THE CLASSIC FAIRY TALES

EDITED BY MARIA TATAR

NORTON CRITICAL EDITION

A NORTON CRITICAL EDITION

THE CLASSIC FAIRY TALES

TEXTS

CRITICISM

Edited by

MARIA TATAR

HARVARD UNIVERSITY

W • W • NORTON & COMPANY • *New York* • *London*

For Lauren and Daniel

Printed in the United States of America.
First Edition.

The text of this book is composed in Electra with the display set in Bernhard Modern. Composition by PennSet, Inc. Book design by Antonina Krass.

Cover illustration: *The Enchanted Prince*, reproduced by permission of © Maxfield Parrish Family Trust/Licensed by ASAP and VAGA, NYC/Courtesy American Illustrated Gallery, NYC.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

The classic fairy tales : texts, criticism / edited by Maria Tatar.
p. cm. — (Norton critical edition)
Includes bibliographical references.

ISBN 0-393-97277-1 (pbk.)

1. Fairy tales—History and criticism. I. Tatar, Maria M., 1945–
GR550.C57 1998
385.2—dc21 98-13552

W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 500 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10110
www.wwnorton.com
W. W. Norton & Company Ltd., Castle House, 75/76 Wells Street,
London W1T 3QT

890

Introduction

Fairy tales, Angela Carter tells us, are not "unique one-offs," and their narrators are neither "original" nor "godlike" nor "inspired." To the contrary, these stories circulate in multiple versions, reconfigured by each telling to form kaleidoscopic variations with distinctly different effects. When we say the word "Cinderella," we are referring not to a single text but to an entire array of stories with a persecuted heroine who may respond to her situation with defiance, cunning, ingenuity, self-pity, anguish, or grief. She will be called Yeh-hsien in China, Cendrillon in Italy, Aschenputtel in Germany, and Catskin in England. Her sisters may be named One-Eye and Three-Eyes, Anastasia and Drizella, or she may have just one sister named Haloek. Her tasks range from tending cows to sorting peas to fetching embers for a fire.

Although many variant forms of a tale can now be found between the covers of books and are attributed to individual authors, editors, or compilers, they derive largely from collective efforts. In reflecting on the origins of fairy tales, Carter asks us to consider: "Who first invented meatballs? In what country? Is there a definitive recipe for potato soup? Think in terms of the domestic arts. 'This is how *I* make potato soup.' "[1] The story of Little Red Riding Hood, for example, can be discovered the world over, yet it varies radically in texture and flavor from one culture to the next. Even in a single culture, that texture or flavor may be different enough that a listener will impatiently interrupt the telling of a tale to insist "That's not the way I heard it." In France, Little Red Riding Hood and her grandmother are devoured by the wolf. The Grimms' version, by contrast, stages a rescue scene in which a hunter intervenes to liberate Red Riding Hood and her grandmother from the belly of the wolf. Caterinella, an Italian Red Riding Hood, is invited to dine on the teeth and ears of her grandmother by a masquerading wolf. A Chinese "Goldflower" manages to slay the beast who wants to devour her by throwing a spear into his mouth. Local color often affects the premises of a tale. In Italy, the challenge facing one heroine is not spinning straw into gold but downing seven plates of lasagna.

Virtually every element of a tale, from the name of the hero or heroine through the nature of the beloved to the depiction of the villain, seems subject to change. In the British Isles, Cinderella goes by the name of Catskin, Mossycoat, or Rashin-Coatie. The mother of one Italian "Beauty" pleads with her daughter to marry a pig, while another mother runs interference for a snake. In Russia, the cannibalistic witch in the forest has a hut set on chicken legs surrounded by a fence with posts made of stacked

1. Angela Carter, ed., *The Virago Book of Fairy Tales* (London: Virago Press, 1990) x.

human skulls. Rumpelstiltskin is also known as Titeliture, Ricdin-Ricdon, Tom Tit Tot, Batzibitzili, Panzimanzi, and Whuppity Stoorie.

While there is no "original" version of "Cinderella" or "Sleeping Beauty," there is a basic plot structure (what folklorists refer to as a "tale type") that appears despite rich cultural variation. "Beauty and the Beast," for example, according to the tale-type index compiled by the Finnish folklorist Antti Aarne and refined by the American folklorist Stith Thompson, has the following episodic structure:

I. The monster as husband
II. Disenchantment of the monster
III. Loss of the husband
IV. Search for the husband
V. Recovery of the husband

While the monster as husband is a structural constant, the monster itself may (and does) take the form of virtually any beast—a goat, a mouse, a hedgehog, a crocodile, or a lion. The search for the husband may require the heroine to cover vast tracts of land in iron shoes, to sort out peas from lentils in an impossibly short time, or simply to wish herself back to the monster's castle. Despite certain limitations, the tale-type index is a convenient tool for defining the stable core of a story and for identifying those features subject to local variation.

