A review of

The Company of Wolves

Emily Jessica Turner

The *Company of Wolves* is a title in Auteur Publishing's Devil's Advocate series, which showcases a range of critical approaches to horror cinema. James Gracey's text explores how the 1984 Neil Jordan film of the same name evokes fairy tales, horror, werewolf films, Freudian symbolism, and the Female Gothic.

Based upon three tales from Angela Carter's 1979 collection of short stories, *The Bloody Chamber* – 'The Werewolf', 'The Company of Wolves', and 'Wolf-Alice', the film was scripted by Jordan along with Carter. Moving away from the kitchen-sink realism favoured by British cinema in the early eighties, Jordan's film is described by Gracey as 'a unique beast; part fairy tale, part werewolf film, part horror film, part feminist coming of age allegory' (117).

Gracey is adept at identifying key themes in the 1984 film and exploring them in an accessible but thorough manner, forging links between images and ideas, and wider theoretical concepts. He shows that transformation and liminality sit at the heart of this film, in which a girl's burgeoning sexuality emerges through feverish dreams, represented by the 'metaphor for adult sexuality' (8) and 'tragic lover', the werewolf. The significance of storytelling – which Gracey argues is central to *The Company of Wolves* – plays out on multiple levels due to the 'Chinese puzzle-box' effect of the film, which shows stories within dreams within stories.

Chapter One, 'Once Upon a Time', gives a brief biography of both Jordan and Carter, contextualising their work and identifying recurring themes and imagery used in their writing prior to working together. The chapter also explores their working relationship and time spent scripting *The Company of Wolves*. The development of the film – creating the set, casting, filming, scoring – and the film's influences from the worlds of cinema, folklore, and art is also outlined in this chapter.

In the second chapter, 'Telling Tales', Gracey astutely notes that Jordan and Carter inversely use the fairy tale to 'demythologise' 'culturally constructed notions' (37) perpetrated by the format. To this end, the art of storytelling, a device through which the film discusses ideas of gender, sexuality, and identity, enables *The Company of Wolves* film to play with 'the form of the fairy tale and its ideas regarding initiation, redemption and personal and social progress' (37). Here, largely informed by the critical writings of Jack Zipes, Gracey

examines the history and evolution of the fairy-tale format and function as cultural conditioner or educator. This is a useful overview of the development of folklore from an oral tradition to a literary form, both in terms of function and social relevance, and its critical evaluation and categorisation.

'Red Hoods, Dark Woods', Chapter Three, examines the Little Red Riding Hood in more detail, exploring how Carter and Jordan subvert expectations of the tale as 'familiar [literary] ground'. Carter's 1979 retellings of the story emphasise female sexuality and experience, resisting the moral message of Charles Perrault's 1697 publication 'Le Petit Chaperon Rouge' that 'girls who invite strange men into their parlours deserve what they get' and instead places the agency in the hands of the young girl, a theme more in keeping with the original tales of a brave peasant girl outwitting the wolf.

Following on from the previous chapter's thorough outlining of the original Little Red Riding Hood tale's translation to the silver screen, Chapter Four positions *The Company of Wolves* film as one of 'a group of films which unravel as darkly sexual coming of age parables' (76).

The Company of Wolves' exploration of the empowerment of women is the topic of 'Seeing Red', which highlights the connection between Carter's feminism and Jordan's 'similar predilection for deconstructing normative gender roles and sexuality' (62). It suggests their joint belief that fairy tales, while possessing the ability to police identity, could also carry messages which would liberate confines of gender and sexuality. Illustrating this, Chapter Four explores Carter's depiction of gender and female empowerment in the short stories which would be adapted into *The Company of Wolves*. The film is also contextualised within feminist discourse both in relation to contemporary analysis of folk tales, and Carter's own fiction writings. Particularly interesting here is Gracey's analysis of the film's representations of both female and male characters, and how the binaries between the two social constructs are subverted by the imagery used on screen, as well as a discussion of the shift from the male gaze to the active female voice. The author also links Jacques Lacan's mirror theory with the film's representation of Rosaleen's discovery of her identity.

'The Big Bad Wolf' is the topic of Chapter Five, which explores the cultural mythos of the werewolf from its early incarnations in the legends and poetry of antiquity, through its frequent depiction in medieval literature and resurgence in 19th-century Gothic literature, and to its eventual home in cinema. Gracey links the 'divided self' of lycanthropy with Freudian notions of suppression, and suggests that early filmic representations of wolf men 'help to establish the Freudian psychoanalytic aspects of the werewolf in cinema' (93).

