to others to collect in India. The conclusion of the introduction proves that “*Old Deccan Days* is a groundbreaking and deeply original book” (xxvii). The twenty-four tales themselves are eminently readable, the more, I think, because their Victorian vocabulary causes a reader to relax into a childlike receptiveness.

Folktales from Northern India also reveals the collaborative role of an Indian subaltern with a colonial officer, but it is far more of a discovery. The book presents a collection of 363 Indian folktale texts, published originally in the periodicals *North Indian Notes and Queries* and *The Indian Antiquary* from 1892 on. The editor was the most prominent of British colonial folklorists in India, William Crooke. Crooke’s previously unrecognized Indian collaborator, Pandit Ram Gharib Chaube, transcribed and translated the texts. In her revelatory introduction, Sadhana Naithani presents this scholar for the first time, establishing Chaube as “an unusually prolific scholar,” linguist, translator, and collector of thousands of bits of folkloric information. It was Chaube who enabled Crooke to make “a systematic collection of folktales” (xxxi). Yet Chaube—the creative subaltern working for the civil servant—has remained obscure till now. The relation of the two men, the way the tales were recorded, the context of Anglo-Indian folkloristics, and the issues that arise from the long invisibility of this material would make this book an essential contribution to anthropology, literary history, and cultural studies, as well as the history of folklore, even if it did not contain such fascinating narratives. The editor also gives the history of the two periodicals, in which the narrator, collector, place, and caste are always recorded. “This systematic record of narrators and places,” she modestly writes, “is not a characteristic of colonial folklore scholarship . . .” (xxviii). The magnitude and variety of the Crooke-Chaube collection is remarkable, and the tales are a pleasure to read. Crooke’s annotations for some of the pieces (“This is the usual faithful animal cycle” [200]) illustrate his zeal. If analyzed, these tales could, of course, be integrated into a larger electronic index of Indian narratives. Meanwhile a scholarly reader needs to be warned that such annotations as there are lie within the same historical frame as the tale texts.

These two books, perhaps more than others in the new ABC-CLIO series, constitute a very significant contribution to the history of folkloristics. They are different from those folktale books that have been criticized for contribut-

ing to “the reduction, fixing, and, ultimately, containment of difference within the context of popular multicultural politics” (Kimberly J. Lau, “Serial logic: Folklore and Difference in the Age of Feel-Good Multiculturalism,” *Journal of American Folklore* 113 [2000]: 71). They point rather to a historical fact: folklore was collected to help create a conception of Indian national identity, which would be useful in colonial domination. Now we assume that such a use is dead. To the extent, however, that the books are “meant to serve as sources for storytellers,” as the publisher says, they inevitably invoke “the values and position of a mainstream, predominantly white, American readership” (Lau 78). To that readership they offer enlightenment as well as entertainment.

Lee Haring
Brooklyn College (Emeritus)

Popular Tales and Fictions: Their Migrations and Transformations. By W. A. Clouston. Edited with an introduction by Christine Goldberg. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2002. xxxi + 585 pp.

Narrative has made something of a comeback in recent years, not least in the academic scramble of the moment. As I write, a British neuropsychologist has won a prestigious general book award for a study of the stories that result from various forms of brain damage (Paul Broks’s *Into the Silent Land*); Dan Lloyd, a philosopher and neuroscientist, has written what he subtitles *A Novel Theory of Consciousness (Radiant Cool)*, in which ideas of the latter (consciousness) are couched in the workings of the former (the novel); and, as might be expected, a literary critic has made the self-evident case that the narratives of the novel are studies of consciousness *avant la lettre* (David Lodge’s *Consciousness and the Novel*). Analogous work can be found in the field of ethics, where the give and take of storytelling, the proliferating provisionality of narrative, is granted cognitive and ethical value in and of itself.

All this is of course interesting news (if it is news) to those of us who deal with the likes of folk and fairy tales. Successive winds of methodological change have generated new, to say nothing of deepening, perspectives on traditions and histories of popular storytelling, and contemporary ethics and the cognitive sciences look set to offer the same possibilities. It is within this perhaps surprising context that the reprint of W. A. Clouston’s classic text of storiology is particularly welcome. As read today, it seems of most interest as a study predicated on a protohypertextual conception of narration, whereby the potential explanations of theory are always undermined by the possibility of another link, another click. The relish exhibited by Clouston in the face of his sea of stories is palpable; while the uninhibited expression of such relish is a characteristic sign of a Victorian gentleman scholar at work in the archives, the text itself feels contemporary precisely in its generous openness to narrative.

The two weighty volumes of *Popular Tales and Fictions: Their Migrations and Transformations*, were originally published in Edinburgh in 1887. The subtitle gives a fair indication of the methodological affiliations of the collection: broadly comparativist, an early version of the historic-geographic approach. There was of course much folkloristic activity in the latter part of the nineteenth century—it was, as Christine Goldberg says, a “new science.” Clouston’s text is embedded in the thick of the scholarly discourse of the time, in particular the conflicting claims of the comparativists—wedded to the idea of what was then termed an “Asiatic” origin for European folk narrative material—and the survivalists, for whom the tales were distant manifestations of primitive beliefs. Clouston’s long introduction is characteristic of the text as a whole, putting its faith in evidence rather than argument. The basic premise is intermittently stated (“most of the popular tales of Europe are traceable to ancient Indian sources”), but by far the bulk of the introduction, as of the text, is taken up with the stories themselves, recounted in varying amounts of detail. As Clouston says, “variants of the same general stories are detailed—not merely indicated by their titles—thus enabling the reader to judge for himself their common origin, and the transformations they have undergone in passing from one country to another.” Following the introduction, the first volume comprises chapters devoted to what we would now view broadly as tale motifs (“Dragons and Monstrous Birds”; “Gold-producing Animals”), followed by chapters dealing with tale types (“The Hunchback and the Fairies”; “Aladdin’s Wonderful Lamp”). Volume 2 is concerned with what Clouston knew as fictions, those traditional narratives with “little or nothing improbable in their details.” The text is testament to Clouston’s self-confessed “promiscuous reading,” with the narrative material drawn from a dizzying array of European, Near- and Middle-Eastern sources, and from an equally varied set of genres. Needless to say, it continues to offer rich pickings for both general and specialist readers.

Goldberg offers a neat and wide-ranging introduction to what is an elegant reprint. She summarizes the intellectual climate in which *Popular Tales and Fictions* was compiled, and traces important links between Clouston and Aarne/Thompson. Underpinning this contextualization is of course a narrative of decline, in terms of both a belief in generalizable patterns of dissemination, and a very Victorian faith in holistic models by which we might understand and account for culturally diverse narrative traditions (Goldberg includes a useful bibliography of “Subsequent Scholarship on Clouston’s Tales”). As Goldberg points out, it was Clouston’s own scholarly interests that led him in the direction of Arabic, Persian, Hindu, and Sanskrit texts; to this extent, his thesis is neatly self-fulfilling. Nevertheless, Goldberg is right: “Any questions of ultimate origins require a thorough, modern study, and even then the answer must be qualified.” I would add that the discovery of any so-called

“ultimate origin” would itself be little more than another story to be set alongside the narrative objects themselves. This is certainly how Clouston’s own late-Victorian theorizing now appears. The implicit Orientalism, for example, stands as a story among stories, one which parts of Europe told to itself for reasons not dissimilar to those that kept alive the traditions of popular tales.

Clouston was of necessity preoccupied with similarity, with the “close analogy,” the “counterpart”; hence the proliferating material. Yet the pseudo-science of the comparative method was allied to an ethical project: in the author’s own words, “a comparative study of folk-tales, apart from its great linguistic value, is calculated to enlarge the mind, and when assiduously prosecuted, broaden our sympathies, and enable us to recognize, more fully, perhaps, than could anything else, the universal brotherhood of mankind.” This is another fiction, of course, ripe for historicization. Nevertheless, in its openness to the narratives of cultures not its own, along with its belief in the ethical value of both individual tales and narrative per se, *Popular Tales and Fictions* is of more than just historical interest. To adapt the epigraph chosen by Clouston for what is his major work, this compendium of tales still has wings.

Stephen Benson
Brunel University

The Annotated Classic Fairy Tales. Edited with an introduction and notes by Maria Tatar. Translations by Maria Tatar. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2002. xxi + 445 pp.

The Annotated Classic Fairy Tales is such a gorgeous book that it is hard to be critical. Its dust jacket, featuring magenta lettering and geometric design on a golden background with miniature illustrations from fairy tales on each corner, heralds the “storytelling archive” within its covers through allusions to *Arabian Nights* arabesque and to manuscript illumination. Editor Maria Tatar has chosen to present 26 classic fairy tales with over 300 accompanying classic illustrations to highlight the golden age of the fairy tale in the Western tradition. “The Tales” section of the book includes familiar texts ranging from those of Charles Perrault, Jeanne-Marie Leprince de Beaumont, Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm, Alexander Afanasev, Peter Christen Asbjørnsen and Jørgen Moe, Joseph Jacobs, Philipp Otto Runge to those of Hans Christian Andersen (17–330).

It is in Tatar’s annotations for each tale, however, that the “familiar” is cracked open and explored intricately but clearly for an implied general audience of parents, children, students, and others interested in the subject matter through innovative use of different type faces, font sizes and colors. Each tale’s number; its title in capital letters, such as tale 1, LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD, or tale 18, KATE CRACKERNUTS; its specific author in italics, such as *Charles Perrault* or *Hans Christian Andersen*; and its footnotes on the page margins are

all printed in light but readable purple ink that matches the geometric border of white vines on purple ground which heads each new tale. Small black print at the bottom left-hand side of each tale's first page announces that the source for this version of the tale is from Charles Perrault, "Cendrillon ou la petite pantoufle de verre," in *Histoires ou contes du temps passé, avec des moralités* (Paris: Barbin, 1697) or from Joseph Jacobs, "Kate Crackernuts," *English Fairy Tales* (London: David Nutt, 1898), for example. The text of each tale itself is in larger black print while Tatar's headnote introducing each tale is in black italics. Illustrations from different artists, some in color and some in black and white, are placed throughout each tale text with captions indicating the specific lines or scenes in the tales from which the artists drew inspiration with accompanying commentaries by the editor.

Tatar's headnotes, footnotes, and illustration captions are informative, clearly drawn from a wide range of scholarly sources, her own among others, but are not academic per se. For instance, her introduction to tale 11, "Bluebeard," draws from comparative studies that she had already referenced in the 1999 Norton critical edition, *The Classic Fairy Tales*: "Known as Silver Nose in Italy and as the Lord of the Underworld in Greece, the French Bluebeard has many folkloric cousins" (145). Her headnote also condenses scholarly shifts in academic interpretations of the Bluebeard tale: "The Bluebeard story has traditionally been seen as turning on the curiosity of the wife, who can never 'resist' the temptation to look into the chamber forbidden to her. . . . Rather than celebrating the courage and wisdom of Bluebeard's wife in discovering the dreadful truth about her husband's murderous deeds, Perrault and many other tellers of the tale disparage her unruly act of insubordination" (146). Here, Tatar appears to draw on, but downplays, her chapter, "Taming the Beast: Bluebeard and Other Monsters," in her 1987 *The Hard Facts of the Grimms' Fairy Tales*, still one of the best feminist rereadings of fairy-tale scholarship.

