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Mirosława ZIAJA-BUCHHOLTZ

WHEN DREAMS CAME TRUE: CLASSICAL FAIRY TALES AND THEIR TRADITION by Jack Zipes. New York and London: Routledge, 1999. x + 238 pp. ISBN 0-415-92151-1 pb. £ 12.99

Luckily for avid readers of fairy tales and fairy tale scholarship, Jack Zipes – one of the leading folklorists and critics of children's literature in the United States – is a very prolific author. In his recent book *When Dreams Came True* he brings together eleven introductions, afterwords, and essays he has published separately over the past fifteen years. Zipes, who rightly breaks with the tradition of reading fairy tales exclusively in a psychoanalytical way, defines his project as an attempt to write a social history of the literary fairy tale in Western society from the sixteenth on into the twentieth century. Two overarching assumptions bind the apparently centrifugal essays: the claim that literary fairy tales are historically determined, and the argument that literary fairy tales play an important role in the civilizing process. In all of the essays – those tracing literary developments in various periods (Chapters One, Two, and Six), as well as those devoted to a specific text or author (Chapters Three to Five, and Seven to Eleven) – Zipes explores the sociogeneric roots of literary fairy tales, and reads a large variety of individual texts as expression of their authors' personal desires, political views, and aesthetic preferences. He also focuses on the values, norms, aesthetic taste these tales impart to children and adults.

In Chapter One, "Spells of Enchantment: An Overview of the History of Fairy Tales", Zipes seeks the origins of the literary fairy tale in oral wonder tales, and focuses on class and gender aspects of their appropriation. He points out the subversive quality of the fairy tale as a genre institutionalized in France in the late seventeenth century (e.g. fairies were women, in contrast to the male-dominated Church hierarchy). Noting that fairy tales for children remained suspect until the 1820s, Zipes links increase in their popularity with the rise of the middle classes in the period of 1830–1900. He explores further the more explicit politicization of fairy tales in the first half of the twentieth century, and

commercialization of fairy tales since the 1950s. He winds up by discussing the most recent development of the genre, and argues that "[e]specially since the 1970s and 1980s, the fairy tale has become more aggressive, aesthetically more complex and sophisticated, and more insistent on *not* distracting readers but helping them focus on key social problems and issues in their respective societies" (25).

Chapter Two, "The Rise of the French Fairy Tale and the Decline of France", repeats and enlarges upon some of the tendencies pointed out in Chapter One. It depicts, more specifically, the French fairy tale of the late seventeenth century as a form of feminine pursuit: amusement as well as self-portrayal of aristocratic manners. Zipes distinguishes three waves of the French fairy-tale vogue: (1) the serious fairy tales that veiled their authors' criticism of Louis XIV and expressed their longing for paradise, (2) the oriental fairy tales, whose popularity paralleled the decline of French glory, and (3) the comic and conventional fairy tales that pulled in two opposite directions: their aim was either to parody the traditional fairy tales, or to use them as a means of socialization.

The following three chapters are devoted to individual texts and authors. The development of the *Arabian Nights* into a classical work for Western readers is traced in Chapter Three. Zipes focuses on both the text (especially the key role of Scheherezade in reeducating the man who listens to her stories, educating her sister, and the Moslem reader) and the context (especially the efforts of various translators). He views the *Arabian Nights* as a loudspeaker for the aspirations and wishes of a strong middle class.

Chapter Four, which recounts the vicissitudes of family and professional lives of the Brothers Grimm, likewise explores the political aspect of fairy-tale writing. Subverting some of the myths about the Grimms' methodology, Zipes reveals, for instance, that, contrary to popular beliefs, the Grimms did not visit peasants, but invited story tellers, mostly young women of middle-class or aristocratic background, who had only heard tales from their nurses, governesses and servants. The Grimms not only collected, but also created "an ideal type for the literary fairy tale, one that sought to be as close to the oral tradition as possible, while incorporating stylistic, formal, and substantial thematic changes to appeal to the growing middle-class audience" (71). The chapter ends with an overview of uses and abuses of the Grimms' fairy tales at the hands of folklorists, educators and psychoanalytical critics from the 1920s to the 1970s.

Hans Christian Andersen, whose life and career forms the subject matter of Chapter Five, completed the Grimms' mission of socializing the bourgeoisie. Zipes reads Andersen's fairy tales in the context of class conflict, and relations of power and domination. He argues that the dynamism of these fairy tales stems from the tension between Andersen's sympathy for the disenfranchised and his servility to the upper classes. Claiming that "Andersen placed power in divine

providence, which invariably acted in the name of bourgeois essentialist ideology" (91), Zipes analyzes Andersen's thirty most popular tales in an attempt to locate the factors that constitute their popularity. He reaches the conclusion that in all of these tales happiness involves adjusting to domination.