Telling fairy tales has been considered a "domestic art" at least since Plato in the *Gorgias* referred to the "old wives' tales" told by nurses to amuse and to frighten children. Although virtually all of the national collections of fairy tales compiled in the nineteenth century were the work of men, the tales themselves were ascribed to women narrators. As early as the second century A.D., Apuleius, the North African author of *The Golden Ass*, had designated his story of "Cupid and Psyche" (told by a drunken and half-demented old woman) as belonging to the genre of "old wives' tales." The Venetian Giovanni Francesco Straparola claimed to have heard the stories that constituted his *Facetious Nights* of 1550 "from the lips of . . . lady storytellers" and he embedded those stories in a narrative frame featuring a circle of garrulous female narrators.[2] Giambattista Basile's seventeenth-century collection of Neapolitan tales, *The Pentamerone*, also has women storytellers—quick-witted, gossipy old crones who recount "those tales that old women tell to amuse children."[3] The renowned *Tales of Mother Goose* by Charles Perrault were designated by their author as old wives' tales, "told by governesses and grandmothers to little children."[4] And many of the most expansive storytellers consulted by the Grimms were women—family friends or servants who had at their disposal a rich repertoire of folklore.

The association of fairy tales with the domestic arts and with old wives' tales has not done much to enhance the status of these cultural stories.

2. Marina Warner, *From the Beast to the Blonde: On Fairy Tales and Their Tellers* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1994) 36.
3. *The Pentamerone*, trans. Benedetto Croce, ed. N. M. Penzer (John Lane: The Bodley Head, 1932) 9.
4. Charles Perrault, "Préface," *Contes en vers* (1694; reprint, Paris: Gallimard, 1981) 50.

"On a par with trifles," Marina Warner stresses, " 'mere old wives' tales' carry connotations of error, of false counsel, ignorance, prejudice and fallacious nostrums—against heartbreak as well as headache; similarly 'fairy tale,' as a derogatory term, implies fantasy, escapism, invention, the unreliable consolations of romance."[5]

Although fairy tales are still arguably the most powerfully formative tales of childhood and permeate mass media for children and adults, it is not unusual to find them deemed of marginal cultural importance and dismissed as unworthy of critical attention. Yet the staying power of these stories, their widespread and enduring popularity, suggests that they must be addressing issues that have a significant social function—whether critical, conservative, compensatory, or therapeutic. In a study of mass-produced fantasies for women, Tania Modleski points out that genres such as the soap opera, the Gothic novel, and the Harlequin romance "speak to very real problems and tensions in women's lives. The narrative strategies which have evolved for smoothing over these tensions can tell us much about how women have managed not only to live in oppressive circumstances but to invest their situations with some degree of dignity."[6] Fairy tales register an effort on the part of both women and men to develop maps for coping with personal anxieties, family conflicts, social frictions, and the myriad frustrations of everyday life.

Trivializing fairy tales leads to the mistaken conclusion that we should suspend our critical faculties while reading these "harmless" narratives. While it may be disturbing to hear voices disavowing the transformative influence of fairy tales and proclaiming them to be culturally insignificant, it is just as troubling to find fairy tales turned into inviolable cultural icons. The Grimms steadfastly insisted on the sacred quality of the fairy tales they collected. Their *Nursery and Household Tales*, they asserted, made an effort to capture the pure, artless simplicity of a people not yet tainted by the corrupting influences of civilization. "These stories are suffused with the same purity that makes children appear so marvelous and blessed," Wilhelm Grimm declared in his preface to the collection. Yet both brothers must also have recognized that fairy tales were far from culturally innocent, for they extolled the "civilizing" power of the tales and conceived of their collection as a "manual of manners" for children.[7]

The myth of fairy tales as a kind of holy scripture was energetically propagated by Charles Dickens, who brought to the literature of childhood the same devout reverence he accorded children. Like the Grimms, Dickens hailed the "simplicity," "purity," and "innocent extravagance" of fairy tales, yet also praised the tales as powerful instruments of constructive socialization: "It would be hard to estimate the amount of gentleness and mercy that has made its way among us through these slight channels. Forebearance, courtesy, consideration for the poor and aged, kind treatment of