In another example, Tatar introduces tale 8, "The Frog King, or Iron Heinrich," as the first in the Grimms' *Nursery and Household Tales*, then refers explicitly to Bruno Bettelheim's psychoanalytical reading of the tale "as a compressed version of the maturation process, with the princess navigating a path between the pleasure principle (represented by her play) and the dictates of the superego (represented by the father's commands)," then shows how Bettelheim's reading "helps to understand why the tale has such a powerful combination of erotic and didactic elements" (115–16).

Tatar's footnotes, usually no more than ten per tale, and often less, clarify the tale texts in a number of ways, often putting the footnoted sections in historical and cultural contexts. In tale 12, Philip Otto Runge's "The Juniper Tree," for example, footnote 8 glosses the death of the boy's mother as the prelude to

his father's remarrying: "Many historians have pointed out that the high rate of mortality in childbirth may have motivated the prominence of stepmothers in fairy tales." And footnote 9 glosses the concern of the boy's stepmother that her daughter inherits everything: "The inheritance issue creates friction even today in many blended families. In "The Juniper Tree" anxiety about dividing the patrimony is spelled out as a key factor in motivating the stepmother's hatred of the boy" (161). I guess that social historian Robert Darnton's and cultural critic Jack Zipes's analyses are some of the sources for Tatar's glosses.

The examples could be multiplied. My criticism here, however, is that, despite the excellent bibliography (429–43) that contains an extensive "Further Reading on Fairy Tales" (429–39), it is not easy for interested readers to get directly to the relevant criticism that undergirds the annotations. Perhaps this is an academic's quibble, and this kind of approach would have made an already large volume too unwieldy, but I miss specific citations within the headnotes and footnotes. Of course, other readers will be more interested in the tales themselves and their illustrations, and the book is beautifully set up to make choices for reading.

The varied illustrations in *The Annotated Classic Fairy Tales* are literally illuminating. They indicate how artists' conceptions of the tales and their selections of parts of the tales to portray are paratextual features, something like gestures in oral storytelling performances, which are important aspects of readers' and listeners' complex receptions of the tales, amplifying the tales in some cases, subverting them in others (xviii). Tatar's captions focus on this artistic diversity. For example, she notes Edmund Dulac's orientaling perception of "Bluebeard" in his 1910 illustrations (147–49), which Gustave Doré's 1861, Harry Clarke's 1922, and Kay Neilsen's 1930 illustrations do not have (150). She also comments on similar artistic features, such as Arthur Rackham's and Heinrich Lefler's use of elaborate border motifs, to underscore what they see as important parts of the fairy-tale narratives they are illustrating. She writes of a Rackham illustration for tale 10, "Jack And The Beanstalk," "Note that the decorative frame reprises the beanstalk motif and adds a touch of whimsy with the talking heads" (143), and of a Lefler illustration for tale 7, "Rapunzel": "The elaborate border, with its stern owls gazing straight out at the viewer, underscore the theme of supervision in the story" (111).

These illustrations, with the hundreds of others drawn from archival sources, add a rich dimension of comparative annotation to the tale texts. My criticism here is that most of the illustrations are very small, some only 2" x 3," so that viewers might wish either for the magnifying glasses included in *The Compact Edition of the Oxford English Dictionary* or for the ability to enlarge illustrations available on websites such as *SurLaLune Fairy Tale Pages* <<http://www.surlalunefairytales.com>>.

The book's framework surrounds the tales themselves with important contextual material assembled from a variety of sources. The front matter includes the section Scenes of Storytelling—full-page illustrations with Tatar's interpretive captions capturing the changing perceptions of the *process* of storytelling, beginning with the frontispiece to Perrault's manuscript for *Contes de ma Mere l'Oye*, 1695 and ending with Jessie Willcox Smith's *Rainy Day with Dream Blocks*, 1908 (3–15). Joseph Highmore's 1744 *Pamela Tells a Nursery Tale*, an illustration from Samuel Richardson's novel, and George Cruikshank's droll illustrations of fire-side storytelling for the 1823 *German Popular Stories*, the first British translation of the Brothers Grimm, are particularly evocative (6–7).

The end matter includes biographies of the authors and collectors (333–51) and of the illustrators (352–68) discussed in the book with portraits when possible and further readings listed. The poignancy of their lives does not always correspond to the fairy tales they collected, wrote, or illustrated. A case in point is that of Alexander Afanasev (1826–71), known as the collector of the Russian fairy tales that became the base for Vladimir Propp's *Morphology of the Folktale*. Tatar concludes her entry: "In 1860 police raided the publishing house responsible for printing *Russian Fairy Tales* and arrested its owner. The second edition of the tales was confiscated and burned. Accused of illegally appropriating work from the public archives, Afanasev lost his government post and lived in poverty the rest of his life. He was forced to sell his private library and lamented that 'books once nourished me with ideas, now—with bread.' Afanasev died of consumption at the age of forty-five in 1871" (335). Although much of this material is also available in *The Oxford Companion to Fairy Tales*, edited by Jack Zipes in 2000 with Maria Tatar as one of the contributing editors, its inclusion here is justified by its connection to the tales themselves and because of the convenience for readers to have this information in one volume.

Four appendices round out the volume: the texts of "The Story of Grandmother," collected in 1885 but believed to be related to a pre-Perrault version of "Little Red Riding Hood" followed by the Perrault text (369–73); Robert Southey's text of "The Story of The Three Bears" (375–79); color plates of Walter Crane's illustrations (381–404) and black and white plates of George Cruikshank's illustrations (405–27). The bibliography, already mentioned, concludes the text.

Although it may not be the norm to end a review with the volume's introduction (xi–xix), I do so because it is Maria Tatar's opening piece that ultimately pulled me into the interior spaces of *The Annotated Classic Fairy Tales*. More comfortable with anthropological and folkloristic approaches to folk-narrative study and to contemporary legend performances, I was not prepared for the sort of epiphany that befell me as I read her nostalgic evocation of her own and other authors' memories of their childhood encounters with fairy tales. I suddenly

remembered my mother walking towards me, eyes sparkling, with a Christmas gift under her arm—an edition of the Brothers Grimm with a burgundy cloth cover and water color and line drawings within. I suddenly remembered the hours I spent reading fairy tales as a child and young woman, and the times that reading those tales saved my emotional life, and for this I thank her.

Janet L. Langlois
Wayne State University

Italian Popular Tales. By Thomas Frederick Crane. Edited and introduced by Jack Zipes. New York: Oxford University Press, 2003. 317 pp.

A deteriorating copy of Thomas F. Crane's *Italian Popular Tales* (1885) had long sat on my bookshelf when, happily, Jack Zipes's edition of this classic work recently came out. Crane's volume is an eclectic compendium—the first of its kind published in English—that is just as delightful to read straight through as it is useful for examining Italian tale types and their variants, and Zipes has done Italianists and folklorists alike a precious service by making it available again.

Italian Popular Tales is divided into six chapters dedicated primarily to “the stories that are handed down by word of mouth from one generation to another of the illiterate people, serving exclusively to amuse and seldom to instruct” (xlix). The principal sources for the fairy tales, stories of oriental origin, legends and ghost stories, nursery tales, and stories and jests were oral, as Crane indicates in the introduction, and derived from Laura Gonzenbach, Vittorio Imbriani, Domenico Comparetti, Gherardo Nerucci, Domenico Bernoni, and, above all, Giuseppe Pitrè, all prolific collectors and folklorists of the second half of the nineteenth century (a good number of Crane's tales will be familiar to readers of Italo Calvino's *Italian Folk Tales*, for Calvino used many of these same sources). Crane's notes, over 50 pages in this edition, contain upward of a dozen more tales as well as details on the development and variants of many tale types across time and space.

As Zipes notes in his preface, Crane “offers a much more complex and rich selection of oral and literary tales” (vii) than can be found in the Grimms or Afanasyev. Although he excludes “authored” tales from the collection, he does frequently cite the robust literary tradition of the preceding centuries (e.g., Straparola and Basile) and is most attentive to the give-and-take between oral and literary storytelling that became particularly intense in the nineteenth century. Crane also tends to “touch up” his tales less than others, even when they deal with violent or disturbing topics and offer morals along the lines of “crime pays, might makes right, and cunning is necessary to survive in a dog-eat-dog world” (vii).

Crane's unusual academic iter, along with the importance of his folklore studies, is outlined in Zipes's excellent introduction. Born in New York in

1844, he attended Princeton, started off his professional life practicing law, acquired proficiency in German, French, Spanish, and Italian largely on his own, and by 1869 was teaching in the Department of Romance Languages at Cornell. In the course of his life he published, besides *Italian Popular Tales*, major monographs and anthologies on French history, society, and folklore, and Italian social customs. Crane was, in the words of Zipes, “a pioneer in America of the comparative method . . . with a strong emphasis on sociocultural contexts and history” (xiii); his interest lay in discovering “the universal in the particular” (xxi) by providing an ample corpus of tales whose variants could be traced both in and outside of Italy.

In the first of two chapters devoted to fairy tales (nearly half of the book) we find versions of well-known stories organized by types such as the mysterious husband, the jealous relative who steals away children or the mother who promises her offspring to a witch or other antagonists, the virtuous child harmed by jealous siblings, other forms of interfamilial treachery, false and forgotten brides, and the defeat of supernatural foes by mortals. The second chapter includes tales outside of the “extensive classes” of the first section, which feature, for example, fairies (relatively rare in the Italian tradition), dolls or puppets, numskull protagonists, helpful animals, or the grateful dead.

The tales may be familiar, but in their details they often deviate from more canonical versions in the direction of greater psychological realism, an attenuated taste for cruelty, and comic sparkle. This is due in part to the difference between oral and literary traditions, but it might also be argued (as Calvino did in the introduction to his tales) that these are distinguishing traits of the Italian tale; in any case, such divergences certainly suggest variations in the ideological and pedagogical functions of tales. Take, for example, “Zelinda and the Monster,” a Beauty and the Beast type (AT 425C) from Montale Pistoiese. Similar in many regards to Mme Leprince de Beaumont’s mid-eighteenth-century tale, it nonetheless parts ways with the French version at telling moments. After Zelinda, the Beauty figure, has moved into the Monster’s house and been repeatedly begged to marry him, she finally gives in when he promises to cure her dying father, whom he has shown to her in an enchanted mirror. (In Beaumont’s version, the heroine is moved to consent by a dream vision of the ailing Beast). As soon as she utters her promise, the Monster turns into a “handsome youth.” The fact that it is the change in Zelinda’s response, rather than any change in her sentiments, that triggers the transformation in effect alters the “messages” conventionally associated with this tale—that beauty is in the eye of the beholder and that the power of love can transform all.