Gracey contextualises *The Company of Wolves* with other werewolf films of its era, particularly Joe Dante's 1977 film *The Howling*, both of which parallel sexuality with lycanthropy. The ideas this example evokes are returned to in Chapter Six, 'A She-Wolf Came . . .', in which the author explores feminine identity within the gender theory contexts of Chapter Four, suggesting that *The Company of Wolves* is atypical in its use of the image of the lycanthrope to demonstrate feminine puberty and developing adult sexuality. Here, Gracey explores literary

and filmic representations of women wolves – which have evolved over time, eventually entering a 'hypersexualised' mode in the 20th century – linking these characters to theories of fear of the female 'other', body horror, and Barbara Creed's 'monstrous feminine'. 'Happily Ever After…', Chapter Seven, gives an overview of the critical response to the film and its impact on wider culture, from cinema to music.

Gracey's text *The Company of Wolves* is a useful and interesting overview of the myriad references and inspirations which conjured the film from the minds of Jordan and Carter. Moving from an overview of the production of the film, to an examination of the fairy-tale format and particularly the mythos of Little Red Riding Hood, which is linked to themes of female empowerment and the image of the female werewolf, Gracey connects readings with concepts to mark the shape of this particular filmic beast. It brings together a variety of critical sources to inform its evaluation of *The Company of Wolves* film's development, creation, manifestation and reception, while allowing the aesthetic and narrative character of the film to shine through, informed and enhanced by Gracey's analysis.

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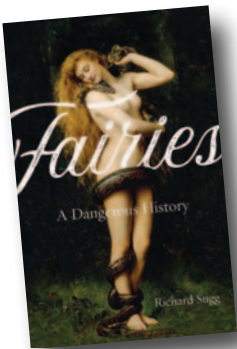
A review of
Fairies:
A Dangerous History

Francesca Bihet

Richard Sugg's *Fairies: A Dangerous History* is a refreshing look at the fascinating, dark and dangerous folkloric fairy, focusing on the mainly Celtic but also wider Western tradition. This is the perilous ancestor of the benign pink sugar-plum fairy children have come to be familiar with since the advent of 19th-century picture books. Sugg's book timeously coincides with a reviving interest in fantasy, folk traditions and folk horror on social media and in wider popular culture. Books such as

Adam Scovell's *Folk Horror: Hours Dreadful and Things Strange* (2017) capture the current fascination with the uncanny in rural supernaturalised landscapes. It is these to which Sugg's work also pays attention.

One of the strengths of *Fairies* is Sugg's attempt to tackle the longstanding and thorny question regarding first-person accounts of fairy happenings in a serious academic manner. He postulates a hierarchy of the improbable or irrational to demonstrate that fairy beliefs are indeed no more absurd than other modern faith paths. Owing to the modern image of the feminine butterfly fairy, contemporary fairy belief is considered the 'nadir of childish irrationality', worse than witches, ghosts or aliens who have 'a certain dark weight of supernatural gravity about them' (14). Yet there continue to be many reported sightings of the fairy folk. A recent Fairy Census, conducted by scholar Simon Young of the Fairy Investigation Society, compiles hundreds of witness accounts of such entities.[1] Sugg's book falls into a new wave of analysis in fairy lore which attempts to consider more recent material alongside traditional folkloric accounts. In *Fairies* we find the work of the 17th-century minister Robert Kirk sitting amongst late 20th-century accounts of fairies performing housework and contemporary children's pictures of fairies. Such approaches have also been incorporated into the recently published *Magical Folk*[2] and Sabina Magliocco's chapter in *Fairies, Demons, and Nature Spirits*.[3] This trend builds upon Gillian Bennett's work *Traditions of Belief*, which broke new ground by considering the 'disreputable' element of present-day supernatural beliefs in folklore.[4]

In times past folklorists dealt with the problematic issue of contemporary fairy belief by simply ignoring it. In the 1920s the Folklore Society sought to guard their academic work from the ridicule experienced by psychical investigators by ignoring the Cottingley fairy photographs. Fairies were, for them, something which belonged firmly in humankind's past, a remnant of more superstitious eras. It was indeed only Andrew Lang, in the era prior to Cottingley, who had proposed looking at 'Psycho-Folklore', considering contemporary psychical manifestations alongside historical traditions. He highlighted that when an item 'rests only on tradition it interests the folklorist', but as soon as a topic became contemporary 'folklore drops the subject' and psychical research picks it up.[5] Lang's opponent Edward Clodd considered such psychical reports as unworthy 'barbaric spiritual philosophy ''writ large'''.[6] Indeed, it has not been until comparatively recently that contemporary fairy belief has been examined seriously by academics (if you discount a few lone individuals like Walter Evan-Wentz). A possible disciple of Lang, Sugg remarks that 'the divide between folklore and alleged fairy sightings may not be as rigid as one would expect' (267). For tackling this historic omission Sugg is to be congratulated.

