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Textualité et intertextualité des contes: Perrault, Apulée, La Fontaine, L'héritier ... by Ute Heidmann and Jean-Michel Adam (review)

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translation the folktale enthusiast who has no access to Russian-language sources? But the book is so clearly written and informative that it can be read without trouble by students and scholars, who will then find on the Internet the bibliographic aids they need. Reading *The Russian Folktale* makes me dream of a one-volume survey on the history and theory of folktales around the world, which would be as comprehensive, readable, and authoritative as this book is about Russia.

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Textualité et intertextualité des contes: Perrault, Apulée, La Fontaine, Lhéritier . . . By Ute Heidmann and Jean-Michel Adam. Paris: Editions Classiques Garnier, 2010. 400 pp.

In this unusual, often insightful, and sometimes polemical book, Ute Heidmann and Jean-Michel Adam take up many of the problems that have long dogged criticism of Charles Perrault's fairy tales. Both the sources and interpretation of his *Histoires ou contes du temps passé* have generated an ever-expanding body of scholarship and with it a number of seemingly intractable questions. Did Perrault base his tales on oral tradition? What were his literary sources, if any? What sort of social critique is performed by his fairy tales? And specifically, is Perrault a (proto-) feminist? These are some of the most prominent questions addressed by Heidmann and Adam, who use the tools of comparative philology, genetic criticism, and discursive analysis to scrutinize the textual fabric of this collection. Through intricate analyses of individual tales and the relationships between them and with other texts, the authors shed new light on this corpus and position themselves against many received notions in Perrault criticism and fairy-tale studies more generally.

The most fundamental notion that Heidmann and Adam question is the possibility of defining what a fairy tale is. As a point of departure, the authors assert, the question of how to define a fairy tale reinforces a universalizing perspective that obscures the textual specificity and variety of the texts we call fairy tales. For Heidmann and Adam, then, it is less productive to ask *what* fairy tales are and much more productive to ask *how* they use and dialogue with a range of linguistic and literary discourses. Focusing on the textual workings of Perrault's prose tales also leads the authors to reject commonplace assertions of a debt to the oral tradition; instead, Heidmann and Adam prefer to analyze the historically contingent intertextual and interdiscursive references that are obscured by the (supposedly) universalizing and thematic approach of folklore studies. Rather than tale types, then, Heidmann and Adam use a limited number

of heretofore mostly neglected literary sources—particularly Apuleius’s *Tale of Cupid and Psyche*—to illuminate “Sleeping Beauty,” “Blue Beard,” and “Little Red Riding Hood” in particular, with implications for all of the *Histoires ou contes du temps passé*. Much more than a source study, *Textualité et intertextualité des contes* shows how Perrault reworks the generic conventions of the intertexts he draws on, thereby creating a newly inflected genre that departs from its antecedents in significant ways. The first part of this book, written by Ute Heidmann, centers on Perrault’s generic “reconfigurations” in some detail. The second part, by Jean-Michel Adam, often refers back to the first part and explores various textual and discursive features that give Perrault’s collection its coherence.

In the first section, “Genres and Texts in Dialogue,” Heidmann studies what she calls Perrault’s “dialogic poetics,” the means by which his prose tales incorporate and rewrite elements from specific intertexts (Apuleius especially, but also Virgil, La Fontaine, Scarron, and Fénelon), creating tales that often invert their storylines and invalidate their overt messages. But Heidmann’s argument in this part of the book goes even further, asserting that it is with these intertextual and interdiscursive dialogues—and not purportedly fictive “folkloric” sources—that Perrault creates the narratives we now know as “Blue Beard” and “Little Red Riding Hood.” Although this claim does not square with a large body of scholarship (none of which is engaged with, it should be noted), the intertextual underpinnings of the *Histoires ou contes du temps passé*, which are astutely laid out here, shed important new light on Perrault’s stance toward antiquity. It is well-known, of course, that his fairy tales had a strategic place in the ongoing quarrel of the ancients and the moderns, but Heidmann’s analyses make clear that the prose tales actively rewrite ancient sources from a decidedly skeptical posture, highlighting their incompatibility with “modern” (i.e., late seventeenth-century) cultural and literary sensibilities. This is an important insight that adds a wholly new and rich dimension to our understanding of the place of Perrault’s fairy tales within the quarrel.