Or, in “How the Devil Married Three Sisters,” a Bluebeard type of the AT 311 variety (similar to the Grimms’ “Fichter’s Bird”) from Venice, the enterprising youngest sister is responsible for saving her two siblings by tricking the Devil

into carrying them, and then herself, back to their home in a chest. The Devil remains gullible right up to the end, when he sees that his wife has been “stolen” from him and runs in alarm to her parents’ house, only to find “on the balcony above the door all three sisters, his wives, who were looking down on him with scornful laughter. Three wives at once terrified the Devil so much that he took his flight with all possible speed. Since that time he has lost his taste for marrying” (65). This is a down-to-earth Devil, comic in his role as victim of a *beffa*—indeed, a close relative to the stupid ogre type of folktales—perhaps no surprise in a country where the Devil’s losing battles with the blessed are often represented, even in more solemn contexts, as the thwarted efforts of an inept bungler. The jibes against marriage and wives, too, are part of a centuries-long novel-la tradition, and might have been lifted from Boccaccio himself.

The bulk of the stories of oriental origin covered in the third chapter evolved from literary sources “naturalized” upon contact with local folklore, often transforming the original material beyond recognition. By tracking the diffusion of tales from collections like the *Arabian Nights*, *Disciplina clericalis*, *Seven Wise Masters*, *Pancatantra*, and *Seventy Tales of a Parrot* (*Tūti-Nāmeḥ*), this section gives us a clear idea of how the early history of prose narrative in Italy involves a complex network of contamination, mutual influence, and inter-sections among traditions and registers.

In the chapter on legends and ghost stories, Crane concentrates on “popular legendary stories which have clustered around the person of our Lord and his disciples” and “other favorite characters of mediaeval fancy” (149), and tales of the otherworld and the uncanny. Here too we meet up with familiar characters: St. Peter is cast in the role of a numskull, and mortal tricksters manage to escape Death’s clutches.

“Nursery tales” include fairy tales with young children as their protagonists and age-related themes such as getting separated from one’s parents (“Don Firriulieddu”), overcoming the perils of being tiny (“Little Chick-Pea”), and outwitting grown-ups, as well as “endless,” cumulative, and nonsense tales. The final chapter, entitled simply “Stories and Jests,” is a catchall for amusing tales, many of which center around fools (Giufà is the most famous of these) or clever pranksters.

The Italian tale tradition is no longer a mystery to the English-speaking world—Calvino’s *Fiabe italiane* were translated in 1980—and Crane’s groupings of types and variants may today seem somewhat archaic by the standards of the Aarne and Thompson’s indices (not to mention a much more recent work like Renato Aprile’s *Indice delle fiabe popolari di magia* [2000]). Yet this volume still serves the suggestive purpose of ordering a broad sampling of forms of popular narration in a way that invites the reader to make sense of why a culture has produced, over the centuries, a particular body of

storytelling, and how its similarities and differences with other traditions may tell us something about our local identities but also about our common humanity: lessons that are surely not dated.

Nancy Canepa
Dartmouth College

Pashtun Tales from the Pakistan-Afghan Frontier. Edited by Aisha Ahmad and Roger Boase. London: Saqi Books, 2003. 379 pp. with folkloristic analysis, glossary, index of tale types, index of folk motifs, sketches.

The book under review is a collection of Pashtun tales collected from the city of Peshawar, the capital city of the North West Frontier Province of Pakistan. Because of its geographical position on the crossroads linking Central Asia with India and beyond, Peshawar and its province had been one of the busiest land routes throughout the history. Since time immemorial caravans of fortunes, as well as simple mendicants (*faqirs*), had traversed the city on their way from Central Asia to the rich and famous India and beyond, and on their way back. As such, it has been a meeting point of different cultures and traditions. The city of Peshawar boasts of its old part, known as the *qis-sakhwāni bāzār*, “the bazaar of storytellers” whose fame had reached throughout the northwestern India and beyond. It is from this historic city that most of the tales in this book come from. However, Aisha Ahmad writes that “despite Peshawar’s reputation as a meeting place for storytellers, in 1977, when I asked a friend to find me a professional reciter of tales, he was unable to find one anywhere in the city or in the neighbouring villages. Even after months of searching, he had only found people who knew one or two stories” (11). This shows the impact of electronic media on the local culture and the domination of radio and television in the daily life of the people. The book constitutes a welcome and valuable addition to the recording of this region’s folktales and a good contribution to the comparative analysis of this genre. With an excellent folkloristic analysis at the end, authors have demonstrated how these tales, and their themes and motifs, participate in a wider sphere of tales common throughout the region and beyond.

The book contains a total of thirty-five tales divided under six subsections: Wit and Intelligence, Virtues and Vices, Miracles and Magic, Courtship and Infidelity, Epic and Romance, and Comedy and Farce. Authors have accomplished a very difficult, but extremely useful task in categorizing the tales according to their contents and in placing them in particular sections. Nevertheless, it can be seen that they have not been successful in all cases as it is a very tricky job to decide which tale goes into which category either because of the complexity of tales or because of the multiplicity of motifs in a tale. However, the attempt here is praiseworthy.

I find the book very interesting and useful as I see a great number of tales included here also in the tradition of other ethno-linguistic groups in the region including my own recordings from Balochistan. It is fascinating to see, once again, how these tales have travelled freely from one culture to another. However, besides other things about the book, there are a few technical observations to which I would like to draw the attention of readers here. For example, one of the book's shortcomings is the lack of proper information about the informants. Aisha Ahmad mentions in the preface that most of the stories were related by Saeed Khan Baba (19), but does not say which ones and from whom the rest of the tales were collected. It seems that some tales were also collected from others as the author thanks "Feroz Shah, Master Sahib, and Fazle Hadi for helping me to collect the remainder of the tales" (20), but Ahmad does not say more about it. Here, Master Sahib seems to be a title and not a personal name as it would mean "Mr. Teacher" if we translate the name into English. The only information provided in the book is about Saeed Khan Baba, who "was a tall Mohmand Pashtun, whom the villagers nicknamed Qissa Khwan (Story Teller) or Qissa Mar (Story Maker)" (12) although the second title, which I believe is in Urdu, would also mean "storyteller" as the verb "mārṇā" in Urdu means "to hit, beat, kill," but also "to tell, to utter" etc. It would have been useful if the authors had given details about the narrator of each tale so that the reader could know which tale comes from whom.

There is much obscurity about the original language of the tales too. It seems that the tales were basically told in Pashtu, or Pakhtu, as the language is called in that area, but the authors remain vague about it. Ahmad's saying that her assistants helped her in the oral translation of the tales into Urdu (20) leaves room for doubts that she did not speak the language of the narrators. Again, if the tales were originally told in one language, then orally translated or paraphrased in Urdu by some assistants, and finally translated into English then one doubts how much validity there is in the claims of the author that she has remained "as faithful as possible to the original" (19). One would wonder to which original? The one of the narrators or that of the assistants who orally translated the tales into Urdu? She further says that "unnecessary repetition has been avoided" in the translation and "foreign words have been eliminated as far as possible" (19). Here again, the author is not clear about whether the narrators used Urdu words in their Pashtu tales or words from another foreign language.

Information regarding the setting when these tales were collected is also missing. Ahmad simply says that "in the heat of the summer afternoons, when Peshawar slept, we sat under the large revolving fan, drinking cold water and listening to Saeed Khan Baba" (12). One would expect more information about who was present during the recording—were only she and her assistants



interacting with the narrator or were there others?—and whether the audience was active, thus affecting the performance, or passive.

I have the impression that the book has been prepared independently by the co-authors: Aisha Ahmad, who seems not to be a folklorist, prepared the English translation of the tales and wrote the preface, while Roger Boase did the folkloristic analysis and prepared the index of tale types and motifs. Boase may have missed minor inconsistencies in the preface. For example, the authors, while writing about certain tales or motifs, claim that these tales depict Pashtun society's values, while it is known to the students of folklore that these tales are common throughout the region and beyond, probably having Indian or Persian origin. One such example can be given about the black lover of the lady where, according to the authors, "the black lover embodies the threat of exogamy in a society where people rarely marry outside their clans" (16). We know for sure that such motifs are found throughout the region and several examples are also found in the *One Thousand and One Nights* where women of high social status have sexual relations with their black slaves (see Nikita Elisséeff, *Thèmes et motifs des Mille et Une Nuits: Essai de classification* [Beyrouth: Institut Français de Damas, 1949] 139).

As for the social status of storytellers in the Pashtun society, the author mentions that the storyteller "is often a figure of fun and is ridiculed by the villagers. The Pashtun peasant earns his livelihood from the land by sweat and toil, whereas the storyteller makes his living [sic] by the ingenuity of his tongue. Since he is obliged by his profession to utter falsehoods to please or flatter his audience, he is often regarded as a sycophant or even a liar" (12; see also Margaret Mills, *Rhetorics and Politics in Afghan Traditional Storytelling* [Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania P, 1991] 12–13, 49, 51, for similar observations from Afghanistan). This kind of negative attitude towards the storytellers has also its impact on the storytelling and storytellers: when a certain activity is not appreciated by the public, and it does not give a good economical return, which storytelling does not in those parts of the world (cf. Mills 49), it loses grounds more rapidly.

The book also contains several color sketches of Afghan notables and the landscape of Afghanistan (see information about plates, 9–10), mostly taken from nineteenth-century works, but I fail to understand the relevancy of these sketches of historical figures with the folktales given in the book.

Another shortcoming of the book is its frequent typographic errors. It is filled with words attached to each other and there are very few pages with no such mistakes. Similarly, on many occasions, letters in a single word are separated with a space while some letters of a word are attached to another word, and so on. There are also cases where "his" is changed to "her" or vice versa. The book is not free of spelling mistakes either. I am not indicating here all

such mistakes for the sake of space but Birbar (321) should be corrected as Birbal as it is the name of a popular humorous character from India; Rum (Rūhm) is not Persia as indicated by the authors (345) but it “designates greater Byzantium, especially present-day Anatolia” (Mills 319n1); “Khwa Qaf” is probably for “Koh-i Qāf,” the mountainous range which, according to the popular legend of the region, surrounds the earth (cf. 347); and paisa, unit of currency, is not one-twentieth of an *anna* (363, glossary), but one-hundredth of a rupee and there are sixteen *annas* in a rupee. In the note 25.2, a saying of the Prophet Muhammad is quoted through the authority of al-Bukhari but the reference is missing. And finally, M. V. Fontana’s title in the bibliography, which I didn’t find quoted in the book, is to be corrected as *La leggenda di Bahrām Gūr e Āzāda: Materiale per la storia di una tipologia figurativa dalle origini al XIV secolo* [Napoli: Istituto Universitario Orientale, 1986]. It is hoped that in future editions such mistakes can be corrected. The addition of a subject index would also be helpful.

