and female creativity, which has traditionally been symbolized by the craft of spinning. In other essays, Zipes takes on familiar targets, Disney and Robert Bly's *Iron John*, pointing to the ways in which each involves self-figuration and the development of a nostalgic patriarchal ideology. Although these are less successful because they are less specific in pointing to details that form the patterns that Zipes investigates, the most disappointing chapters are the final two, on Frank Baum and the possibilities of American fairy tales, respectively. The former is too thin and polemical, a pale reproduction of his analysis of Baum in *Fairy Tales and the Art of Subversion.* The latter tries to analyze too many authors in a brief chapter.

In *Fairy Tale as Myth/Myth as Fairy Tale*, Zipes repeatedly notes the limitations of other critics and attempts to fill in the gaps they leave. Although the erection of critics as straw men is something of a rhetorical and stylistic tic with him, he does an admirable job. Readers concerned only with children's books may be disappointed that so much of his analysis involves movies and contemporary adult books, but most readers unfamiliar with Zipes's other books will find the collection stimulating. In fact, the Introduction, which presents a theory of fairy tales as myth, and the opening two essays, which explore the origin of literary fairy tales and the representation of women in "Beauty and the Beast" and "Rumplestiltzkin," are outstanding introductions to Zipes's radical method of examining literary fairy tales: they alone justify the purchase and the reading of the book.

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MINI-REVIEWS

Circles: Shapes in Math, Science, and Nature. Catherine Sheldrick Ross. Illus. Bill Slavin. Kids Can Press Limited, 1992. 80 pp., $10.95 paper. ISBN 1-55074-064-4.

Aiming to help children understand and enjoy math is the goal of this little theme book from Kid's Can Press. And it succeeds. What child can resist the challenge to squeeze the ends of a raw egg together to test its strength, or amaze her friends like Queen Dido did by cutting an ordinary index card into a circle big enough to step through?

The author has researched the subject of circles well and made it enjoyable to read in the process. Organized into nine, well-designed chapters, the book also contains a helpful glossary, table of contents, and an index. The mathematic principles are accurate, and the easy-to-read directions, with the exception of step 8 in the yin and yang instructions on page 25, are clear enough. But not to worry, Bill Slavin's illustrations help clarify the directions. It is so cram-packed with interesting facts, such as saving 17 black spruce trees by putting 350,000 pages of text on a CD-ROM, that my curiosity was aroused, and I found myself

cutting, drawing and exploring many of the concepts. This same fact also contained the only inaccuracy I found. CD-ROMs are made of polycarbonate (a plastic). To call them *silicon discs* is not correct. If they were made of silicon, they would be much more brittle and cost thousands of dollars.

The combination of upbeat writing and humorous illustrations is bound to appeal to elementary school children, but they may find some passages a bit difficult to read and may need guidance with some activities. Their teachers should find this an excellent resource book.

Kathlene R. Willing, *Toronto teacher and writer, is the Primary computer resource teacher at The Bishop Strachan School. Her many publications include* Sign Out Science: Simple hands on experiments using everyday materials *and* Learning Together: Computer integrated classrooms.

The Story of King Kabul the First & Gawain the Kitchen-Boy. Max Jacob. Trans. Moishe Black & Maria Green. Followed by **Vulcan's Crown**. Max Jacob. Trans. Moishe Black. Illus. Roger Blachon. University of Nebraska Press, 1994. 79 pp., US $20. cloth. ISBN 0-8032-2577-6.

These two translations are a fine tribute to the playful imagination of the respected author and founder of French surrealism, Max Jacob (1867-1944). The first of the two tales, longer and somewhat more coherent, dates from the very beginning of the author's career in 1904 and was written for his young cousin. It celebrates adolescent initiative and, with lots of heroic drama and high emotion, traces a campaign that runs from a kitchen to a battlefield with the object of winning the hand of a princess over the snobbish objections of her father. The spritely vigour of its style, its mock-epic tone, and the relative brevity of each of its 19 chapters seem to indicate that this narrative would lend itself to being read to six- to nine-year-olds. The second tale, dating from 1923 and some 18 pages in length, similarly follows a wonderfully equivocal crusade of its humble hero, in this case a hunchbacked fool. Filled with such marvellous creations as exotic boats, fish that transport passengers through the air, talking donkeys, shouting chameleons and, ultimately, a re-crowning of the King of the Cheeses, this weirdly whimsical romp into some never-never nonsense land is reminiscent of Lewis Carroll and Rabelais. Abundant line drawings reinforce the light-hearted verve of the text.

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