In Chapter Six, "The Flowering of the Fairy Tale in Victorian England", Zipes explains why literary fairy tale was denigrated and failed to establish itself as a genre in Britain until the nineteenth century, when it was first promoted by the romantic movement and employed to question inequalities caused by the industrial revolution. At mid-nineteenth century, literary fairy tale was used to express opinions about religion, education, and progress. Zipes focuses on three Victorian writers: Charles Dickens, Lewis Carroll, and George MacDonald, who in the years 1840–1880 combined in their fairy tales the regressive longing for innocent bliss with progressive social concerns. Zipes points out two directions taken by fairy-tale authors from 1860 to 1900: conventionalism (which did not allow social criticism or subversion), and utopianism (in which magic and nonsense figured as liberating forces). He lists the following crucial qualities of utopian fairy tales in Britain: strong feminine (if not feminist) influence, the tone of social protest, denial of materialism, and experiments with audience expectations. Toward the end of the nineteenth century there was a growing tendency among fairy-tale authors to support the ideas of Christian and Fabian socialism (131). In the following chapter, Zipes discusses Oscar Wilde's fairy tales in the context of both personal and social concerns. He proves that Wilde's tales contain homoerotic portrayals, as well as allusions to Fabian socialism, and that Wilde, like Freud, was interested in "civilization and its discontents".

The remaining four chapters discuss the contribution of four fairy-tale writers: an Italian, two Americans, and a German. In Chapter Eight, Zipes analyzes Collodi's tragic-comic fairy-tale novel of education *Pinocchio* at the background of the author's political and literary career. Zipes emphasizes the social forces that shape the protagonist, and notices similarities between Pinocchio and Huck Finn. He points out the tension between skepticism and optimism that results from the clash between the author's intention and the readers' expectations; Collodi was forced by readers' protests to continue the tale beyond the pessimistic ending.

Chapter Nine revives interest in the forgotten American pioneer of fairy tales, Frank Stockton. Zipes draws analogies between Stockton's and Twain's criticism of American materialism and greed, and presents Stockton as an author who showed concern with social issues after the Civil War. Avoiding heavy didacticism, Stockton ridiculed in his tales the abuse of power. Frank Baum's fourteen Oz novels are the focus of attention in Chapter Ten. Zipes points out the shift in "Oz Scholarship" that took place in 1988 from the traditional reading of the novels as an homage to populism and social utopianism to the recent charges against Baum's alleged cult of consumerism, his anti-feminism, and

retrogressive political ideas. Zipes takes exception to these attacks on Baum and argues that the world of Oz transcends and subverts the commodity system in that it glorifies and relies on gift economy. Two principles govern the world of Oz: magic is used only for the good of people, and it rests in the hands of women. “Creative exploration and artistic transformation of space into home [...] is the teleological force that guides all the Oz books [...]” (177). In the chapter on *Pinocchio* as well as in the chapter on *The Wizard of Oz*, Zipes juxtaposes the books and their film adaptations, clearly favoring the social and political complexity of the books.

Hermann Hesse’s achievement in the domain of fairy tale and fantasy literature is likewise discussed in the context of his life and political views. Influenced by Nietzsche, the German romantics, and Oriental religions, Hesse perceived art as the ultimate self-fulfillment. He nevertheless departed, occasionally, from his solipsistic position to consider the responsibility of the artist in society.

When Dreams Came True is an inspiring book, a wide panorama that despite the ostensibly fragmentary quality, retains unity and coherence. Its magic cannot be broken by the pranks of some mischievous imp that found particular pleasure in jumbling up dates in two important cases. In Chapters One and Two instead of the 1690s, the 1790s are repeatedly, and confusingly, referred to as the time of fairy-tale vogue in France (14, 39, 40, 41). In Chapter Six (on Victorian fairy tales), 1688, that is the year of the Glorious Revolution, is mistakenly associated with the onset of restrictive Puritan rule (111–112, 132).

Zipes clearly has an eye for the big picture, and like a master painter points out the blank areas that his disciples may want to fill in with details. He has a talent for posing fundamental and provocative questions (examples on pages 31, 61, 81, 137, 141). Some of his puzzling sentences may set the reader pondering and researching (e.g. “The speaker/writer posits the self against language to establish identity and to test the self with and against language” 2). The book contains black-and-white illustrations reprinted from the old editions of fairy tales, and it seems to remain for Zipes’s disciples to find a way of integrating these illustrations into critical discourse (the commentary on the portrait of Rumpelstiltskin on page 75 is particularly enigmatic and hence thought-provoking). The value of the book is also enhanced by a very extensive bibliography of primary and secondary literature, as well as an index of names, titles, and issues.