Some inconsistencies have also crept into the book. For example, the authors write that Ali bin Abi Talib, the Prophet Muhammad’s son-in-law “is especially venerated in Afghanistan because his tomb is in Mazar-i-Sharif, although other traditions have his body interred near Kufa at the twon [sic] of Najaf” (348). I believe that there is no room for any doubts that the tomb of Ali is not in Mazar-i Sharif although it is in popular belief in Afghanistan. The authors should not have given any credit to such beliefs, for we read that Ali was killed in A.H. 40/660 A.D. with a poisoned sword in front of the door of the mosque of Kufa in revenge for the men slain at al-Nahrawan. His burial place was initially kept secret, “evidently for fear lest his body should be exhumed and profaned.” The tomb was later identified at a spot some miles from Kufa and a sanctuary subsequently arose there and the town of al-Najaf grew up later (for details, see *Encyclopaedia of Islam* [Leiden: Brill, Leiden; London: Luzac, 1960] vol. 1, s.v.).

Some of the tales given here seem to have come directly from other cultures and remained with no or little modifications which is surprising as we know that normally when a folktale is adopted from another culture, and when it becomes part of the local oral tradition, it goes through the process of adopting local color so that listeners of that particular group find it in accordance with their culture and local values. There are very few cases in the oral tradition when a tale is adopted from another culture without going through any modifications. The tale no. 10 in the book, “The Lion of the Jungle,” seems to be such an example. Despite the authors’ claim that the tale “is set within the framework of Pashtun society” (333), I have the feeling that this version has been adopted directly from the Indian tradition since we find that the poor man, the main character of the tale, is worried about the dowry of his daughters. The man, after extracting the

thorn from the lion's paw says to it, "I have three daughters; they have reached a marriageable age and I'm worried about them" (93). In note 1, it is explained that "he was worried because he would have to provide each of his daughters with a suitable dowry." It is well known, on the contrary, that Pashtuns do not give any dowry to the bridegroom, which is a purely Indian custom, but demand huge amounts as brideprice. The brideprice, generally called *walwar* among the Afghans, "is considered poor compensation for the expense a father has had in raising his daughter, . . . and men with few or no sons talk of the brideprices they receive for their daughters as little consolation for the absence of male heirs" (Nancy Tapper, *Bartered Brides: Politics, Gender and Marriage in an Afghan Tribal Society* [Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1991] 143). Besides the brideprice, "the bridegroom has to supply provisions (*khushai*) to the father of the girl for the entertainment of the wedding guests" (*The Gazetteer of Baluchistan: Zhob* [1906; Quetta Gosha-e Adab, 1986] 60). T. L. Pennell observed that an Afghan "practically buys his wife, bargaining with her father, or, if he is dead, with her brother; and . . . the father has little power of interfering for her protection afterwards, seeing he has received her price" (*Among the Wild Tribes of the Afghan Frontier* [1909; Karachi: Oxford UP, 1975] 193). So I don't agree that this tale reflects Pashtun values and as such is set within the framework of Pashtun society. Furthermore, in the folkloristic analysis the authors claim that "the formula of a man who delivers a lion from peril or suffering, and is rewarded by the lion's lasting gratitude, is not common in the Indian subcontinent" (332–33). But they further explain that "in several Indian tales it is used as a convenient device to spark off the narrative. But the lion is generally replaced by the native Indian tiger" (333). Actually, the tale belongs to the type 160, "Grateful animal, ungrateful man" (cf. also type 156, "The splinter in the bear's [lion's] paw") (Stith Thompson and Warren Roberts, *Types of Indic Oral Tales: India, Pakistan and Ceylon* [Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedekatemia, 1960]), and is found in several Indian versions (cf. also B 380, "Animal grateful for relief from pain", and B 381, "Thorn removed from lion's [tiger's] paw", Stith Thompson and Jonas Balys, *The Oral Tales of India* [Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1958]). Variants of the tale have been recorded from different parts of the world with the tale often ending in a proverb which runs, more or less, "The wound of sword heels, the wound of a tongue does not," or "The pain from a blow heals, but the pain from a word does not," and so on.

The book contains an interesting bibliography, but some important works, related to the region, are missing, such as, Hafizullah Baghban, "The Context and Concept of Humor in Magadi Theatre," (4 vols., diss., Indiana U, 1977); Ulrich Marzolph, *Typologie des persischen Volksmärchens* (Beirut and Wiesbaden: Steiner, 1984); Margaret A. Mills, *Oral Narrative in Afghanistan: The Individual in Tradition* (New York: Garland, 1990); and Mills's 1991 book already quoted above.

Despite minor shortcomings, *Pashtun Tales* is an important contribution to the scholarship on the folklore of the region in general and on that of the Pashtuns in particular. With its diverse tales and motifs, it enriches our knowledge of the common themes and motifs present in the region. It is also a welcome addition to the study of folktale tradition because this is one of the least studied fields in Pakistan and Afghanistan. Having firsthand experience of the fast-changing sociocultural situation in that part of the world, I fully agree with the authors that “if these tales had not been recorded and translated, some of them might have vanished without trace and this would have been a great loss” (12). In Pakistan, Sindh is the only region where the Institute of Sindhology has sponsored extensive field works (Ghulam Ali Allana, *Folk Music of Sind* [Jamshoro: U of Sind, 1982 iii] and published tens of volumes of material on Sindhi folklore, while from Afghanistan we have extensive collections and excellent books but mostly from the city of Herat (see Mills, *Oral Narrative and Rhetorics*; and Baghban). It is hoped that other scholars from the region undertake similar works and bring to the general readers the tales which would otherwise be lost for ever.

Sabir Badalkhan
L'Orientale, University of Naples

***Fairy Godfather: Straparola, Venice, and the Fairy Tale Tradition.* By Ruth B. Bottigheimer. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002. viii + 156 pp.**

Fairy Godfather is a monographic essay on Giovanni Francesco Straparola da Caravaggio's *Pleasant Nights*, a two-volume collection of stories published in Venice between 1550 (1551) and 1553, and reprinted more than twenty times in the following fifty years. The study consists of five chapters, two of which, about the two-thirds of the book, concern the author's biography and socio-cultural context. I'll start this review by focusing on those chapters. Chapter 3, “A Possible Biography for Zoan Francesco Straparola da Caravaggio,” tries to reconstruct imaginatively the biography of an author about whom very little is known. The facts we can be certain of are very few: the birth in Caravaggio, a rural village in the vicinity of Bergamo; a book of poetry published in 1508 (*Opera nova* [Venice, new expanded edition in 1515]); the move from Caravaggio to Venice; the publication of the two volumes of *Pleasant Nights* in 1550 (1551: the dedication is dated *more veneto* on 2 January 1550) and, in 1553, “ad istanza dell'autore” (i.e., at Straparola's own expense); no further participation of the author in the 1558 edition, allowing one to infer that his death occurred between 1555 and 1558.

On this meager framework Bottigheimer builds a completely fictitious biography, supported by no philological or documentary verification. She imagines that Straparola lived as “subaltern intellectual, assistant, or teacher” at a

noble house in Venice or nearby (Padova or Treviso), writing for others more than for himself; before that, she invents his humble childhood in Caravaggio by getting clues of Straparola's life and psychology from two tales: that of Fortunio (III, 4), where we read an account of the painful discovery of being an adopted child; and that of Zambò (V, 3), where we read about the long and uneven trip from Valsabbia (near Brescia) to Venice. Along the same lines is chapter 4, "Straparola at His Desk," in which Bottigheimer reconstructs the publishing *iter* and the structure of *Pleasant Nights*. One can overlook the startling invention of two dialogues between Straparola and the Venetian publisher Comin da Trino. But I would question the author's conclusion that volume two betrays the presence of a second author. This conclusion is based on the asymmetry of book II in comparison with book I and with the initial project (thirteen instead of ten nights, thirteen tales in the last night against five tales in all others), on some glaring errors that affect the *frametale* and individual tales, and on the weighty reuse, in the last two nights, of Morlini's *Novellae* translated from Latin. These imperfections in the Straparola collection have been noticed by other scholars and ascribed to a certain haste created by the success of book I and the desire to publish a second book; regarding the use of Morlini, previous scholars have seen a specific literary interest in bringing a little-known and semiclandestine text to life again. Even if we may not agree with this (Bottigheimer assumes that Straparola did not know Latin well and that he drew from well-known *florilegia* the few Latin passages in his collection), there is no compelling reason to believe that another author collaborated on book II; in any case, such hypothetical collaboration would exist only for nights 11 and 12, since Bottigheimer acknowledges that night 13 is by Straparola himself, as is the dedication, commonly written after completion of the book.

Pages of this kind may provide a fictional vision of the good old days (and the good old Venice), but they don't fit well into a scholarly monograph on an author of the Italian Renaissance. Moreover, these hypotheses underestimate the solid literary learning that underlies Straparola's oeuvre, as shown in the commentaries of Giuseppe Rua (Bari: Laterza, 1927) and Donato Pirovano (Roma: Salerno Editrice, 2000). They also neglect the significance of the noble and learned setting of the *Pleasant Nights* (where we find Pietro Bembo, Antonio Molino, Ottaviano Maria Sforza, etc.). Even if one accepts the fictitious tone of these pages, other problems can be noted. I will not dwell on page 98, where the hyperbolic and typically idealized description of female storytellers is presented as a reason for denying that the gathering did actually take place. I'll offer two examples.

The first is the digression on the surname "Straparola," according to Bottigheimer a "nickname that bespeaks his most notable personal characteristic," that of talking too much: "As he grew up playing on the streets of

Caravaggio, he probably had something to say about everything that happened and everybody who passed by. His parents couldn't shut him up. He interrupted his father. He added to what his mother had to say. He contradicted his brothers. And he couldn't stop talking in school, where his teacher shushed him in vain" (48). As Pirovano already stated, the surname is certainly "un po' bizzarro" (somewhat bizarre), but it is the only surname we find in official documents: the printing privilege of *Pleasant Nights* and an *ex-libris* on a book owned by the Municipal Library in Bergamo. If there is no doubt that this surname, still widespread in the Bergamesque territory, originates from the loquacity of its bearers, it is not at all sure that it originated with Giovan Francesco: on the contrary, it is likely to have belonged to the family for generations. The second example is the interpretation of sonnet 114 in *Opera nova*, "O Caravaggio" (the town): Bottigheimer infers from it a courtly relationship between Straparola and the Seccos, a noble family of Caravaggio (56–57). She describes as "a misreading" the identification, originally suggested by Giuseppe Rua, of "Iacomo" (verse 3) not with Giacomo Secco, but with a Giacomo Pesente (or Pesenti). But the text says exactly "Iacomo pesente," rhyming with "presente," and Pesenti as a surname is widespread in Bergamo and its territory; and the word "pesente" as an adjective or noun has no meaning. Moreover, in the English translation of the sonnet, which is quoted in the original language in a note (135), Bottigheimer omits translating a very difficult hemistich (*seco eliseo monte*) assuming there is a pun between *seco* (=with oneself) and *Secco* (the family). The text says (1508 edition): "Regna in colui [i.e., Iacomo Pesente] dogni virtude el fiore [and not *dogni virtude de el fiore*, that causes hypermetry]/ seco a le muse: seco eliseo [and not *elises*] monte/ qual e dogni saper splendido honore." Bottigheimer's translation: "In him reigns the Secco flower of every virtue, / The muses celebrate him: / He who is a magnificent glory of all knowledge." My translation would be: "In him reigns the flower of every virtue; / he has [a instead of *ha* was very common in printed poetry of the period] the muses with him; with him [he has] Parnassus, / which is a splendid honour of every knowledge." This is, of course, no more than a hypothesis, but all the same I believe that there is no evidence of a pun between *seco* and *Secco*.