Sugg helps modern readers who may consider fairy belief as pure whimsy to understand how deeply such beliefs were held within the mental context of rural Ireland. It is his 'dark and impious dream: to get fairies into your head, and to get you into the heads, behind the eyes, of people to whom fairies were terror and wonder, danger and glamour, and yet unlike

the angels and demons of educated Christianity – right *there*' (9). A mentalities approach is particularly helpful in achieving his aim. Sugg, in many ways, sees fairies as an intermediary between harsh and unpredictable rural lives and the forces of nature. He makes the reader see that fairies were a perceptibly real and uncanny force in homes and the wider landscape: friends and foes, who could help you with the housework, steal your babies or give fairy doctors the power to heal. Sugg encourages readers to understand apparent superstitions within their own contextualised setting, rather than just dismissing them as irrational.

By encouraging readers to understand the mental landscape of fairy believers, Sugg also encourages us to re-animate the landscape. It is in this manner the work can also be considered of eco-critical importance. In the concluding chapter 'The Green Mist' he cites the tale of Tiddy Mun, recorded by Marie Balfour during the 1880s (249). It concerns the curse of disease wrought upon Lincolnshire by the spirit after the fens were drained in the 17th century. Sugg highlights how for 'most people across most of history, this kind of attitude to nature has been the norm' (249). Nature was revered and held in fear; likewise fairies as animistic natural entities were also ambivalent and dangerous beings. Sugg sees that, at least in some respects, 'fairy belief helped to counter the predatory behaviour of industrialism and capitalism' (250). The re-evocation of fairies, and indeed wider folk horror genres, in contemporary scholarship is timely within our era of plastic pollution and ecological crisis. Re-engagement with an animistic world view, even on an academic level, can help contemporary readers relate to the natural landscape in more reverential ways.

Another welcome addition is Sugg's frequent inclusion of under-recognised sources, most notably the Irish antiquarian Thomas Westropp, who published numerous articles on Clare, Connacht and Limerick in the journal *Folklore* during the first decades of the 20th century. Westropp had an intimate knowledge of his local area, focussing both on the landscape and the tales connected to ancient sites. It is indeed proper that Westropp sits amongst names such as John Rhys, Kirk and Evan-Wentz in fairy scholarship.

Sugg equally does not overlook the dangerous qualities extant in literary and artistic expressions of fairies. He cites the sexually dangerous temptresses of 19th-century art such as Herbert James Draper's *Lamia* and John William Waterhouse's *Hylas and the Nymphs*. He acknowledges the erotic elements in Christina Rossetti's 'The Goblin Market'. Ultimately though, 'the freedom of literature gives the fairies life, where the vampiric camera often drains it away' (235). Celluloid actualised the fairies, conjuring their presence at will and hence removed their dangerous, unpredictable potency. It is perhaps the troublesome juncture between the modern picture book fairy, the Disney fairy and neo-pagan fairy beliefs which requires more interrogation.

If there are any weaknesses in the book they can be found in the truncated source list and absence of footnote referencing. This makes the book a little frustrating for use as a scholarly source. A more comprehensive index might also have assisted navigation. However, the book contains a number of beautiful colour illustrations and some pertinent links to

key websites. Overall the book is a charming read for interested general readers and a timely scholarly update on the fairy problem, building on the works of Diane Purkiss and Carole Silver. It is a very useful addition to the modern fairy enthusiast's *Cabinet des Fées.*

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Notes
1. Simon Young (ed.), *Fairy Census 2014-2017,* http://www.fairyist.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/The-Fairy-Census-2014-2017-1.pdf, accessed 30 August 2018.
2. Simon Young and Ceri Houlbrook (eds), *Magical Folk* (London: Gibson Square, 2018).
3. Sabina Magliocco '''Reconnecting to Everything'': Fairies and Contemporary Paganism' in *Fairies, Demons, and Nature Spirits,* ed. Michael Ostling (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 325-48.
4. Gillian Bennett, *Traditions of Belief* (London: Penguin, 1987).
5. Andrew Lang, 'Protest of a Psycho-Folklorist', *Folklore* 6.3 (1895), 247-8.
6. Edward Clodd, 'Presidential Speech', *Folklore* 6.1 (1895), 79.
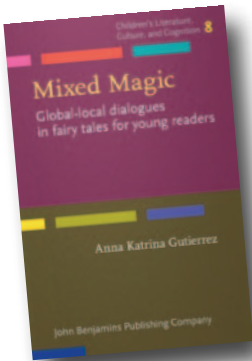
A review of

