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Review

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**Haase, Donald, ed.** *Fairy Tales and Feminism: New Approaches*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2004. 268 pp. \$27.95 paperback.

This collection of essays, an expanded version of a special issue of *Marvels & Tales*, offers a comprehensive overview of contemporary feminist fairy-tale scholarship and its many agendas, critical approaches, and concerns. The eleven essays are joined by the common thread: "the continuously emergent nature of the fairy tale and its powerful, if unpredictable, relation to gender" (Haase, xiii).

Like Haase's other work as an editor, this volume is expansive and interdisciplinary, assembling contributions from international scholars with multifaceted approaches. Haase's preface provides important sociohistorical and generic context, as well as background on the production and reception of the fairy tale. His introductory essay is an excellent overview of the thirty years of scholarship since the Lurie/Lieberman debates of the 1970s, and he clearly outlines the central concerns of feminist scholarship of the past three decades as they were created and then often defined by those debates. The bibliography is currently the most extensive available on contemporary feminist research dealing with the fairy tale.

Although not overtly presented in this way, the articles fall into relatively neat groupings. The first three (Bottigheimer on fertility control and the image of the modern European fairy-tale heroine; Seifert, on feminist approaches to 17<sup>th</sup>-century *Contes de fées*; and Blackwell, on German women's fairy tale fragments) rehearse the birth of the European tradition, with looks at sociohistorical, cultural, and literary influences on the writers of the early tales in France and Germany, and the recovery of the female tale writers by modern feminists. The second set of articles (by Harries and Stone) examines the autobiographical nature of tale-writing and -telling. Harries uses the fairy tale trope of the magic mirror and the fracturing of self to examine post-war novels; Stone reflects on her own story as a feminist critic, teller, and writer of fairy tales. Although a scholar and critic and well versed in this genre, she unwittingly changed characters and other details of the story in her re-tellings. She discovered she had retained the original's essential message, but that the message morphed as her own needs as story-teller and -writer shifted. With the next set of articles, the collection shifts the focus to relatively unstudied traditions (Odber de Baubeta, on Iberian and Latin American women's writing, and Mackintosh, on fairy tales in 20<sup>th</sup>-century Argentine women's writing). Despite the change in location to Latin and South America, the European traditions and the major figures the Grimms, Andersen, and Perrault cast their deep and sometimes murky shadows. The texts Odber de Baubeta and Mackintosh present highlight the ambiguity of cultural identity as their writers, descendants of the received and canonical European tradition, struggle in a kind of private diaspora, both inside and outside of that tradition. A fourth group (Haring, on creolization as agency, and Bacchilega, on cultural reproduction of India as "Wonder Tale") shifts our gaze to traditions that developed independently of European influences—tales and tellers from African and Southwest Indian Ocean regions, and tales of India in the diaspora. These traditions offer challenges to Anglo-American and Eurocentric scholars. These two essays, besides their contribution to the understanding of non-European cultural traditions, bring into focus disciplinary divisions facing fairy-tale studies to which Haase alludes in his preface. The last article, by Preston,

stands alone; it is a fitting conclusion to this collection because it points to many of the fissures in the bedrock of fairy tale scholarship and uses postmodern arguments to disrupt the boundaries of genre and gender with which other scholars have occupied themselves. Preston explodes the idea of the fairy tale *text* by looking at new media (feature-length films, TV shows and magazine ads using fairy tale themes and images) and suggests that “the accumulated web of feminist critique [...] may function as an emergent and authoritative—though fragmented and still under negotiation—multivocality that cumulatively is competitive with the surface monovocality of the inherited older fairy tale tradition” (199).

Preston points the way for feminist scholarship and writing that is struggling to move beyond seeing gender and genre in a reactive mode: as re-acting, re-writing, re-inventing the paradigms. The collection of essays will provide important springboards for that future research.

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**Heidenreich, Bernd, and Ewald Grothe, eds.** *Kultur und Politik: Die Grimms*. Frankfurt am Main: Societätsverlag, 2003. 368 pp. €19.90 hardcover.

In his memoirs of 1830, Jacob Grimm described his particular kind of “Liebe zum Vaterland” as follows: “es fällt mir ein, daß mein vierter [B]ruder...als Kind auf der hessischen Land-Cardt alle Städte größer und alle Flüsse dicker mahlte. Mit einer Art von Geringschätzung sahen wir z.B. auf Darmstädter herab” (17). With these words, Jacob introduces a kind of nationalism utterly dependent on the provincial and the local. His lightly ironic appeal to the reader’s own provincialism reveals a potentially more progressive aspect of the Grimms’ work—by openly stating and restating their love of province as love of country, the brothers participated in what Jack Zipes has called an idealistic discourse of “self-understanding and social enlightenment” (in *The Complete Fairy Tales of the Brothers Grimm*, 2003, p. xxxv).

The essays in the volume all imply or assert openly that the brothers’ nationalism was, in the final analysis, a fundamentally progressive nationalism—nationalism as a kind of a modest Protestant call for the right to speak up, and to create a Germany as good as, rather than superior to, its neighbors. However, due perhaps in part to their often rigorous focus on details of the Grimms’ lives and work, the essays ultimately do not explore the relationship that clearly did exist between the brothers’ affinity for the local and their longing for a national cultural identity, nor do the authors note Jacob’s sense of irony about his own intense love of home. The discussion of such questions is admittedly not the book’s aim; the authors wish on the whole to deploy studies of specific aspects of the Grimms’ biographies and production in the service of continuing or re-affirming the brothers’ Romantic project of constructing a unified German-speaking cultural identity.

The book’s contributions almost completely avoid investigating the potential significance of both reactionary and progressive traits in the brothers’ lengthy careers. Most of the contributors seem to agree with Hans-Christof Kraus’s assessment that the