The less weak part of the book is therefore the first one (chapters 1 and 2), a new elaboration of an article published in 1994. It is about a group of stories that can be classified as "rise tales," that is, as fairy tales where "heroes and heroines begin their lives and their narrative trajectory in a low estate and end their lives and their stories ennobled and enriched," and where this upward mobility hinges on magic and not on wit: a pattern that, according to Bottigheimer, was invented by Straparola himself. The analysis of these fairy tales, whose separate grouping in the collection is well justified, leads to two conclusions: the first,

that the protagonists do not deal actively with magic but experience magic in a totally passive way, magic being a mere narrative device; the second, that Straparola's readership was not upper class but composed principally of literate urban artisans and craftsmen. Bottigheimer offers, in chapter 2, a translation (though not word-for-word) of four less-known rise tales (II, 1; III, 1; III, 4; V, 2; VIII, 4), leaving out another well-known tale "Costantino and his cat" (Puss in Boots, XI, 1), whose "lasting legacy" from Basile to Perrault is traced briefly in chapter 5. To lay stress on fairy tales, and particularly on rise tales in such a heterogeneous collection, appears to be an appropriate choice for various reasons. First, because Straparola is one of the first writers to try to give literary shape to the heritage of popular fairy tales; second, because it opens the way to comparative literary analysis; third and last, because it points out the author's difficulty in handling raw material. This difficulty is proved by Straparola's constant clinging to Boccaccio's tradition (Pirovano speaks of "eclecticism," of a "compromising and prudent" mixture), but also by the fact, not noted by Bottigheimer, that fairy tales were not the most well-received stories in *Pleasant Nights* during the first decades after its publication: for example, Francesco Sansovino chose the more traditional "novelle" and "facezie," and not the fairy tales, for his anthology of *Cento novelle* published in 1561 (see Pirovano, *Introduction*, XV).

Clizia Carminati

Villa I Tatti

The Harvard University Center for Italian Renaissance Studies, Florence

Metamorphosis: The Dynamics of Symbolism in European Fairy Tales. By Francisco Vaz da Silva. New York: Peter Lang, 2002. 278 pp.

In *Metamorphosis*, Francisco Vaz da Silva synthesizes folkloristic, psychoanalytic, semiotic, and anthropological scholarship to introduce a new frame for understanding the symbolism in fairy tales. As Alan Dundes notes in his Editor's Preface to the book, one of the key features of Vaz da Silva's analysis is his "entirely original" synthesis of the works of Freud and Lévi-Strauss. Lévi-Strauss's notion of "mythism" informs Vaz da Silva's thinking, as do Freud's theories on the unconscious and sexuality. Vaz da Silva follows Dundes in utilizing folklore—which is "largely unconscious and involves projection" (3)—as not only material for the study of worldview, but he also suggests that fairy tales contain imagery that allows people to project symbolic themes "onto daily life events" (5).

Vaz da Silva begins by linking transformations in Iberian fairy tales to superstitions that mirror their thematic concerns. In chapter 1, "Fairy Tales and Ethnography," he connects werewolves to shamans through otherworldly journeys and skin-changing, concluding that "in shamanic narrations, in dreams, and of course in fairy tales, whatever unconscious elements there are

appear encoded in cultural patterns and motifs" (19). Vaz da Silva interprets these unconscious elements by deciding to apply psychoanalysis not to the folklore itself, which risks dissolving the subject, but rather to "previously reconstituted symbolic patterns" (19). However, Vaz da Silva does not adequately explain his reluctance to psychoanalyze fairy-tale characters, a method utilized by Dundes and Bengt Holbek.

He proceeds to criticize Holbek for his reductionistic use of projection in his *Interpretation of Fairy Tales*, and reexamines allomotifs in "King Wivern" (AT 433B). Using examples from Holbek and the Grimms, Vaz da Silva shows that "the essence of metamorphosis is an alternation between the inner and the outer, the hairy and the hairless, the bloody and the milky dimensions of complex beings cyclically turned inside out" (27). These symbolic equivalencies, along with details of Iberian beliefs, help resolve problems of dual feminine identity in a Portuguese variant of "Little Red Riding Hood" (AT 333), "The Girl of the Little Red Hat." Vaz da Silva lengthily discusses AT 333 in chapter 3, but here his aim is to show the connection between cyclic alternation in the oral tales and superstitions of a region.

The male aspect of skin-changing receives considerably more attention. Utilizing content from fairy tales and traditions worldwide, Vaz da Silva associates skin-shedding with dragon-slaying, as excess children, born with a symbolic extra skin, seem fated to become dragon slayers. This is related to Propp's insight, often quoted in this book, that the one born from the dragon is fated to kill the dragon.

Vaz da Silva switches gears to incorporate Norse sacrifices, Greek gender-bending, and Biblical bleeding in chapter 2, "Metamorphosis and Ontological Complexity." He considers characteristics of Odin and builds a homology between self-sacrifice and slaying one's ancestor. Like Odin, who gives up an eye for omniscience, the Greek prophet Teiresias overcomes sensory perception to "see" in a different sense, except his foresight is linked to serpents and sex-swapping. Turning to Genesis, Vaz da Silva discusses the origin of menstruation as associated with serpents and clairvoyance, and connects castration, menstruation, and clairvoyance to ophidian metamorphosis. The insights of Propp and Lévi-Strauss help relate these symbolic associations back to fairy tales: Propp by claiming that all fairy tale plots are variations of each other and contain metamorphosing characters, and Lévi-Strauss by his famous formula of mythic transformations, which Vaz da Silva applies to describe the "twofold dimension of ontological complexity (two in one) and of identity of opposites (two as one) concerning a dynamic notion of cyclically reversed identity, which spells out metamorphosis" (87).

The skins or filth worn by heroines in the Cinderella cycle reveal a bride, who can also be won by killing a dragon, leading to Vaz da Silva's fascinating

suggestion that “The *Cinderella* and the *Dragon Slayer* cycles would then seem to envision one single process of disenchantment from symmetric points of view” (102). Vaz da Silva concludes this chapter by asserting that Propp is “fundamentally right” in deriving all tales from the *Dragon Slayer* theme, for the tales as well as “all ‘mythological’ traditions concerned with metaphysics” (105) partake in cyclic and sacrificial release from ophidian sources.

In the third chapter, “Bloody Tales,” Vaz da Silva deconstructs folkloristic assumptions such as types and archetypes, which destroy the thematic plot unity and obscure the symbolic equivalencies at the crux of his argument. Vaz da Silva reprimands folklorists for “taking arbitrarily defined types for things out there” and working from a perspective that “leads one to take oral tales as corrupted forms of hypothetical original texts, each composed only of its only motifs . . . and ascribes to folklorists the task of reconstituting these ‘archetypes’” (115). Moreover, Vaz da Silva challenges another assumption by inquiring why different criteria apply to oral folk-tellers and to the Grimms and Perrault. Here, Vaz da Silva follows Holbek’s precedent in surveying scholarship on AT 333, but instead with the aim of showing that folklorists have unfairly dismissed literary rewritings from symbolic analysis. By reviewing the details of “Le Petit Chaperon rouge,” the “Conte de la Mère grand,” and a medieval poem, Vaz da Silva illustrates that symbolic themes remain constant in literary versions, even as surface qualities fluctuate.

Vaz da Silva builds another argument atop Holbek’s scholarship in order to use the Danish folklorist to exemplify the detrimental “old ‘Finnish’ mode of tradition as corruption”: Holbek’s “so-called use of the allomotif method amounts in practice to discarding all changes” that deviate from the “original” tales (145). However harsh Vaz da Silva’s criticism might seem, he does folklorists a service by insisting that we treat all texts with respect, regardless of how they fit into our conceptual schemes.

He begins chapter 4, “The Core of Fairy Tales,” with a discussion of four versions of the *Dragon Slayer* (AT 300), in which single, double, and triple heroes prove equivalent and display Cinderella-like characteristics such as shoes-tests and alternations between humble and magnificent states. Dealing with varying numbers of siblings, Vaz da Silva intriguingly suggests that “Olrik’s ‘laws’ of Three, of Contrast, and of Twins are inseparable facets of a deeper principle of dynamic unity underlying a landscape of complex entities” (173). In fairy tales, the antagonist shares this complexity: dragons and witches can be many-headed creatures. The undifferentiated aspect of female antagonists suggests a symbolic “return to the womb,” providing an “overall image of male rebirth through death” (176).

Vaz da Silva proceeds to use not only the Oedipus folktale but also the Oedipus complex to understand these themes of male rejuvenation, and he

justifies this by investigating how folklore has inspired Freud (181–84). He concludes: “If indeed a hermeneutic circle causes folklore to work as a model for psychoanalysis, it is only to be expected that Freudian models should present an overall fitting to folkloric schemes” (185).

Whether Freud applies to feminine tales is more complex; Vaz da Silva presents evidence for menstrual and virginity taboos, which relate to being kept by and being one with the dragon in fairy tales. This proximity to dragons, like closeness to amorous fathers in variants of *Cinderella* (namely AT 510B), suggests incest, a topic Vaz da Silva deals with in his conclusion. He argues that “fairy-tale heroines and heroes are structurally incestuous” (228), which makes sense in light of his symbolic equivalencies throughout the book, but which may not in itself solve every problem of fairy-tale interpretation. Performance and feminist issues, for example, are not considered, and the Freudian models employed depict women as passive objects of their sons’ incestuous desires (189) and as passive objects circulating in semiotic squares, a bind that Vaz da Silva acknowledges (225). Other Freudian contentions, such as women are slow to enjoy sex because their husbands are inadequate substitutes for their fathers (205) and women suffer from penis envy (236), inform Vaz da Silva’s construction of symbolism in fairy tales. Despite the displeasure this caused my inner feminist, I came to terms with this dimension of the book by realizing that the Oedipus complex is an expression of male power, and the discourse of a patriarchal society logically bears the imprint of its power structure. This book’s bibliography alone is magnificent, and I’m certain other folklorists will find *Metamorphosis* as thought-provoking as I did.

Jeana Jorgensen
Indiana University

Pregnant Fictions: Childbirth and the Fairy Tale in Early-Modern France. By Holly Tucker. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2003. 213 pp.

