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**(Review) Jones, Christine A. and Jennifer Schacker, eds.,
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Contemporary Critical Perspectives and Raynard, Sophie, ed., The
Teller's Tale: Lives of the Classic Fairy Tale Writers**

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Marvelous Transformations: An Anthology of Fairy Tales and Contemporary Critical Perspectives ed. by Christine A. Jones, Jennifer Schacker, and: The Teller's Tale: Lives of the Classic Fairy Tale Writers ed. by Sophie Raynard (review)

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The book's second section, "Custom," comprises a study of "Tricks and Fun: Subversive Pleasures at Newfoundland Wakes," updated from 1990s publications and papers. It also includes an ingenious study of the occupational folklife of Canadian Broadcasting Corporation reporters, first published in earlier form in *American Behavioral Scientist* in 1990.

Section 3, "Vernacular Music," reaches to the heart of Peter Narváez's contribution to folklore scholarship. The rationale for the title of his book is revealed in this section. *Sonny's Dream* refers to the name of a song by local singer-songwriter Ron Hynes, and Narváez seized upon this composition in St. John's in the 1970s as exemplifying "vernacular song." Hynes was consciously trying to move local popular music tastes "away from the mainstream pap of international mass culture toward a deeper appreciation of his vision of the Newfoundland experience," as Narváez put it in 2002. In his analysis, vernacular songs reflect how melody, text, and texture can be united in performance and can be "transcended by a collective sense of awe in experiencing the social force of commonality in space" (p. 155).

The essays in this section include three entries: "Newfoundland Vernacular Song," "The Folk Parodist," and "Collective Consciousness, Satirical Song and Labour Song," an essay published here for the first time, and strongly enriched by, and illustrative of, the author's deep interest in labor struggles and labor communities on the island. These essays are rounded out by "'Sonny's Dream,' Popularity and Regional Vernacular Anthems," "'She's Gone Boys': Vernacular Song Responses to the Atlantic Fisheries' Crisis," and the wonderful and combative "Unplugged: Blues Guitarists and the Myth of Acousticity" (based on a paper presented in Australia in 1999 and later published in *Guitar Cultures*, Berg, 2001).

The book's final section, "Popular Culture," comprises a study of "Joseph R. Smallwood, 'The Barrelman': The Broadcaster as Folklorist"; "Folk Talk and Hard Facts: The Role of Ted Russell's 'Uncle Mose' on CBC's Fishermen's Broadcast"; "Country Music in Diffusion: Juxtaposition and Syncretism in the Popular Music of Newfoundland"; "'The Newfie Bullet'—The Nostalgic Use of Folklore"; and "Fandom as Magical Practice: Great Big Sea, Stockwell Day

and Spoiled Identity." The book ends, therefore, with work that is both interdisciplinary and yet insistently Newfoundlandian.

Though regionally focused, the book also displays a general applicability. As Neil V. Rosenberg's exemplary introduction notes, the book groups its material under headings designed to make them useful for teaching. The first three main sections cite genres taught widely in folklore departments' introductory courses. The book's entries will also be valuable for teaching courses throughout Canada and the United States, and internationally.

Perhaps Peter Narváez's greatest achievement will always be seen as his groundbreaking book *Media Sense: The Folklore-Popular Culture Continuum* which he co-edited with Martin Laba in 1986 (Popular Press). But *Sonny's Dream* is a valuable addition to his canon and a most useful gathering-together and updating of scattered writings. It is a fitting memorial to a scholar and musician whose loss has affected so many.

Marvelous Transformations: An Anthology of Fairy Tales and Contemporary Critical Perspectives. Ed. Christine A. Jones and Jennifer Schacker. (Peterborough, ON: Broadview Press, 2013. Pp. 580, introduction, notes on contributors, sources.)

The Teller's Tale: Lives of the Classic Fairy Tale Writers. Ed. Sophie Raynard. (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2012. Pp. vi + 183, introduction, list of contributors, index.)

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Fairy tale scholars have much to look forward to in the two books *Marvelous Transformations* and *The Teller's Tale*. Although both books are intellectually stimulating, the breadth and depth of *Marvelous Transformations*, as well as its strong folkloristic orientation, makes it more suitable for classroom use as well as perusal for research or pleasure.

Christine A. Jones and Jennifer Schacker's guiding aim in creating their anthology, *Marvelous Transformations*, is a historical orientation. Their focus is on re-integrating the histories of

fairy tales across national, linguistic, generic, and communicative boundaries (p. 22). The anthologized tales are thus arranged chronologically, thereby highlighting continuities over time and space. In part 1, canonical tales appear alongside lesser-known tales, and even experienced fairy tale scholars are guaranteed to discover something that is new to their interests. The broad range of tales included in the volume reveals many contrasts, such as those between the ornate language of literary tales and the differing styles of orally collected tales. The Comtesse de Murat's description of a carriage that a fairy made from a giant's skull illustrates the whimsical element of many tales:

The giant was ninety-six feet tall: she had his skull reworked in such an agreeable manner than everything necessary could be found in it from the undercarriage to the wheels, and as she only wanted to travel by night, she had it painted with a black veneer; she had harnessed to it two great mastiffs to whom she attached the wings of Indian bats who are, in that country, as large as cows. (p. 212)

Contemporary tales that encompass modern rewritten tales, as well as recently collected and/or translated tales, also occupy a range of linguistic and social positions. Amid well-known adaptations such as those of Anne Sexton and Robert Coover, tales such as Sylvia Townsend Warner's "Bluebeard's Daughter," which tells of the serial killer's daughter growing up and marrying, display delightful surprises.