Mixed Magic: Global-local dialogues in fairy tales for young readers

Anthony James O'Shea

In Anna Katrina Gutierrez's *Mixed Magic: Global-local dialogues in fairy tales for young readers* we are presented with a densely theoretical work that spans such fields as global studies, linguistics, ecofeminism, art history and cognitive narratology – a theory that looks at how narratives shape the way in which the subject perceives the world.

Globalisation is often seen (and in many ways justifiably so) as a monolithic neoliberal homogenising force that assimilates whatever culture it encounters, often with the objective to marketise and expand the insatiable appetite of capital accumulation.

Gutierrez offers up a counter-narrative to this idea, 'that an approach that focuses on collaborative exchanges makes possible a new understanding of identity: as glocal, or a blend of global signs and local meanings', in the hope that '[a]pplying glocalization as a theory of hybridity might more accurately depict the reality of cultural relations.' Ultimately Gutierrez argues against the idea that globalization is inherently a western thrust toward dominance and homogenization: 'my … concern … is a felt need to direct attention to a more nuanced form of globalization framed as an exchange rather than as a monologue.' And the following chapters explore and critique these concerns in highly perceptive and illuminating ways.

Chapter 1 begins with Gutierrez outlining the conceptual framework in which glocalization belongs. Despite the potentially esoteric language Gutierrez deploys, her writing style makes the chapter easy to follow and she ably builds the concepts together to then prepare the reader for what follows. One of the most interesting concepts that Gutierrez foregrounds is the notion of *maodun* which is the Chinese idea of 'four cornered logic' that situates itself against traditional notions of Western binaries between 'I am not you therefore I am I'. 'Four cornered logic' allows for a multiplicity of selves that allows both contradictory dualities between the self and other to be both true and allowed to be contained as opposed to more western ideas of binary logic. The notion of *maodun* is one in which ideas of glocality is contingent upon, as it allows for 'contradictory sameness'. Gutierrez offers up the example of 'the wealthy communist' that through the lens of *maodun* allows the reader to begin to enter the glocal space.

Chapter 2 'Reimaging the Nation' examines works in which the ideas of dual nationality and multiculturalism are scrutinised under the schema of fairy-tale motifs. The chapter mainly explores these themes in three texts: *Angelfish*, a young adult novel by Laurence Yep, *American Born Chinese*, a graphic novel by Gene Luen Yang, and *Tall Story* by Candy Gourlay – amongst other numerous retellings, most notably *Gomi and Uncle Opoondori*, a Korean fairy tale heavily embedded within the historical context of the Korean war which utilises a universally Korean folktale 'Hae wa Tal' to highlight the cultural commonality between North and South Korea and to reframe the Korean war with the 'tigers' in the tale being two cultural superpowers (namely the USA and Soviet Union) as forces that violently demarcated the country for geopolitical gain.

Chapter 3 seeks to complicate the argument of the 'orient and the other' through a series of detailed analysis of various retellings of *Beauty and the Beast* and *Bluebeard*, beginning with Jean-Marie le Prince de Beaumont's and Charles Perrault's versions respectively. Gutierrez poses the question, 'Do these Oriental constructs perpetuate colonialist and Western values, or do they inspire dialogic and glocal paradigms for Western subjectivity?' The answer is an obviously complex one and on face value many of the retellings (barring one in particular – Jo Napoli's *Beast*) reaffirm the stereotype of the Orient as a dangerous and exotic other which the enlightened West attempts to pacify.

Also, of interest is how the orientalising of *Bluebeard* and *The Beast* came about through pictorial representation rather than narrative evidence of the Orient. Gutierrez, through careful examination of art history, constructs a paradigm of the East/West power dynamic that exposes how this came to be. Gutierrez's 'glocalizing' comes about in contingent and fleeting moments in her analysis of these retellings in which she compares and contrasts the schemas of *Bluebeard* and *Beauty and the Beast* and sees the former as emphasising 'binary oppositions' while the latter has more potential to open up into glocal agentic subjectivity through 'themes of loving compassion and inner beauty, foreground[ing] an intersubjective model'.