Pregnant Fictions offers a fascinating look at the intersections of medical discourse and fairy tales in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century France. Delving into the realms of midwifery, fertility, embryological theory, sexual and nutritional sex-selection practices, pregnancy cravings, cesarean sections, and maternal markings, Holly Tucker illuminates a space of intersecting social and narrative practices. That space is, for Tucker, both conflictual and gendered, with fairy tales seen as sites in which a predominantly female body of authors explored and resisted prevailing male obstetrical practices and embryological theories. *Pregnant Fictions* looks at the ways in which early-modern fairy tales intersected with and challenged dominant discourses on the body. Within the network of intertextual references that forms the fabric of *Pregnant Fictions*, lies

a portrait of competing male and female discourses on the body and a celebration of women's challenges to male authority.

Pregnant Fictions sets conception and childbirth at the core of human experience, looking at the myriad of ways in which the reproductive body becomes shared by different cultural discourses. Chapter 1 opens the work in some real and bizarre stories of the womb, offering opportunities to revise the boundaries between salon fictions and academic sciences. The scene of Queen Marie-Thérèse's demand in 1681 to examine the womb of the dissected cadaver of a young pregnant woman who had died suddenly, sets the stage for a discussion of the early-modern fascination with reproductive anatomy and the imbrication of "fact-finding and fiction-making" (19). Tucker follows reports of post-term pregnancies and petrified fetuses, paying particular attention to the tales surrounding the pregnancies of two women, Colombe Chatri in 1582 and Marguerite Mathieu in 1678. The chapter contains a useful chart of the various textual and illustrative sources of stories and embellishments that added material, in the case of Chatri, for more than a hundred years. Comparing variants in *Le Mercure galant* (targeting an audience of salon women) and *Le Journal des Sçavans*, Tucker looks at the ways in which salon and academic worlds collided and merged.

Chapter 2 posits the central thesis of the book, that the fairy-tale tradition that began with Mme d'Aulnoy and was continued and developed by Bernard, Murat, Lhéritier, La Force, and others reveals a female-centered response to prevailing embryological theory. Tucker looks at the diverse ways in which women writers may have gained knowledge of obstetrical practice and academic medical theory, including a mix of personal experience, family, social, and salon connections to members of the medical and scientific community, and popular sources of obstetrical practice and knowledge. She gives an overview of the interactions of women authors with members of the medical and scientific elite, tracing the association of the women authors with the Academia dei Ricovrati of Padua, which had a strong interest in the biological sciences. Mademoiselle Bernard was related to the natural philosopher Bernard Le Bovier de Fontenelle, Lhéritier was the niece of both the academicien Charles Perrault and the doctor Claude Perrault. D'Aulnoy, La Force, Murat, and Bernard were also members of the Marquise de Lambert's salon, which was frequented by male members of the Académie des Sciences. Tucker also suggests popular sources of reproductive knowledge, such as the *Observations diverses* by the midwife Louise Bourgeois. While sure and direct influences are difficult to prove, the chapter situates the women within multiple avenues of access to medical and philosophical thought.

In chapter 3, Tucker looks at fertility in the tales and the role of fairies as facilitators of conception, focusing on the triadic relation among fairies, witch-

es, and midwives. A quick overview of ancient yet enduring superstitions traces interesting links among the works of Pliny and Ovid, the *Malleus Maleficarum*, and fairy tales. It indicates fertile terrain that others will surely want to continue to explore. Particularly good in this chapter is Tucker's illustration that the objects associated with the practice of midwifery in early modern France were also the objects frequently found in fairy tales. The overview of decrees on midwifery is useful.

Chapters 4 and 5 look at gendered relations in the tales and at procreative strategies tied to gender. "It's a Girl" studies the art of making boy or girl babies. Here Tucker proposes that the tendency to produce girls in d'Aulnoy's work represents a show of female reproductive strength and reflects a modified Galenist view of nature. "Like Mother, Like Daughter" takes the comparison a step further, suggesting figurative references in tales to preformationism. References to childbirth manuals, advice on prenatal nutrition by physicians including Paré, Guillemeau, and others evoke an interesting and still insufficiently studied medical history. Tucker draws a parallel between theories of ovist preformation and images of enclosure (such as an acorn containing a miniature dog) in d'Aulnoy's tales. Other readers will see other contexts of influence for the miniature and encased objects and cascading fruits of fairy tales: literary sources, the history of court festival and display, artistic traditions, and practices of art and natural history collection for example. Tucker opens a realm that will surely provoke discussion and additional research. The book closes on a particularly strong note, with a look at embryological references in Enlightenment fairy tales by François de Plantade, l'Abbé Jean-Paul Bignon, and Mlle de Lubert. Plantade is one of the fascinating figures in Tucker's book. Plantade was obscure astronomer whose history crosses the realms of science and tales. He left to posterity fanciful diagrams of tiny men emerging from sperm that found their way into the collected works of Leeuwenhoek. Plantade also published fairy tales filled with tiny beings and an egg-laying fairy. Plantade himself crossed the realms of both science and literature, allowing for a particularly convincing interdisciplinary reading.

Pregnant Fictions is part of an evolving trend in fairy-tale studies towards increasingly interdisciplinary perspectives, and it will inspire new research and more discussion in the field. With solid research into early-modern science and medicine, it has the merit of presenting an overview of works by a range of early-modern midwives, physicians, scientists, and philosophers including Bourgeois, Paré, Fernel, Guillemeau, Joubert, Culpepper, Mauriceau and many others in extremely readable fashion. Tucker mixes recent work on medical history with critical work on the body and gender, including references to such familiar figures in those realms as Laqueur, Pinto-Correia, Kristeva, Jordanova, Greenblatt, and others. The specialists of fairy tales cited will be familiar to an audience of

French fairy-tale critics. Focused primarily on the French early modern, its crossdisciplinary perspectives on medicine and tales are applicable to a broad range of early-modern European problems. It is a book that is a must for those working in gendered or interdisciplinary perspectives in fairy tales, and one that will be of interest to anyone curious about the ways in which early-modern science, marvel, and tale-telling crossed boundaries.

Kathryn A. Hoffmann
University of Hawai'i, Mānoa

National Dreams: The Remaking of Fairy Tales in Nineteenth-Century England.

By Jennifer Schacker. Philadelphia: University of Philadelphia Press, 2003. 198 pp.

Folklorists commonly agree that, in the nineteenth century, England—contrary to both Scotland and Wales—did not sport a living tradition of folk and fairy tales. Whatever the reasons for this development might have been, it appears as a matter of course that towards the beginning of the nineteenth century the growing reading public in England had to look for other than local traditions to satisfy their curiosity in terms of popular reading matter. Wherever those other traditions would be found—in European or non-European countries—they were bound to be adapted to the contemporary English world view in order to prove appealing and, hence, commercially successful. This general situation constitutes the theoretical grounding for Schacker's journey through the “national dreams” of the day.

As a point of start, Schacker follows the evaluation of one “of the earliest systematic observer's of folktale publication in England” (8), Charlotte Yonge (see also 44–45, 47), who in her 1869 essay on “Children's Literature of the Last Century” evaluated three publications of the early nineteenth century as “real good fairy books”: Edgar Taylor's translation of the brothers Grimm's *Kinder- und Hausmärchen*, published under the title of *German Popular Stories* (1823), Thomas Crofton Croker's *Fairy Legends and Traditions of the South of Ireland* (1825), and George Webbe Dasent's *Popular Tales from the Norse* (1859), from whose introduction Schacker takes her title (see 134). To this trinity, Schacker has added another highly influential publication of the time, Edward William Lane's translation of the *Arabian Nights* (1838–40), the first ever English-language translation rendering a more or less complete text as prepared directly from the Arabic. Besides being welcomed by the public as popular reading matter, these four collections share another criterion, easily recognizable from their respective titles: all of them present popular tales from regions other than England—Germany, Ireland, Norway, and the Arab world. In the light of present day considerations about the marketing of specific products and the ways to meet the expectations of readers, Schacker's study promises fascinating reading, and indeed it is.

Schacker's study is clearly structured and in its four main chapters presents the four collections considered: Taylor (13–45), Croker (46–77), Lane (78–116), and Dasent (117–137). The main chapters are bracketed by an introduction (1–12) and a conclusion (138–150), and followed by notes (151–178), a bibliography (179–188), and an index (189–195). Within the main chapters, the author develops detailed discussions of the background and contemporary English reception of the respective works. The discussions as a rule comprise a standard set of arguments dealing with the translated publication in its original context, the biography of its translator (and editor), the translator's theoretical considerations in choosing and adapting the tales, and the collection's story of success, together with a discussion of the publishers and their editorial strategies; except for Dasent's work, illustrations are also considered as an important constituent in the transmission of (mental) images. Of the four collections discussed, two are particularly noteworthy for their ensuing repercussions: Taylor's reductive presentation of a German peasant world, convincingly visualized in George Cruikshank's illustrations, proved so successful as to instigate the original collection's authors to prepare a similar selection in German; and Lane's narrative image of the Arab world, accompanied by a wealth of annotation and illustration both relying on firsthand experience by its readers was soon taken as an ethnographic guide mirroring contemporary reality.

Schacker's writing is dense and convincing, and the impressive multitude of her detailed arguments is difficult to summarize. Besides numerous other important problems touched upon more or less casually, she focuses on three main points: first, the reasons for the previously prevailing unavailability of local fairy tales in England and the problems caused by the genre's renewed popularity; second, the different strategies employed by the translators in the presentation of the foreign collections to the English public, the "remaking of fairy tales" (keywords are: familiarizing, foreignizing, and domesticating); and, third, the resulting products as compared to the original publications. While each of the works under consideration holds specific characteristics, the common denominator of their English-language presentation turns out to be "the accurate representation of cultural difference" (91). None of the translated collections is seriously concerned with whatever "true" or "authentic" image of the respective original national traditions (and at times the translations superbly disregard both original wording and original context), instead employing them as a means to portray Otherness in an adapted shape. This shape is characterized by the biased reduction of the original as well as by the transformation and remolding of the remaining texts. As a result of this process, contemporary readers were presented with tales that successfully met their expectations while purporting to be faithful to their respective originals. Were



it not for the fact that the like attitudes are only too well known from other regions and periods, one would feel tempted to link them to Britain's world rule and the intellectual appropriation of objects that were otherwise unavailable to her hegemonic supremacy.