5. Warner, *Beast* 19. (Excerpted below, p. 309.)
6. Tania Modleski, *Loving with a Vengeance: Mass-Produced Fantasies for Women* (Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1982) 15.
7. From Jacob and Wilhelm Grimms' "Preface," *Nursery and Household Tales*, 1st ed., 2d ed., trans. Maria Tatar, in Maria Tatar, *The Hard Facts of the Grimms' Fairy Tales* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1978) 206, 207.

animals, the love of nature, abhorrence of tyranny and brute force—many such good things have been first nourished in the child's heart by this powerful aid."[8]

Even in 1944, when Allied troops were locked in combat with German soldiers, W. H. Auden decreed the Grimms' fairy tales to be "among the few indispensable, common-property books upon which Western culture can be founded." "It is hardly too much to say," he added, "that these tales rank next to the Bible in importance."[9] Like the devaluation of fairy tales, the overvaluation of fairy tales promotes a suspension of critical faculties and prevents us from taking a good, hard look at stories that are so obviously instrumental in shaping our values, moral codes, and aspirations. The reverence brought by some readers to fairy tales mystifies these stories, making them appear to be a source of transcendent spiritual truth and authority. Such a mystification promotes a hands-off attitude and conceals the fact that fairy tales, like "high art," are squarely implicated in the complex, yet not impenetrable, symbolic codes that permeate our cultural stories.

Despite efforts to deflect critical attention from fairy tales, the stories themselves have attracted the attention of scholars in disciplinary corners ranging from psychology and anthropology through religion and history to cultural studies and literary theory. Every culture has its myths, fairy tales, and fables, but few cultures have mobilized as much critical energy as has ours of late to debate the merits of these stories. Margaret Atwood, whose personal and literary engagement with fairy tales is no secret, has written vividly about her childhood encounter with an unexpurgated version of *Grimms' Fairy Tales*: "Where else could I have gotten the idea," she asserts, "so early in life, that words can change you?"[1] Atwood's phrasing is magnificently ambiguous, referring on one level to the transformative spells cast on fairy-tale characters, but also implying that fairy tales can both shape our way of experiencing the world and endow us with the power to restructure our lives. As Stephen Greenblatt has observed, "the work of art is not the passive surface on which . . . historical experience leaves its stamp but one of the creative agents in the fashioning and refashioning of this experience."[2] As we read fairy tales, we simultaneously evoke the cultural experience of the past and allow it to work on our consciousness even as we reinterpret and reshape that experience.

Carolyn Heilbrun has also addressed the question of how the stories circulating in our culture regulate our lives and fashion our identities:

> Let us agree on this: that we live our lives through texts. These may be read, or chanted, or experienced electronically, or come to us, like the murmurings of our mothers, telling us of what conventions de-

8. Charles Dickens, "Frauds on the Fairies," in *Household Words: A Weekly Journal* (New York: McElrath and Barker, 1854) 97.
9. W. H. Auden, "In Praise of the Brothers Grimm," *New York Times Book Review*, 12 November 1944, 1.
1. Margaret Atwood, "Grimms' Remembered," in Donald Haase, ed., *The Reception of Grimms' Fairy Tales: Responses, Reactions, Revisions* (Detroit: Wayne State UP, 1993) 292.
2. Stephen Greenblatt, "Introduction," *Representing the English Renaissance*, ed. Stephen Greenblatt (Berkeley: U of California P, 1988) viii.

> mand. Whatever their form or medium, these stories are what have formed us all, they are what we must use to make our new fictions. . . . Out of old tales, we must make new lives.[3]

Heilbrun endorses the notion of appropriating, revising, and revitalizing "old tales" in order to produce new social discourses that can, in turn, refashion our lives.

How we go about mobilizing fairy tales to help us form new social roles and identities is a hotly contested question. Some advocate the recuperation and critique of the classic canon; others have called for the revival of "heretical" texts (stories repressed and suppressed from cultural memory) and the formation of a new canon; still others champion rewriting the old tales or inventing new ones. This volume furnishes examples of each of these strategies, providing "classic" versions of specific tale types side by side with less well known versions from other cultures and inspired literary efforts to recast the tales. These projects for reclaiming folkloric legacies are not unproblematic, and they have each come under fire for failing to provide the answer to that perennial question of what makes an ideal cultural story.