In Chapter 4 Gutierrez's application of a 'glocal' framework really comes into its own. This is in no small part due to the work of Studio Ghibli's Hayao Miyazaki, who deliberately eschewed the confines of the world of 'Disneyfication' in lieu of ensuring that his films would not be edited or mistranslated in any way.

Disney's *Mulan* is the kind of film rife with cultural appropriation – such as naming the wisecracking dragon sidekick voiced by Eddy Murphy 'mushu' – 'a staple food item for American Chinese take-out menus' (110). Ultimately the film shows how 'Chinese traditions are presented from an American perspective and judged according to American values'. In contrast to this Miyazaki creates spaces deliberately designed to be culturally ambiguous. To quote Gutierrez, Miyazaki's films 'are blended with Western signs and scripts, the emergent anime fantasyscapes are glocal spaces that are both familiar and exotic to Japanese and non-Japanese audiences alike. These eclectic spaces evoke feelings of home and deterritorialization, and in this way reflect the increasing hybridization and boundary-crossing characteristic of a network society.'

The Secret World of Arriety, an anime remake of *The Borrowers*, also lends itself to a fascinating analysis by Gutierrez. The protagonist Arriety recycles 'everyday objects […] borrowed and given new purpose – in other words they are recycled and glocalized.' Gutierrez then gives examples of spools of strings and cogs being repurposed and therefore gives concrete examples of 'signs given new meaning'. One excerpt stands out as an example of destructive modernity – a well-meaning human decides to replace the lovingly glocalized home with a premanufactured dollhouse thereby presenting, in a wonderfully concise fashion, the contingency and delicacy of globalization versus glocalization.

Chapter 5's 'Mermaids' contains a fascinating analysis of 'the little mermaid' script across cultures of the East and West and is primarily focused on adaptations or retellings emergent from the Hans Christian Anderson's *The Little Mermaid*. Gutierrez pays close attention to specific examples of glocal interface and 'motifs of metamorphosis, migration, and otherness'. Of particular interest to the reader is the sharp dichotomy between the Disney version and the Miyazaki remake.

Gutierrez deconstructs Disney's *The Little Mermaid* as a reinforcing Western product that consolidates ideas of the male gaze and patriarchal rule. For example Ursula, the main antagonist, presents anarchy and chaos whilst also reinforcing gender stereotype. Patriarchal hegemony is restored when the princely Eric ends her 'anarchic matriarchy' thus restoring order and the so-called fairy-tale happy ending. Gutierrez points out that Ariel never again reaches the kind of agency she had as a mermaid and that 'the only space wherein it is safe to become a woman is the space of marriage.'

On the other end of the spectrum we have another Miyazaki film, *Ponyo on the Cliff by the Sea*, and a wonderfully concrete example of the glocal in practice: the titular character Ponyo embodies elements of the glocal in her own being. According to Gutierrez, Ponyo's journey throughout the film 'brings together metamorphosis motifs that either fragment mermaids or show their mutability, and hence allow a dialectical exchange between ecofeminist and patriarchal perspectives from the East and West.' Hence, Ponyo's ability to shift forms allows for an ecofeminist critique that allows for the embodiment of the nonhuman. In an inverted version of the Disney's film, *Ponyo* has the matriarchal figure as the benevolent Gran Marmae, who has the ability to encompass the entire ocean and thus represents the idea of the networked society. It is Fujimoto, Ponyo's father, who incites a conflict with humanity because of the horrific levels of pollution that the ocean suffers from. By contrasting the Disney version with the Studio Ghibli iteration Gutierrez deftly highlights the glocal whilst all the while undermining and bringing attention to the dangers of perceiving globalisation through a wholly western lens.

Chapter 6, 'Beasts (and Beauties)', examines the way in which masculinity is expressed in the 'beast-groom' script. This chapter seems particularly prevalent as it examines a globalised obsession with beauty through the tale of *Johnny Tinoso and the Proud Beauty* as well as examining the Disney version. And in our current cultural climate of toxic masculinity it resonates on a deeply pertinent and fundamental level.

This is an excellent examination of the way in which children's literature through the scripts and schemas of the universal fairy tale can reveal that contradictory sameness is not only achievable but preferable over the elimination of difference. I believe that this is not only an examination of children's literature but also a useful praxis in attempting to navigate the contemporary. Hybridity and mutability need to be fostered in times where demarcation and international relations seem to be at an all-time low.

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Anthony James O'Shea