As a European reader, I find Schacker's study highly fascinating and convincing, since it demonstrates the sensitive exploration of various levels of interpretation addressed at a variety of different objects with a common denominator. The density of her language, however, is not always of advantage, particularly when she repeatedly succumbs to folklorist jargon. Besides various modernist constructions such as "metanarratologically" (53), "narrativization" (144) and "illustratability" (146), the author's favorite term appears to be "indexicality" (5, 11, 63, 138, 143); in want of a suitable explanation in Webster's dictionary, I understand this term to denote the capacity of a specifically molded representation to transmit cultural complexity in a reduced shape that by its recipients is taken as indicating representative characteristics of the respective (foreign) tradition (German "Zeichenhaftigkeit"). Moreover, I am struck by the fact that while Schacker sensitively studies the English appropriation of cultural properties originating from linguistically non-English regions, she almost completely disregards the various languages of origin, both in her discussion and her bibliography. A rare exception in the discussion is mentioned when she quotes Taylor's comparison of the original German (in literal translation) and his English rendering (28–29); the only exception in the bibliography concerns two of Heinz Rölleke's editions of the Grimms' German tales. Of course it might be argued that one does not necessarily have to read German in order to study the aftermath of the *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* in their English translation; equally, the amount of serious scholarly studies on the background and character of Lane's adaptation of the *Arabian Nights* appears reliably sufficient in order not having to take recourse to a first hand study of the Arabic original. But what of Croker's Irish tales, about the original language of which (Gaelic or English) we are not even informed? Or what of Dasent's rendering of Peter Christian Asbjørnsen and Jørgen Moe's *Norske Folkeeventyr* that is discussed in much detail, but without the least connection to the original Norwegian texts? What should be made of the author's own position towards the statement she quotes from Dasent's introduction that "it may fairly be said of a man who knows only one language that he knows none" (128)? At least in the Norwegian case, the author's disregard of the foreign language the English language adaptation of whose popular traditions she studies points out an important lacuna. At the same time, it appears to be indicative of something more than a neglect that in the specific case of the study under consideration might well be justified. Even though institutions of higher education in the United States repeatedly deplore their students' lack of



command of standard European languages, no serious initiatives are taken to encourage a broad individual language competence. Instead, this competence is relegated to the “specialists,” upon whose assessments (and the implied bias) even the intellectual public is becoming more and more dependent. In this manner, Schacker’s study cannot avoid being the child of an age that combines a tremendous amount of sensitivity in adapting foreign messages to the own cultural context with an equally large and commonly accepted disregard of the Other’s sensitivities in their own definition.

Above these blemishes arising from a general critique of its intellectual context, Schacker’s study impresses by its high degree of reflection and the concise web of arguments she convincingly employs to convey her message. It opens a new window on the constantly relevant problem of cultural appropriation and deserves to be read as an insightful study of an important area of folklorist research.

Ulrich Marzolph
Göttingen

The Emperor’s Old Groove: Decolonizing Disney’s Magic Kingdom. Edited by Brenda Ayres. New York: Peter Lang, 2003. 203 pp.

The last decade has seen a proliferation of critical collections focused on the Disney empire, signaling, perhaps, that Western culture’s defensive love-affair with the Disney product is finally on the wane. Brenda Ayres’s collection is firmly in the tradition set by Bell, Haas, and Sells’s *From Mouse to Mermaid* (1995) or Eric Smoodin’s *Disney Discourse* (1994): a reasonably eclectic collection of essays on various aspects of Disney’s film and corporate culture. Inevitably, the tendency for any critical collection to swing wildly between poles of discourse, theory, and quality is exaggerated by the breadth of Disney’s cultural artifact and by the often widely differing critical backgrounds from which critics of Disney hail.

Ayres’s collection finds some kind of focus by stating its intention to be “a series of close readings of individual animated films. . . . a close, careful look at the very heart of Disney” (3). It thus offers more concentrated textual concerns than do Bell et al., who include live action films from Touchstone and Hollywood Pictures, or Smoodin’s collection, which includes considerable analysis of the theme parks. The focus on animation is productive, underlining the extent to which it is the animated icons which define Disney to its consumers, and the animated films which define the ideological and cultural construction of the familiar images. At the same time, the limitation leads to a certain smoothing of theme, suggested by the collection’s section topics—Family, Women, Culture, Literature, History. While certain essays stand out, the overall effect of both the sectioning and the bulk of the essays is a faint but

persistent sense of déjà vu; despite the disparity of critical approaches, they at times echo not only each other, but the general themes and insights of earlier collections. Disney scholarship, it would seem, is moving towards some kind of canonical consensus; *The Emperor's Old Groove* is exactly that.

The sense of an accepted canon of Disney insight is strengthened in the collection by the degree to which individual essays take for granted the scholarly historicity of their approach. "Disneyfication" has apparently become an accepted critical term, used straight-faced and without explanation. Few essays offer any contextualization of Disney as cultural monolith, launching in many cases into an analysis of cultural imperialism or problematical ideology in a particular film, without pausing to define in any depth the terms in which the monolith constructs *itself*. The effect is curiously unbalanced: the essays on the whole do not acknowledge, other than in passing, the essential tension between Disney's popularity as innocent, family entertainment and the ideological minefield which underpins that smug surface. Ayres's Acknowledgments and Epilogue bookend the essays with a slightly shamefaced admission of pleasure in the Disney product, but none of the essays address this issue in any depth. This ends up exaggerating the lack too often seen in Disney criticism, of engagement with the difficult, seductive, embarrassing problem of Disney's appeal, the pleasure it creates despite everything we can do to deny it. Since this tension between the critical and the popular is, to me, one of the most interesting aspects of reading Disney, explorations of specific films in the terms simply of gender issues or colonialism seem to me to be rather flat. Those essays which dealt with feminist criticism, in particular, were to me the most problematical, reiterating the same old tropes.

That said, many essays in the collection offer new insight or the succinct summation of previous critical trends. Brian E. Szumsky's sociopolitical reading of *Mary Poppins* is agile and entertaining, and offers fascinating comparisons with P. L. Travers's original text. Diane Sachko Macleod's exploration of *Aladdin* in the context of the Gulf War brings together existing strands of criticism to form a persuasive and coherent whole, while Sheng-mei Ma's "Mulan Disney" is a welcome treatment of a seldom-analyzed film, offering the most sustained treatment of Disney's play with familiarity and identification. It was refreshing, too, to see attention paid to Disney's appropriation of other narrative traditions, in essays tracing the Shakespearean resonances in Disney films; Stephen M. Buhler's examination of *The Lion King* as *Hamlet*, and Richard Finkelstein's tracing of parallels between *The Little Mermaid* and *The Tempest*.

The fruitfulness of narrative approaches brings me to my final issue with Ayres's collection. I would agree with her that the animated film is indeed the heart of Disney and the best exemplification of its ideological tendencies, and in this the collection forms a useful and comprehensive textbook. At the heart

of Disney's animated empire, however, lie its fairy-tale films, its most defining and successful texts. As a whole, the collection lacks sustained theoretical attention to issues of fairy-tale or folkloric narrative, thus neglecting precisely those questions of ownership and community investment which would help to address Disney's reception as a popular narrative form. While several essays deal with the fairy-tale films, references to fairy-tale theory are glancing or embedded in broader debate; some essays offer comparisons between literary fairy tale and Disney versions, but these tend to be superficial. Obviously no one collection can do everything, but I cannot help but feel that this particular omission has impoverished an otherwise interesting work.

Jessica Tiffin

University of Cape Town, South Africa

The Poets' Grimm: 20th Century Poems from Grimm Fairy Tales. Edited by Jeanne Marie Beaumont and Claudia Carlson. Ashland, OR: Story Line Press, 2003. 287 pp.

This anthology of twentieth-century fairy-tale poems is a publishing desideratum finally come true. My own compilation entitled *Disenchantments: An Anthology of Modern Fairy Tale Poetry* (Hanover, NH: UP of New England, 1985) has been out of print for a number of years, and it was high time that someone undertook the necessary task of editing a new collection of this fascinating subgenre of lyric poetry. Jeanne Marie Beaumont and Claudia Carlson have put together a superb anthology, and they are to be commended for their careful and sensitive selection of poems. They have purposely stayed away from duplicating authors and poems from my earlier anthology. In fact, only 14 of the 78 authors included in *Disenchantments* also appear (usually with different texts) in *The Poets' Grimm*, with the latter volume featuring poems by 112 poets. This handsomely produced book with its fairy-tale-like low price is thus a treasure trove of fairy-tale poetry, a volume designed for the general reader but also most suitable for the classroom. *Disenchantments* had found considerable use in English and folklore classes, especially in Women's Studies courses, Honors programs, and first-year special topics seminars. There is no doubt that this new and more comprehensive anthology would be a perfect textbook, and I hasten to urge its adaptation both on the advanced high school and college level.

The two editors provide a mere six-page introduction, arguing convincingly that earlier fairy-tale poetry usually consisted of retellings of commonly known fairy tales, to wit poems by Alfred Tennyson, Bret Harte, John Greenleaf Whittier, and James Whitcomb. This modus operandi changed at the beginning of the twentieth century, when poets well versed in the fairy-tale tradition started to reinterpret the tales or parts of them in innovative and thought-provoking fashion. As I have argued in my entry on "Poetry and Fairy

Tales” in Jack Zipes’s *The Oxford Companion to Fairy Tales* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2000), “the basic message of most 20th-century poems based on or at least alluding to fairy tales is one that this is a world of problems and frustrations, where nothing works out and succeeds as in these beautiful stories of ages past. And yet, by composing their poems around fairy-tale motifs, these authors if only very indirectly seem to long for that miraculous transformation to bliss and happiness” (388). This is certainly very obvious in the fairy-tale poems of some of the best English-language poets as, for example, Randall Jarrell, Anne Sexton, Sara Henderson Hay, Olga Broumas, Hayden Carruth, Louise Glück, Galway Kinnell, Maxine Kumin, Lisel Mueller, Allen Tate, and Jane Yolen. As expected, these poets are represented in *The Poets’ Grimm*, but the editors have also included many less-known poets, among them Regie Cabico, Mike Carlin, Anna Denise, Meg Kearney, Eline Lipkin, Margaret Rockwell, Maria Tarrone, and Estha Weiner.

For the most part, these poets and the many other authors who have written one or more fairy-tale poems reinterpret the Grimm tales in a humorous, parodic (at times nonsensical), ironical, cynical, or satirical fashion, thereby turning the positive wisdom of the tales into so-called anti-fairy tales. The themes of the poems are as universal as the insights into the human condition expressed in the traditional tales. Every imaginable human or social problem is treated, from love to hate, from politics to war, from marriage to divorce, from decency to criminality, and from sexual politics to emancipation. But there are also themes of deception, vanity, loneliness, manipulation, lovelessness, manipulation, frustration, and power. The happy ending of the fairy tales is transformed to express the complexities and anxieties of the modern age that seems far removed from the world of fairy tales. But it is the juxtaposition of the original tales with the innovative interpretations in these poems that leads to effective and insightful poetic communication. There is indeed something for everyone in these modern fairy-tale poems.

