



When Dreams Came True: Classical Fairy Tales and Their Tradition

By Jack Zipes

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For centuries fairy tales have been a powerful mode of passing cultural values onto our children, and for many these stories delight and haunt us from cradle to grave. But how have these stories become so powerful and why?

In *When Dreams Came True*, Jack Zipes explains the social life of the fairy tale, from the sixteenth century on into the twenty-first. Whether exploring Charles Perrault or the Brothers Grimm, Hans Christian Andersen or *The Thousand and One Nights*, *The Happy Prince* or *Pinocchio*, L. Frank Baum or Hermann Hesse, Zipes shows how the authors of our beloved fairy tales used the genre to articulate personal desires, political views, and aesthetic preferences within particular social contexts. Above all, he demonstrates the role that the fairy tale has assumed in the civilizing process?the way it imparts values, norms, and aesthetic taste to children and adults.

This second edition of one of Jack Zipes's best-loved books includes a new preface and two new chapters on J.M. Barrie's *Peter Pan* and E.T.A. Hoffman's *The Nutcracker and the Mouse King*.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Since publishing *Don't Bet on the Prince* a decade ago, Zipes has established himself as the preeminent popularizer of the social and psychological uses of fairy tales for a contemporary audience. The 11 essays collected here are revised and updated introductions and afterwords written by Zipes for his books dealing with fairy and folk literature. His aim in updating and reissuing this material is to highlight the historical role that fairy tales, both oral and written, play in socializing and civilizing their audience. Backed by scholarly research and cross-cultural references, the essays describe how a privileged, educated minority has used fairy tales to defend and maintain its status while incorporating and perpetuating the belief that the poor could triumph over the ruling class through cunning and moral integrity. Zipes's main thesis is that fairy tales are a dynamic mixture of upper- and lower-class values that at once reinforce a society's class structure and, with subtlety and humor, show the emperor's nakedness without upsetting the status quo. The chapters on fairy tale creators Hans Christian Andersen, Oscar Wilde, Herman Hesse and Americans Frank Stockton and L. Frank Baum connect these writers' outsider status with their use of the fairy tale to explore nonconformism and to voice their opposition to hypocrisy, commercialism and war. Of primary interest to students of children's literature, the book may also appeal to readers concerned with social history, although the links between these disparate pieces are not as solidly forged as they might have been had Zipes written a single cohesive study of the subject.

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From [Booklist](#)

Zipes has forged a career out of brilliant and subversive analyses of fairy tales. Here he gathers in somewhat recast form previously published introductions and afterwords and turns them into a scholarly but lucid text, with enchanting illustrations from compilations through the centuries. The rise of the literary fairy tale came about in seventeenth-century France in the salons of aristocratic women, who told stories based on the folktales of their childhood, but the truly ancient *Arabian Nights* tales deeply colored everything that followed their introduction in Europe in the eighteenth century. Zipes relates the lives of the Brothers Grimm and Hans Christian Andersen as metaphors of class struggle and knowing one's place as played out in the tales they constructed and related. Chapters on Oscar Wilde, Frank Baum, Collodi (*Pinocchio*), the now-forgotten Frank Stockton, and Herman Hesse follow a nimble analysis of the delayed development of the literary fairy tale in Victorian England. Intelligent and thoughtful fun, without deconstructing the land of Faerie into dust and ashes. *GraceAnne A. DeCandido*

From Kirkus Reviews

paper 0-415-92151-1 Zipes (German/Univ. of Minnesota; *Don't Bet on the Prince*, 1986, etc.), a children's literature specialist, here gathers together his introductions and postscripts from various previous fairy tale collections. The result is a concise yet comprehensive picture of the genre's development in Western Europe and America since the 1600s. Fairy tales thrived as an oral tradition for centuries before they were transcribed. Zipes argues that early tales didn't target a juvenile audience; instead, their allegorical form often concealed social, moral, ethical, and aesthetic criticism appreciated only by adults. The pioneer of the genre in France was Charles Perrault, who created fairy tales drawing on pagan beliefs and folklore, rather than on antique sources, as the classicist canon of his time preferred. In Germany, Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm charged their tales with Protestant ethics, while Hans Christian Andersen negotiated power relations and social domination in Danish society. Due to religious austerity, fairy tales were suppressed in England until the middle of the 19th century. After they entered literature officially during the Victorian Age, they

exhibited a strong didactic tendency, and eventually took shape as an implicit critical inquiry into the dominant materialist culture, the oppressive moral code, or, as in the case of Oscar Wilde, normative sexuality. Among American fairy tale writers, Zipes focuses particularly on Frank Baum, whose multivolume work on the utopian land of Oz became a fixture of the cultural landscape, embodying the author's dream of a socialist alternative to American capitalism. Zipes skillfully weaves into his narrative the story of the influence of the Arabian Nights, translations of which began to appear in the West as early as the 1700s. At the close of his study, he also looks briefly at how the 20th-century German novelist Hermann Hesse infused the classical fairy tale with the macabre and romantic realism to reflect his personal journey and European political conflicts. An enticing reexamination of cherished texts. (15 illustrations) (Author tour) -- Copyright ©1998, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved.

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