For some observers, the classic canon of fairy tales is so hopelessly retrograde that it is futile to try to rehabilitate it. Andrea Dworkin refuses to countenance the possibility of preserving tales that were more or less forced upon us and that have been so effective in promoting stereotypical gender roles:

> We have not formed that ancient world [of fairy tales]—it has formed us. We ingested it as children whole, had its values and consciousness imprinted on our minds as cultural absolutes long before we were in fact men and women. We have taken the fairy tales of childhood with us into maturity, chewed but still lying in the stomach, as real identity. Between Snow-white and her heroic prince, our two great fictions, we never did have much of a chance. At some point the Great Divide took place: they (the boys) dreamed of mounting the Great Steed and buying Snow-white from the dwarfs; we (the girls) aspired to become that object of every necrophiliac's lust—the innocent, *victimized* Sleeping Beauty, beauteous lump of ultimate, sleeping good.[4]

Yet for every critic who is convinced that we need to sound the tocsin and make fairy tales off-limits to children, there is one who celebrates the liberating energy and revolutionary edge of fairy tales. Alison Lurie, for example, sees the tales as reflecting a commendable level of gender equality, along with a power asymmetry tilted in favor of older women:

> These stories suggest a society in which women are as competent and active as men, at every age and in every class. Gretel, not Hansel, defeats the Witch; and for every clever youngest son there is a youngest daughter equally resourceful. The contrast is greatest in maturity,

3. Carolyn Heilbrun, "What Was Penelope Unweaving?" in *Hamlet's Mother and Other Women* (New York: Columbia UP, 1990) 109.
4. Andrea Dworkin, *Woman-Hating* (New York: Dutton, 1974) 32–33.

> where women are often more powerful than men. Real help for the hero or heroine comes most frequently from a fairy godmother or wise woman, and real trouble from a witch or wicked stepmother. . . . To prepare children for women's liberation, therefore, and to protect them against Future Shock, you had better buy at least one collection of fairy tales.[5]

Whom are we to believe? Andrea Dworkin, who contends that fairy tales perpetuate gender stereotypes, or Alison Lurie, who asserts that they unsettle gender roles? Do we side with those who denounce fairy tales for their melodrama and violence or with the psychologist Bruno Bettelheim, who finds them crucial to a child's healthy mental development? Margaret Atwood would answer by saying "It depends." Astonished by reports that *Grimms' Fairy Tales* was being denounced as sexist, she observed that one finds in the volume "wicked wizards as well as wicked witches, stupid women as well as stupid men." "When people say 'sexist fairy tales,' " she added, "they probably mean the anthologies that concentrate on 'The Sleeping Beauty,' 'Cinderella,' and 'Little Red Riding Hood' and leave out everything else. But in 'my' version, there are a good many forgetful or imprisoned princes who have to be rescued by the clever, brave, and resourceful princess, who is just as willing to undergo hardship and risk her neck as are the princes engaged in dragon slaying and tower climbing."[6] Few fairy tales dictate a single, univocal, uncontested meaning; most are so elastic as to accommodate a wide variety of interpretations, and they derive their meaning through a process of engaged negotiation on the part of the reader. Just as there is no definitive version of "Little Red Riding Hood," there is also no definitive interpretation of her story.

Some versions of Little Red Riding Hood's story or Snow White's story may appear to reenforce stereotypes; others may have an emancipatory potential; still others may seem radically feminist. All are of historical interest, revealing the ways in which a story has adapted to a culture and been shaped by its social practices. The new story may be ideologically correct or ideologically suspect, but it can always serve as the point of departure for debate, critique, and dialogue. In this volume, I have tried to convey a sense of the rich cultural archive behind stories that we tend to flatten out with the monolithic labels "Little Red Riding Hood," "Snow White," or "Cinderella."

Recovering fairy tales that have undergone a process of cultural suppression or that have succumbed to cultural amnesia has been the mission of a number of folklorists in the past decades. Instead of reshaping canonical fairy tales or trying to reinvent them, these collectors seek to fill in the many empty spaces on the shelves of our collective folkloric archive. Rosemary Minard's *Womenfolk and Fairy Tales* explicitly seeks to identify tales in which women are "active, intelligent, capable, and courageous human beings."[7] While Minard succeeds in reviving some resourceful folklore heroines, many of the faces in her anthology are familiar ones. A Chinese Red Riding Hood, a Scandinavian Beauty, and a British wife of Bluebeard

5. Alison Lurie, "Fairy Tale Liberation," *New York Review of Books*, 17 December 1970, 42.
6. Atwood, "Grimms' Remembered," 291–92.
7. Rosemary Minard, ed., *Womenfolk and Fairy Tales* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1975) viii.

mingle in her anthology with the more obscure Unanana, Kate Crackernuts, and Clever Manka.

