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Review

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*Im Reich der Wünsche*. Edited by Shawn C. Jarvis. Munich: C. H. Beck, 2012. 366 pp.

More than 400 German women writers published fairy tales in the nineteenth century, but today nearly all of their works are out of print and unavailable in most libraries. In *Im Reich der Wünsche*, Shawn C. Jarvis gives these stories new life, bringing them back into print. As she says in the afterword, playing off the common German fairy-tale ending, “Damit sie nicht sterben, sollen sie weiterleben in diesem Band” (“in order for them not to die, they must live on in this volume,” 319). *Im Reich der Wünsche* cannot possibly include all the fairy tales that German women wrote in the nineteenth century, but Jarvis has provided a carefully curated selection of twenty-one stories that demonstrate the wide variety of women who were writing in the period and the significance of their contribution.

Of course it is difficult to talk about *Im Reich der Wünsche* without mentioning *The Queen’s Mirror*, a collection of translations of these rare stories that Jarvis published together with Jeannine Blackwell in 2001. *The Queen’s Mirror* was a much needed volume of new translations of women’s fairy tales, but because the original German stories remained in inaccessible out-of-print sources, many readers were left wishing for a similar collection in German. Even though *Im Reich der Wünsche* is that collection, it is not simply a German version of *The Queen’s Mirror*. A third of the collection is made up of new stories, and its structure is significantly different. Unlike *The Queen’s Mirror*, it has no introduction or preface and the stories are not individually introduced; rather, the biographical and historical information has been shifted to appendixes. This allows one to read tale after tale uninterrupted by secondary information. Lovely illustrations throughout by Isabel Große Holtforth help to bind the diverse stories together into a unified whole.

And this is a worthy task, for the authors and tales vary widely. If these stories were left to die, as Jarvis phrased it, in the few archives that still held them, with them would die the unique perspectives of their authors and their important contributions to fairy-tale history. For instance, Elisabeth Ebeling’s “Schwarz und Weiß” (“Black and White,” 1869) takes on race relations and comes to a surprising conclusion for the nineteenth century: “Dass die Farbe der Haut Nebensache ist und dass nichts darauf ankommt, ob man weiß oder schwarz aussieht, wenn man nur weise ist” (“The color of skin is secondary, and it does not matter if one is white or black, if one is only wise,” 262). One of the new stories in the collection, Friederike Helene Unger’s “Prinzessin Gracula” (1804), is a kind of *Bildungsmärchen*, in which a princess must pass through a magical world of metaphorical trials. Another new tale in this collection is Charlotte von Ahlefeld’s “Die Nympe des Rheins” (1812), in which an

Undine recounts “den kurzen Traum des meines vergangenen Glücks” (“the short dream of my long-lost joy,” 63) in her own words just a year after Friedrich de la Motte Fouqué’s *Undine* was published. Jarvis also includes several of the Grimms’ informants’ stories that were deemed unfit for *Kinder- und Hausmärchen*. Take Ludovica Brentano Jordis des Bordes’s “Der Löwe und der Frosch” (“The Lion and the Frog,” 1814), which tells of a young woman who saves her brother in an active and transgressive manner by cutting off her master the lion’s head. When it turns out that her brother was in fact the lion himself, enchanted until “eine Mädchenhand aus Liebe zu mir dem Löwen den Kopf abhauen würde” (“a girl’s hand would cut off the head of the lion out of love for me,” 89), it is clear that she released both her brother from the role of oppressor and herself from his rule. “Der Löwe und der Frosch” originally appeared in the second volume of the Grimms’ collection in 1815 but was removed from subsequent editions. Although Jarvis can give us only a taste of the hundreds of tales women wrote in the period, her collection foregrounds the incomplete picture that is painted when we fail to include women writers in the study of German literature.

Following the tales is an afterword with a wide historical overview that reaches back centuries to relate the long history of European women and fairy tales. Without overgeneralizing, Jarvis discusses how women writers have used fairy-tale motifs and characters differently and how the tales were received in their own time. Following the afterword are short biographies, accompanied by rare portraits and photographs of the authors. These images are the result of intensive archival research by Jarvis, with assistance from Roland Specht Jarvis. This research also led to new details in the biographies, such as the revelation that Elisabeth Ebeling was a pseudonym for Christa Ling. Marie Timme’s biography, for example, includes new information on her upbringing, schooling, and life as a young widow and mother, whereas in *The Queen’s Mirror* her biography read, “Almost nothing is known about the life of Marie Timme” (225). For such authors as Ebeling and Timme, who were popular in their own time but are almost completely unknown today, such details are significant.

Following the biographies is another valuable addition to *Im Reich der Wünsche*: a bibliography of available sources for further reading, many of them online. Since *The Queen’s Mirror* was published in 2001, many more works have become available online, but they are distributed throughout the web at libraries and sites such as Google Books, Project Gutenberg, and Wikisource; and their digitization has been anything but systematic. This makes Jarvis’s list a wonderful resource for students, academics, and fairy-tale fans.

This is both the strength and weakness of *Im Reich der Wünsche*. The book’s structure allows the reader to enjoy the fairy tales as an uninterrupted

whole while still providing historical context, biographical information, and further reading in the appendixes. There is little direction, however, for those interested in more history or analysis, and, with the exception of the biographical sources, there is no bibliography of secondary literature. Students and readers will find the collection engaging and easy to enjoy, but a researcher would wish for more resources. This being taken into account, *Im Reich der Wünsche* is a well-organized and curated collection of some of the best fairy tales by German women in the nineteenth century. Jarvis's specific selections demonstrate not only the variety but also the quality of these tales and their important place in the literary landscape of German fairy tales.

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***The Donkey Lady and Other Tales from the Arabian Gulf.*** Edited by Patty Paine, Jesse Ulmer, and Michael Hersrud. Highclere, UK: Berkshire Academic Press, 2013. 264 pp.

This charming, well-produced large-format book is a group project conceived by students and faculty at the Virginia Commonwealth University of Qatar. Mostly female students, with the assistance of faculty members whose first language is English, collected and translated fifteen oral stories, which were then illustrated by College of Arts students. An intelligent short preface aptly invokes the collaborative fluidity of oral tradition to support attributing these stories to Qatari sources without making claims to exclusivity. The stories are both visually and textually accessible for young readers or listeners and aesthetically appealing to adult readers.

Each story is offered by a different student teller/writer and a different illustrator. Styles of illustration vary widely; all are effective and lively. Interestingly, the most conservative ("folkloric") styles belong to the only two illustrators with European names. The Arab students' techniques vary from lively pen and ink, to pastels (apparently), scratch work, felt pen, wash brushwork, and what appear to be paper cutout silhouettes. Their styles range from rather conservative literalist to anime, various cartoon styles, and abstract.

The stories vary by genre. There are two different variants of "The Kind and Unkind Girls" (AT 480) and a "Cinderella" variant (AT 410). Another magic tale's core array of motifs, familiar in regional oral tradition and the *1001 Nights*, has a young male hero carried off to the jewel-filled mountain aerie of a great bird, whence he escapes to a magic castle and opens a forbidden door, winning (temporarily) a supernatural bride. Among nonmagical tales, a legend of named male and female rivals explains the invention of sail technology among Gulf pearl fishers. There is one anecdote of Jouha, the Arab trickster/fool. Among admonitory tales are a version of "The Boy Who Cried Wolf";