

ayant du corps me semble être cet homme maléfique; c'est d'ailleurs celui qui nous fait réagir tout au long du conte.

La fin de l'histoire m'a déroutée un peu. Comment Sara peut-elle retrouver son oiseau? Cela me semble étrange même après plusieurs lectures.

J'ai été charmée par les dessins de Judy Shore. Le passage du noir à la couleur accompagne très bien le texte, accentue les sentiments d'impuissance devant la perte du rêve. Le sentiment de vivre les rêves est ainsi augmenté. La seule chose qui m'a dérangée un tant soit peu, et j'ignore ici à qui s'adresse la remarque, l'auteur ou le traducteur, est l'utilisation du mot "petit homme." Le dessin nous le montre grand et élancé; il me semble donc que le terme employé s'applique mal. Il est même représenté dominant les gens physiquement lors de leur visite à la tour pour la vente des rêves.

En général, un conte qui séduit le lecteur et qui tout en faisant un peu peur nous envoûte entièrement. Le succès du texte et des illustrations est captivant. Un bon livre à lire ou à se faire lire avant d'aller se coucher pour les 7-12 qui aiment frissonner un peu. Le texte aéré le rend facile à lire pour ce même groupe d'âge.

A avoir dans une collection. Un bon livre canadien intéressant et bien traduit. Texte coulant et évocateur.

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Responses. . .

THE CASE OF CINDERELLA

As Perry Nodelman must know, when he gave his students the title of the tale he wished them to recount as "Little Red Riding Hood," he virtually guaranteed that they would respond with a story about a female child with a noteworthy red garment.¹ He might also have had a shrewd idea that this tale would have as its climax a dramatic dialogue between the child and a wolf disguised as the child's grandmother.² In fact, though, among the variants of Aarne-Thompson tale type 333, conspicuous clothing may play no part at all, the protagonist may be of either sex, and the climactic conversation may be of an entirely different nature — if an important feature of the tale at all.³ Agnes Grant's Indian and Métis students, on the other hand, may seem to have been iconoclastic in de-emphasizing these factors in ways prompted by their own cultural background, as is surely the case of their reported interpretation of the wolf as Trickster rather than Threatening Beast;⁴ yet these students

would appear to have responded intuitively with an emphasis on 'food' characteristic of the general tale type in Europe. Type 333, known to folklorists as "The Glutton,"⁵ centers upon the question of whether one is to eat or be eaten.⁶

Thus "native" North Americans who had only limited European backgrounds may have actually had a better understanding of this tale than did Nodelman's more typical Canadian students, whose retellings implied that the tale was a message they assumed to be reassuring to children: "You can always count on adults to protect you." The "Canadian" versions of folktales known to Nodelman's students and mine — and no doubt to those of most other teachers of children's literature in Canadian universities — are all too revealing of current North American cultural attitudes, and not just attitudes towards children and the literature "suitable" for them. This is most glaringly evident in the case of the two traditional fairy tales most notably mistreated by Disney, "Snow White" and "Cinderella," both of which are viewed by the majority of my students as lovely examples of wish-fulfillment because the girl is rescued and married by the handsome prince; one of them confidently remarked, "This is every little girl's dream."

There are those who would dispute this assumption, including her instructor, who found it rather a relief when another student in the same class — a male, as it happened — stated that he had always found Cinderella something of a simp. "What was the matter with that girl?" he wrote. "Why didn't she get out and make an independent life for herself?" This, of course, is exactly what the Cinderella figure does, one way or another, in most of the seven hundred or so variants of tale type 510 (and 511). Even Perrault's relatively weepy and passive Cendrillon takes the initiative in suggesting a rat coachman and demanding suitable clothes — *and* deliberately deceiving her stepsisters. Others, especially those of the "Cap o' Rushes" type (510B), do precisely what my student demanded and leave the persecuting relatives to make their own way in the world.