Part and parcel of Heidmann’s argument about the prose tales is the reconfiguration of the archetypal storytelling scene, visualized in the famous frontispiece but also evoked in the preface to the tales in verse. Once again, Heidmann is intent on setting aside assumptions that Perrault is in any way beholden to an oral tradition, and instead she views these oblique references to oral storytelling as pseudo-naïve. Like Apuleius, Perrault invents the pretext of an old woman tale-teller all the better to highlight the (often ironic) distance of a writer-commentator and the interpretive skill required of his readers. Although this conclusion is not particularly new, it does reveal yet another illuminating intertextual dialogue at the heart of the *Histoires ou contes du temps passé*. But it is entirely a different matter to claim,

as Heidmann does, that this nod to Apuleius can be construed as yet further proof that Perrault was *not* rewriting elements from an oral tradition. Even more perplexing is the nonironic reading of the final morals at the end of “Blue Beard.” After teasing out Perrault’s ironic reworking of Apuleius in the narrative, Heidmann shifts gears and views the final moral from a curiously literal lens. For her this tale actually *endorses* female curiosity, a conclusion that goes very much against the grain of recent feminist scholarship (although Heidmann does not respond to these arguments in any detail). Be this as it may, a more persuasive consequence of the argument about Perrault’s dialogues with Apuleius and other texts is Heidmann’s suggestive observation that they provide the sort of cohesion for the collection provided by the frame narrative of other fairy-tale authors.

In the second part of the book (“The Textuality of Perrault’s Tales”), Jean-Michel Adam elaborates further on this observation, demonstrating the coherence of the collection through specific textual details and relations of cotextuality, that is, the formal and thematic links among tales. Through intricate readings of the original editions of the verse and prose tales, Adam demonstrates how recurring features such as capitalization, conjunctions (*ou* and *car*), pronouns (*on*), hyperbole, onomastics, and parenthesis function coherently throughout. For Adam (and Heidmann), Perrault’s tales must be studied in their original form—notably, the editions of 1694 and 1697—failing which the full extent of its social commentary is lost. Again and again, Adam notes that the liberties modern critical editions take with the letter of the text alter the meanings conveyed originally. Adam convincingly shows how the use of capital letters and a number of grammatical oddities, for instance, contribute significantly to the cotextual meanings of the collection as a whole. Other scholars have noted the unusual use of capitalization in Perrault’s tales, but none as systematically as Adam. Even more enlightening is the overarching argument Adam makes about the cotextual connections among the tales in the collection, including the juxtaposition of antithetical plotlines and the recurring motif of the weak confronting the powerful, with greater and lesser success. The broader point Adam makes is that “the analysis of these relations of co-textuality reveals the coherence of a writing project that the ordinary interpretation of fairy tales as independent entities does not allow one to grasp” (163; my translation).

Paradoxically, at times Adam’s sheer attention to detail overwhelms this larger argument, focusing on specific lexical and linguistic features within individual tales. And at moments the conclusions drawn from the intricate analyses seem altogether obvious. But this is certainly not the case of the careful analysis devoted to the morals in verse, which Adam sees as a change in “textual regime” (210), where the voice of the narrator gives way to that of

an ironic moralist. Indeed, these pages are the most extensive yet in Perrault criticism on the narrative structure and function of the versed morals, giving particular attention to the use of irony. Also revealing is the analysis of meta-enunciation in Perrault's tales, the reference to their own enunciation. Through an engaging analysis of the use of the pronoun *on*, Adam shows how the boundary between narrator, characters, and readers is dissolved, creating a common point of reference marked by irony toward the worlds of the fairy tale. At its best, then, this second part of the book refines and fleshes out conclusions made by other scholars, albeit from the standpoint of genetic and discursive analysis.

In their joint conclusion Adam and Heidmann point to the need for the study of other fairy-tale collections with the comparative philological, genetic, and textual linguistic analysis used in this book. The pair have already published studies of Andersen, the Grimms, and Angela Carter, and they promise future work in this vein. In North America and perhaps elsewhere, the methodology endorsed by the authors is not widespread, to say the least. And yet their book demonstrates that scholars of fairy tales have much to learn from this approach, even if they do not adopt it for themselves. We should all greet future work by Adam and Heidmann with great interest and hope that they will dialogue more directly with other methodological approaches.

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Meseterápia: Mesék a gyógyításban és a mindennapokban. By Ildikó Boldizsár. Budapest: Magvető Könykiadó, 2010. 368 pp.

Mesepszichológia: Az érzelmi intelligencia fejlesztése gyermekkorban. By Annamária Kádár. Budapest: Kulcslyuk Kiadó, 2012. 376 pp.

Leading Hungarian folklore scholar Ildikó Boldizsár is nationally renowned as the editor of best-selling fairy-tale anthologies about men for women and about women for men (2007); about mothers and about fathers (2008); and about life, death, and rebirth (2009). In her 2010 publication, *Meseterápia: Mesék a gyógyításban és a mindennapokban* (Fairy-Tale Therapy: Tales to Help Cure and Everyday), she claims to have developed a bibliotherapeutic method, called metamorphosis fairy-tale therapy (*metamorfózis meseterápiás módszer*, abbreviated MMM), by relying on ancient folk wisdom encapsulated in the enduring form of the fairy tale, a genre that has not only served entertainment and informational purposes but also primarily provided a ritualistic means for intergenerationally passing down a complex body of mundane and metaphysical knowledge about the fundamental psychic needs and conflict resolution capacities of the “enworlded” human being.