Like Minard, Ethel Johnston Phelps aims to collect tales that feature "active and courageous girls and women in the leading roles" for her volume *Tatterhood and Other Tales*.[8] By contrast, Angela Carter's *Virago Book of Fairy Tales* chooses texts for their historical interest, for the way in which they provide models of how women struggled, succeeded, and also sometimes failed in the challenges of everyday life. "I wanted to demonstrate the extraordinary richness and diversity of responses to the same common predicament—being alive—and the richness and diversity with which femininity, in practice, is represented in 'unofficial' culture: its strategies, its plots, its hard work."[9]

Our own fairy-tale repertoire can now be said to consist of two competing traditions. On the one hand, we have the classical canon of tales collected by, among others, Joseph Jacobs in England, Charles Perrault in France, the Grimm brothers in Germany, and Alexander Afanasev in Russia. On the other hand, we have a rival tradition of heretical stories established by folklorists who have sought to unearth buried cultural treasures and to conduct archaeological exercises designed to connect us with a subversive dimension of our collective past. In addition to this twin folkloric legacy, we have the reinventions of such authors as Hans Christian Andersen and Oscar Wilde, who, in competing with the raconteurs of old, attempted to supplant their narratives and to provide new cultural texts on which to model our lives.

Hans Christian Andersen and Oscar Wilde can be seen as moving in an imitative mode, attempting to capture the style and spirit of folk raconteurs in their literary efforts. Yet their fairy tales, with their self-consciously artless expressions and calculated didactic effects, diverge dramatically from the traditional tales of folk cultures. What both Andersen and Wilde seem to have forgotten is that the folktale thrives on conflict and contrast, not on sentiment and pathos. P. L. Travers tellingly registers her response as a child to reading Andersen's fairy tales: "Ah, how pleasant to be manipulated, to feel one's heartstrings pulled this way and that—twang, twang, again and again, longing, self-pity, nostalgia, remorse—and to let fall the fullsome tear that would never be shed for Grimm."[1] Andersen wants to erase "the pagan world with its fortitude and strong contrasts." Still, Andersen's "Little Mermaid" reveals just how easily literary fairy tales can mutate into folklore, lending themselves to adaptation, transformation, and critique in a variety of media and becoming part of our collective cultural awareness.

Feminist writers have resisted the temptation to move in the imitative mode, choosing instead the route of critique and parody in their recastings of tales. For Anne Sexton, for example, the history and wisdom of the past embedded in fairy tales is less important than the construction of new cultural signposts for coping with "being alive." Anne Sexton's *Transfor-*

8. Ethel Johnston Phelps, ed., *Tatterhood and Other Tales* (Old Westbury, New York: Feminist Press, 1978) xv.
9. Carter, *Virago*, xiv.
1. P. L. Travers, *What the Bee Knows: Reflections on Myth, Symbol and Story* (Wellingborough, Northamptonshire: Aquarian Press, 1989) 232.

mations begins by staking a claim to producing fairy tales, by declaring herself to be the new source of folk wisdom and of oracular authority. She positions herself as speaker, "my face in a book" (presumably the Grimms' *Nursery and Household Tales*), with "mouth wide, ready to tell you a story or two." In a self-described appropriation of the Grimms' legacy ("I take the fairy tale and transform it into a poem of my own"), Sexton creates new stories that stage her own "very wry and cruel and sadistic and funny" psychic melodramas.[2] As "middle-aged witch," Sexton presents herself as master of the black arts, of an opaque art of illusion, and also as a disruptive force, a figure of anarchic energy who subverts conventional cultural wisdom. Nowhere is her critique of romantic love, of the "happily ever after" of fairy tales, more searingly expressed than in the final strophe of "Cinderella":

> Cinderella and the prince
> lived, they say, happily ever after,
> like two dolls in a museum case
> never bothered by diapers and dust,
> never arguing over the timing of an egg,
> never telling the same story twice,
> never getting a middle-aged spread,
> their darling smiles pasted on for eternity.
> Regular Bobbsey Twins.
> That story.

Sexton's transformations reveal the gap between "that story" and reality, yet at the same time expose the specious terms of "that story," showing how intolerable it would be, even if true.