Glancing over the useful pages of “About the Authors” (261–72; it would have been useful to include the years of birth), one is inclined to agree with the editors that there appear to be “more poems on this subject by women than by men” (xiii). They are also correct in arguing that fairy tales “offer to girls and women prominent stereotypes with which they must grapple—beauty, stepsister, stepmother, witch, crone, princess, and of course ‘prince charming’” (xiii). Appropriately the anthology includes a section of poems entitled “The Grimm Sisterhood,” with the remaining nine sections grouping poems under such headings as “Mapping the Ways,” “Spinning the Tales,” “Voices & Viewpoints,” “Spell Binding & Spell Breaking,” “Magical Objects,” “Desire & Its Discontents,” “Variations & Updates,” “Ever After, or a Few Years Later,” and “Living the Tales.” While some of these thematic titles speak for them-

selves, others appear to be so general that most of the poems could have appeared under them. In any case, the editors decided to group their rich poetic materials under these ten themes rather than according to the dominant fairy tale under discussion in the individual poems. This was their choice to make, and this arrangement certainly overcomes the unavoidable repetitiveness of reading, for example, one poem after another about "Cinderella." For anybody wishing to find those poems that treat a particular fairy tale, the editors have included an invaluable "Index of Poems by Tale" (283), and there is also a useful and necessary "Index of Authors and Titles" (284–286).

As expected from cultural literacy considerations, the majority of the poems deal with such fairy tales as "Sleeping Beauty," "Cinderella," "The Frog Prince," "Hansel and Gretel," "Little Red Riding Hood," "Rapunzel," "Rumpelstiltskin," and "Snow White." This was also the case with my *Disenchantments*, of course. However, Beaumont and Carlson have now also unearthed and included poems based on such lesser-known Grimm fairy tales as "Brother and Sister," "The Fisherman and His Wife," "Foundling," "The Goose Girl," "The Juniper Tree," "The Maiden Without Hands," "Snow White and Rose Red," and others. This is a clear indication that the editors have cast their net very wide and deep indeed, making their anthology an extremely valuable poetry collection for cultural and literary historians, folklorists, psychologists, and above all for students and general readers.

Clearly the editors had to make difficult decisions about which poems by what authors to include in their splendid anthology. There was no need to register earlier poems from the nineteenth century that retell the basic tales. Not wanting to overlap too much with *Disenchantments*, they "weighted [their collection] more heavily toward the last half of the 20th century, including a generous sampling of the substantial body of fairy-tale poetry that has been published since 1985" (xiii). The anthology is thus clearly a complement to *Disenchantments* while at the same time also going far beyond it. Nevertheless, not even Beaumont and Carlson were able to include all of the fairy-tale poems they had located, especially since "the mining of fairy tales for the making of poems proceeds unabated in the new [21st] century" (xvi). There are still many fairy-tale poems to be anthologized, and perhaps Beaumont and Carlson are already at work on a future volume that will be needed in due time.

Be that as it may, I did a bit of checking in my own archive, and here is a short selected list of poets and poems that have not been included in *Disenchantments* or *The Poets' Grimm*. The two editors might enjoy adding this information to their holdings, assuming that they do not know much of it already: Moniza Alvi, "Red Ridinghood's Plan" (1993), Rae Armantrout, "As We're Told [Snow White]" (2002), Claire Bateman, "The Frog Princess" (1990), Jody Gladding, "But What about the Stepsisters [Cinderella]" (1993),

Maria Jacobs, "Ball-frog and Story" (1986), Paulette Jiles, "Snow White" (1988), Penny Kemp, "The Law of Sevens" (1984), Leslie Miller, "Cinderella" (1977), Sarah Provost, "The Frog Prince" (1986), Anne Scott, "The Thread [Hansel and Gretel]" (1973), Edith Sitwell, "The Sleeping Beauty" (1954), Jane O. Wayne, "To the Uninvited [Sleeping Beauty]" (1984), and Sheila Wingfield, "Rapunzel" (1984). That would be a small selection of female authors. But there are plenty of male poets as well who deserve to be included in future fairy-tale poetry anthologies, among them: Tom Absher, "Fable: Hansel" (1981), Henri Cole, "The Prince Enters the Forest [Sleeping Beauty]" (1988), Roz Cowman, "The Lost Witch Sings of Lost Children [Hansel and Gretel]" (1989), Peter Davison, "Sleeping Beauty Variations" (1977), John Dickson, "Cinderella" (1982), Len Gasparini, "Separated [Rapunzel]" (1980), John Haines, "In the House of Wax—VII" (2001), Andrew Harvey, "In Fairy Stories [general]" (1985), Adrian Henri, "Any Prince to Any Princess [Rapunzel]" (1986), Kevin Ireland, "A Popular Romance [Frog Prince]" (1970), Jan Kemp, "Cinderella" (1987), Michael Longley, "Graffiti [Frog Prince]" (1969), Ed Madden, "Frog Prince" (1994), Don McKay, "A Child's Hearse in the Huron County Museum [Cinderella]" (1980), John Medeiros, "Rapunzel" (1994), John Newlove, "Under the Civilized Skin the Savage Har Har [Rapunzel]" (1972), W. H. Oliver, "Rumpelstiltskin" (1980), Felix Pollak, "Cinderella Revisited" (1973), Kenneth Radu, "Aschenputtel's Sisters" (1984), Tennessee Reed, "Disney's *Cinderella*" (2003), Robert Service, "Cinderella" (1958), David R. Slavitt, "The Prince [Sleeping Beauty]" (1994), Jon Stallworthy, "End of a Fairy Tale [Sleeping Beauty]" (1970), and Walter Wangerin, "*Kinder- und Hausmärchen* [general]" (1987). Space does not permit listing more names, titles, and bibliographical information, but perhaps male poets write more fairy-tale poems than people tend to think. One is reminded of the proverb "Seek, and ye shall find" (Matthew 7:7).

With Beaumont's and Carlson's comprehensive anthology now readily available, it is to be hoped that literary scholars and folklorists will be more eager to study this subgenre of lyric poetry in greater detail. The somewhat disappointing "Selected Bibliography" (279–82) provided by the editors lists no scholarship on fairy-tale poems as such, save perhaps Alicia Ostriker's "Thieves of Language: Women Poets and Revisionist Mythology," in *Signs* 8 (1982–83): 68–90, dealing at least in part with Anne Sexton's fairy-tale poetry. There is, of course, some scholarship on her, Hays, Jarrell, and others that touches on fairy-tale issues, but much more research into this poetic subgenre is desirable. One of the best studies, albeit in German, is Barbara von Bechtolsheim's "Die Brüder Grimm neu schreiben: Zeitgenössische Märchengedichte amerikanischer Frauen" (diss., Stanford U, 1987). But this dissertation deals only with female poets and does not cover many of the more

recent authors included in Beaumont's and Carlson's anthology. The time has surely come for additional dissertations, articles, and books on this fascinating subject matter.

One thing is for certain, *The Poet's Grimm*, splendidly edited by Jeanne Marie Beaumont and Claudia Carlson, will become a classic in the vast literature on fairy tales. It deserves to be read and studied, and it should be sold by the thousands to general readers, students, and scholars. The price of the book is incredibly reasonable, and the Story Line Press deserves much praise for making this anthology available to readers of English everywhere in the world. Altogether this anthology is a most welcome and appreciated addition to the world of fairy tales, and the editors are to be congratulated for their labors—it's like a fairy tale come true to have *The Poets' Grimm* on the book market.

Wolfgang Mieder
University of Vermont

The Hard Facts of the Grimms' Fairy Tales. By Maria Tatar. Expanded second edition. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003. xxxvi + 325 pp.

The fairy-tale scholarship that emerged in the 1970s and 1980s is remarkable in both its quantity and quality. Most of this work occurred in the wake of the Grimm bicentennial celebrations in 1985–86, which occasioned a fundamental reassessment of the brothers' tales and generated enormous interest—both scholarly and popular—in the fairy tale. Among the influential works of scholarship that were published during those two decades, I think in particular of the several editions of Grimms' tales edited by Heinz Rölleke; Ruth B. Bottigheimer's *Grimms' Bad Girls and Bold Boys* (1987); James M. McGlathery's *The Brothers Grimm and Folktale* (1988); and the many books authored, edited, or translated by Jack Zipes, from *Breaking the Magic Spell* (1979) and *The Trials and Tribulations of Little Red Riding Hood* (1983), to *The Complete Tales of the Brothers Grimm* (1987) and *The Brothers Grimm* (1988). I also think of Maria Tatar's elegant study of the fairy tale's "hard core," *The Hard Facts of the Grimms' Fairy Tales*. Published in 1987, *The Hard Facts* is not only one of the most important studies that emerged from the bicentennial years, it is also, in a broader context, an exemplary work of scholarship. Attesting to the book's enduring values, Princeton University Press has now reissued it in a second expanded edition.

When I reviewed *The Hard Facts* after its first publication, I emphasized its successful interdisciplinary mix of methods from folklore, literary criticism, social history, and psychoanalysis; its lucid introduction to the fundamental realities of Grimms' collecting, editing, and rewriting; its sound analysis of the Grimms' male and female characters; and Tatar's compelling deconstruction of the Bluebeard tale and its critical reception, which in the meantime has become

one of the most frequently cited passages of her book. My assessment and admiration for this book have not changed. Its arguments and demonstrations remain fresh, and the expanded second edition brings new materials that enhance the book's usefulness, especially in teaching. Specifically, the expanded edition includes a new preface that speaks eloquently to the problems and power of Grimms' fairy tales in our cultural and personal lives and the need to "interrogate and take the measure of their project" (xvii) precisely because of that power. The new edition also offers translations and commentaries for six tales from the 1857 edition of the *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* ("Little Red Riding Hood," "Hansel and Gretel," "The Robber Bridegroom," "Cinderella," "Snow White," and "Thousandfurs"). Both the preface and the commentaries provide exquisitely formulated insights into Grimms' stories and in some cases brought on, at least for me, head-slapping insights into texts that have become all too familiar. For example, Tatar's brief discussion, in the preface, of "Little Red Riding Hood," the alternate ending the Grimms appended to it, and the unusual Swedish variant cited in the brothers' notes to the *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* prompted me to critically reconsider my understanding of how the Grimms constructed gender in the tale and to rethink how I have been teaching this story. The commentaries to the newly translated tales discuss them in psychological and cultural contexts and compare them to variants in literature, film, and popular culture. Here, too, Tatar offers fresh perspectives. For instance, after pointing out that "Snow White" has inspired fewer adaptations among artists, writers, and filmmakers than tales such as "Cinderella," she concludes that "'Snow White may well be dying a natural death in our culture' (235).

The expanded edition of *The Hard Facts of the Grimms' Fairy Tales* enriches an already rich volume of scholarship, one that, because of its clarity and engaging style, appeals to a very wide audience and is frequently used in undergraduate courses. For the scholar and student, the second edition might have been an even richer resource if the new preface and commentaries had provided references to existing scholarship on the topics that Tatar presents so engagingly—for example, on film adaptations of Grimms' classical tales, on fairy tales in media, advertising, and popular culture, and on the reception of the fairy tale in Holocaust literature and film. Nonetheless, *The Hard Facts of the Grimms' Fairy Tales* continues to provide readers with one of the finest introductions to Grimms' stories and an outstanding example of what literary scholarship, at its best, can achieve.

Donald Haase
Wayne State University