Furthermore, the editors' attention to the normative role of criticism in shaping our ways of reading and interpreting fairy tales is compelling. Their introduction offers suggestions for ways to read fairy tales, and their treatment offers insights for both longtime scholars and newcomers. One especially relevant example of their insightful overview is a new and persuasive reading of the language in "Little Red Riding Hood." The critical essays in part 2 of the book are similarly informative and enjoyable. The interlocking categories of genre, ideology, authorship, reception, and translation receive stellar treatment from folklore and literary scholars alike.

The aim of *The Teller's Tale* is somewhat different. The book's editor, Sophie Raynard, ex-

plains that "this collection of newly researched biographies of the best-known authors of European fairy tales rectifies false data, adds new information, and provides a reliable historical context for Europe's fairy tales" (p. 3). Covering primarily Italian, French, and German writers, this collection of essays is thought-provoking and informative. The essays expand upon many of the known facets of European writers' life histories, illuminating the effects of social context, market forces, and personal tastes on fairy tale authorship and collecting. I found the summaries of stylistic trends and social interconnections, especially within the French salon scene, particularly helpful and intriguing. For instance, while I have read a handful of Catherine Bernard's fairy tales, Lewis C. Seifert's analysis of two of her tales guided me to think about her body of work in a new way. Seifert shows that both tales are dystopic and explores how they support Bernard's novel's overriding theme that love will not necessarily bring happiness. Unhappiness, unfortunately, is also present as an overarching theme in these essays. Many of the writers of canonical and beloved fairy tales led lives that could be described as the opposite of fairy-tale-like, plagued with poverty, unwanted marriages, and unsatisfying familial obligations.

One major contrast between the books is in their emphases. Schacker and Jones may well be describing Raynard's *The Teller's Tale* when they observe that the majority of collections that are compiled for use in the North American classroom have a fairly canonical orientation. The narrower focus of Raynard's book makes it appropriate for specific purposes, whereas the broad, extra-canonical reach of *Marvelous Transformations* promises greater versatility as a resource. It is important to note, however, the limitation of this critique. *Marvelous Transformations* is almost triple the length of *The Teller's Tale*, and there is some overlap between the books. Raynard contributed an essay on sexuality and the women fairy tale writers of the 1690s to *Marvelous Transformations*, while Nancy Canepa and Ruth Bottigheimer wrote essays for both books, for example, that deal with related themes.

The books are important contributions to scholarship, but neither is without problems.

Marvelous Transformations does not include any discussion of the tale type system used by the editors, although Anne Duggan's essay on gender ideologies mentions the tale type system. Many of the tales in the anthology are unconventional and perhaps do not correspond to any single tale type number, but the absence of this typology puzzled me. One of my concerns with *The Teller's Tale* is that many of the authors seem to assume more than a passing familiarity with the fairy tale writers and the historical periods they wrote about. This approach creates challenges for readers who lack this contextual understanding and could create problems for classroom instruction. The unevenness of many essays in *The Teller's Tale* was a bit jarring. Folklorists have critiqued Ruth Bottigheimer's account of Straparola's life and the degree of his contribution to the establishment of the fairy tale genre. Yet this view is presented uncritically in her contribution to *The Teller's Tale* (see JAF 123, 2010, for a debate on this issue).

Overall, however, the books offer valuable insight into fairy tales. *The Teller's Tale* is better suited for a specialized audience that is already quite familiar with literary fairy tales. The volume provides important insight into the writers' life histories. Broader in its focus, *Marvelous Transformations* will appeal to anyone interested in fairy tales, from college sophomores to serious scholars.

Society of the Dead: Quita Manaquita and Palo Praise in Cuba. By Todd Ramón Ochoa. (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2010. Pp. 313, introduction, notes, references, index.)

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This is an interesting book in a number of ways. Most importantly, it is truly a work of participant observation. As a work of ethnographic folklore, Ochoa's book details the spiritual practices he studies from informants' perspectives while reflectively challenging ways that his own worldview could potentially color the narrative. In this manner, he strives to avoid making value

judgments regarding the practices of Palo. Instead, he writes about the cultural practice from the position of his subjects' own beliefs. In a move that is liable to make serious scholars of Palo uncomfortable, his method was to ascertain insiders' views by becoming an initiate, moving from the level of novice to the equivalent of journeyman practitioner. He did this with complete openness, as his teachers and subjects were fully aware that he was involved in a scholarly study. He created a fair and well-reasoned academic work despite this immersion. Because of his honesty with both informants and readers, I do not have a problem with his methods, but it is important to note that his account is at least partially from a practitioner's perspective, rather than wholly the viewpoint of a disinterested observer.

Ochoa's process actually addresses one of the vital questions of doing religious ethnography. How *does* the scholar get the best information about spiritual practices, especially ones like Palo, which are part and parcel of an underground religious movement? This issue is especially relevant to the practice of Palo in Cuba because the tradition is incorporated into a physical and spiritual black market within a tightly controlled country. Does one complete a wide-open—yet experientially distant—study that keeps the student neutral but results in limited information? Or, should one become fully involved in the beliefs and actions without revealing motives and then publish what could amount to an exposé? Ochoa chose to go in openly and follow the road where it led. Consequently, this openness could make his findings and processes subject to scholarly critique about his methods. Because he has been honest with all parties concerned, my belief is that Ochoa made an excellent choice in his fieldwork. His writing is detailed, but far from sensationalist, and his approach allowed for a very intense study of Palo.

As a result, this book is a personal narrative as well as a scholarly study. The introduction begins as a Hegelian discussion of his perspective, going into the ethnography of studying belief systems as well as how those preconceptions were turned upside down as he went further into the study. There are some moments where it seems as if Ochoa is protesting too