Sexton enters into an impassioned dialogue with the Grimm brothers, contesting their premises, interrogating their plots, and reinventing their conclusions. Other writers, recognizing the social energy of these tales, have followed her lead, rewriting and recasting stories told by Perrault, the Grimms, Madame de Beaumont, and Hans Christian Andersen. The dialogue may not always be as emotionally charged as it is in Sexton's poetry. In some cases it will be so muted that many readers will be unaware of the intertextual connection with fairy tales. Few film reviewers, for example, recognized the allusive richness of Jane Campion's *The Piano*,[3] which opens with a bow to Andersen's "Little Mermaid," then nods repeatedly in the direction of the Grimms' "Robber Bridegroom" and Perrault's "Bluebeard."

With her collection of stories *The Bloody Chamber*, Angela Carter joined Anne Sexton in reworking the familiar script of fairy tales, in her case to mount "a critique of current relations between the sexes." Carter positions herself as a "moral pornographer," a writer seeking to "penetrate to the heart of the contempt for women that distorts our culture." "Beauty and the Beast," "Little Red Riding Hood," "Puss in Boots," and "Bluebeard":

2. Diane Wood Middlebrook, *Anne Sexton* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1991) 336–37.
3. *The Piano*, dir. Jane Campion, Miramax, 1994.

all these stories have, according to Carter, a "violently sexual" side to them, a "latent content" that becomes manifest in her rescriptings of fairy tales for an adult audience.[4] Carter aims above all to demystify these sacred cultural texts, to show that we can break their magical spells and that social change is possible once we become aware of the stories that have guided our social, moral, and personal development. Margaret Atwood's novels and short stories also enact and critique the plots of fairy tales, showing the degree to which these stories inform our affective life, programming our responses to romance, defining our desires, and constructing our anxieties. Like Sally, the fictional heroine of Atwood's "Bluebeard's Egg," Atwood questions the seemingly timeless and universal truths of our cultural stories by reflecting on their assumptions and exploring the ways in which they can be subverted through rewritings.

It was Charlotte Brontë who inaugurated with full force the critique of fairy-tale romance in fiction by women for women. The life story of the heroine of *Jane Eyre* (1847) can be read as a one-woman crusade and act of resistance to the roles modeled for girls and women in fairy tales.[5] At Gateshead, Jane Eyre finds herself positioned as domestic slave, as a Cinderella figure in the Reed household. Employed as an "under-nurserymaid, to tidy the rooms, dust the chairs" (25), she is subjected on a daily basis to reproaches, persecuted by two unpleasant "stepsisters" and by a "stepmother" who has an "insuperable and rooted aversion" (23) to her, and excluded from the "usual festive cheer" (23) of holiday parties. Jane, although initially self-pitying and complicit, takes a defiant stance, refusing to be contained and framed by the cultural story that has inscribed itself on her life. Rather than passively enduring her storybook fate (which will keep her—as a "plain Jane"—forever locked in the first phase of "Cinderella"), she rebels against the social reflexes of her world and writes herself out of the script.

Just as Jane refuses to model her behavior on Cinderella, despite the seductive, though false, hopes of that story, so too she refrains from accepting the role of beloved in Rochester's fairy-tale fantasies. No beauty, Jane is nonetheless at first enchanted by the prospect of domesticating a man who is described as "metamorphosed into a lion" and who inhabits a house with "a corridor from some Bluebeard's castle," a house that contains the dreaded forbidden chamber familiar to readers of "Bluebeard." Jane recognizes what is at stake for her in succumbing to a fairy-tale concept of romance: "For a moment I am beyond my own mastery. What does it mean? I did not think I should tremble in this way when I saw him—or lose my voice or the power of motion in his presence" (214). Jane Eyre rejects the cult of suffering and self-effacement endorsed in fairy tales like "Cinderella" and "Beauty and the Beast" to construct her own story, renouncing prefabricated roles and creating her own identity. She reinvents herself and produces a radically new cultural script, the one embodied in

4. Robin Ann Sheets, "Pornography, Fairy Tales, and Feminism: Angela Carter's 'The Bloody Chamber,'" *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 1 (1991): 635, 642.
5. All parenthetical citations to *Jane Eyre* refer to Charlotte Brontë, *Jane Eyre*, ed. Richard J. Dunn (New York: Norton, 1987).

the written record that constitutes her own autobiography. Making productive use of fairy tales by reacting to them, resisting them, and rewriting them rather than passively consuming them until they are "lying in the stomach, as real identity," Jane Eyre offers us a splendidly legible and luminous map of reading for our cultural stories.

Contents

The Texts of
THE CLASSIC FAIRY TALES