But most Canadian undergraduates do not know this. What they *do* know is an American version, and, as Jane Yolen puts it, "the wrong Cinderella has gone to the American ball." In her excellent — if pessimistic — article entitled "America's Cinderella," which Alan Dundes has appropriately placed at the end of his selection of essays,⁷ Yolen explains that we cannot blame it all on Disney: the decline of the intelligent, active heroine of the old tales into the "sorry excuse for a heroine, pitiable and useless" so understandably inveighed against by feminist critics had already begun in a version published by *St. Nicholas* in the 1870s. Yolen's essay on the present unsatisfactory state of this folktale in North America (and by no means only in the U.S., as my students bear eloquent witness) is one of the reasons why Canadians with a serious professional interest in children's literature ought to read *Cinderella: A Casebook*.

There are, of course, other reasons why such readers will find the collection

worth their while. It is by no means simply a collection of incompatible views, as those who have glanced at T.A. Shippey's review in the TLS may have gathered.⁸ It contains, to start with, three important versions of the tale itself: those of Basile, Perrault, and the Grimms. To these are added eighteen essays, which do indeed embody almost every possible approach ventured to date, from the cartographic method used by many European folklorists to analyze the dissemination of tales and their constituent motifs, here represented by Anna Birgitta Rooth's "Tradition Areas in Eurasia," to the structural approach of David Pace's "Beyond Morphology: Lévi-Strauss and the Analysis of Folktales." Of course there are bound to be many real or apparent incompatibilities between the findings of — among others — a Freudian, such as Ben Rubenstein, author of "The Meaning of the Cinderella Story in the Development of a Little Girl,"⁹ and those who take a "spiritual" approach, as does Aarland Ussher in "The Slipper on the Stair." But as Dundes says in his introduction, "That is precisely the point. Any analysis of an item of folklore should begin where previous analyses have ended." And, as he suggests in a headnote to the Ussher article, all approaches have *some* value, even those which are compromised by doctrinaire assumptions: "By and large, if the readers share the bias of the critic, they will agree with the interpretation; if they do not . . . they may summarily dismiss the interpretation as being totally arbitrary."

Dundes himself clearly did not lean too far in either direction, and his editorial material demonstrates admirable editorial restraint, neither promoting nor sneering at any approach — although a certain understandable preference emerges in favor of the findings of those who know what they are talking about, such as the French folklorist Paul Delarue. Delarue's "From Perrault to Walt Disney: The Slipper of Cinderella" should have ended, once and for all, the speculation that Perrault changed a fur (*vair*) slipper in his source into one of glass (*verre*). It must be admitted that Dundes's own contribution, an essay on the relationship of *King Lear* to type 510B, occasionally falls a little too far into the Freudian mode to make all readers comfortable. For example, *Lear* is said to exemplify "a folktale whose normal form includes an overt paternal demand for an incestuous relationship with a daughter." Maybe so — and I am sure I do not know as much about type 510B as Dundes does — but this is not true of "Cap o' Rushes" or of any number of other variants of that tale type.

Such minor dubious points should not in any way undermine the value of this collection to discriminating readers, who ought to be able to see its usefulness as an introduction to, or summary of, the insights folklorists and others have brought to the study of the fairy tale. Not the least aspect of its usefulness is the many accounts of the ways in which the Cinderella tale has been interpreted in different parts of the world. A striking example is "A Cinderella Variant in the Context of a Muslim Women's Ritual," by Margaret A. Mills, which shows us how this tale is used as an expression of an ideal of

female solidarity (and the dangers of its betrayal) in a society which Dundes rightly describes as “famous, or infamous, for its male chauvinism.”

Canadian readers may well note that not a single Canadian folklorist or critic is represented in this volume, nor is there any reference to a Canadian version of the tale. Perhaps there *is* no really striking Canadian Cinderella, beyond the one we have (alas) borrowed from our neighbors to the south; the only printed version I have seen of a genuine Cinderella collected here in Canada is a short one reported by Marius Barbeau many years ago, which has no especially notable features (beyond the heroine’s *habitante* clothing).¹⁰ But in that connection, we have a slight problem, the successful solution of which might give considerable help to those of us who discuss such folktales with university students, and maybe even to those others who deplore the vulgarization and misinterpretation of powerful folktales in our society.

That is, while the spirited (if censored) translation of a selection of tales made by Barbeau and Michael Hornyansky, published as *The Golden Phoenix*,¹¹ has made a few of these French Canadian variants available to North American children with some obvious success (obvious in that a notably inexpensive paperback issued by Scholastic Books is bound to circulate very widely indeed all over the continent), there is still a wealth of such originally European tales recorded from French Canadian sources which is almost completely unknown — except to folklorists. One of the few specimens translated into English in a widely available edition is “The Duck-Dog,” a version of tale type 652, “The Carnation,”¹² which should whet the appetite of readers for more of these remarkable tales, for they have an earthy zest which conveys a New World spirit absolutely remote from the saccharine pap peddled by the mass media to the inhabitants of our Global Village. Someone ought to get to work on translating, with minimum watering-down (admittedly, an edition for the widest possible market might require some tidying), a good selection of this material in the language most North Americans speak, English. The Barbeau/Hornyansky selection simply isn’t enough, and does not include enough of the really familiar tales to weigh much in the balance against the all-too-available competition.

It is, however, what we have, and perhaps more of us ought to prescribe it as a slight antidote to current “Canadian fairy stories” of the kind Nodelman describes. And maybe there really is a hardy, spirited North American Cinderella hidden (as Cinderella must be) in the archives of the National Library or Laval University, waiting for the proper time to shed her rags — or *habitante* disguise — to dazzle us all by proving that her shoe does not, after all, fit that American imposter.¹³

NOTES

¹“Little Red Riding Hood as a Canadian Fairy Tale,” *CCL* 20 (1980), 17-27.

²Iona and Peter Opie rightly compare this dialogue with that between Loki and Thrym in the *Edda*; see *The Classic Fairy Tales* (London: Oxford University Press, 1974), pp. 93-94.

³An example is "Boudin-Boudine," in *Folktales of France*, ed. Geneviève Massignon (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968).

⁴"A Canadian Fairy Tale: What is it?" *CCL* (1981), 27-35.

⁵See *The Types of the Folktale* sub 333.

⁶In his introduction to the Penguin Classics edition of Grimms' *Tales*, David Luke remarks on the 'forest' link between *Little Red riding Hood* and *Hansel and Gretel*, but does not note the linkage of 'food' motifs (pp. 35-36).

⁷*Cinderella: A Casebook* (New York: Garland, 1982; re-issued in paperback format, Wildman Press, 1983).

⁸"Relocating Cinderella," *TLS* July 22, 1983, p. 781. — Shippey's review is not really an unfavorable one; but while he did suggest some of the interest and usefulness of this volume, he was evidently not as impressed by the contributions of the professional folklorists as I was.

⁹And a particularly annoying example, with its insistence on seeing "penis envy" as an important factor. Dundes rightly comments that folklorists doubt the existence of such a syndrome, since they know plenty of evidence for male envy of female reproductive abilities, but none of the opposite.

¹⁰In *Journal of American folklore* 29 (1916), 55-57.

¹¹(Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1958); later re-issued by Scholastic Books under the title of *The magic tree*.

¹²Collected by Luc Lacourcière and translated by Margaret Low; in *Folktales Told around the world*, ed. Richard M. Dorson (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1975; Phoenix (paperback) edition, 1978), pp. 429-445; the "duck-dog" of the title is presumably that truly Canadian breed, the Nova Scotia Duck Tolling Retriever.

¹³Those interested in locating such French Canadian tales will find a sizable selection collected by Barbeau and others in the *Journal of American folklore* 29, 30, 32, 33, 39, 44, 53, and 62. The *Catalogue of French folktales in North American* promised as forthcoming by Luc Lacourcière (Dorson, p. 590) has apparently not appeared yet. Edith Fowke has published a volume entitled *Folktales of French Canada* which I was not able to locate at the time of writing, and has published with Carole H. Carpenter *A bibliography of Canadian folklore in English* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981); the *Bibliography* appears to indicate that there is still not very much French Canadian material available in English.

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