ADRIANA TROZZI (1992) *FAIRY-TALE CRITICISM WITHIN FICTION: THE FEMINIST ELEMENTS*. MEMORIA E INTERPRETAZIONE 4. MARINA DI PATTI (ME): PUNGITOPO

Although no clue is given in the title, this is a study of the uses of fairy-tale material in the works of Audrey Thomas. Trozzi bases on the model established by the Grimm Brothers' collection (1812), to identify points of convergence and divergence in Thomas's treatment of well-known tales, such as "Cinderella," "Snow White," "Rapunzel," "The Princess and the Pea," and "The Little Mermaid." However, the author seems more interested in the object of study at large –fairy-tale history and criticism– than in the particular subject she chooses: Thomas's fiction.

Thus, the introduction includes a short history of fairy-tale criticism, and a dissertation on the most common methods of approach to fairy tales, among which Trozzi singles out three: the psychological approach, based on Jungian and Freudian theories of the collective unconscious and of sexual symbols respectively; the philological method, derived from the formalist Vladimir Propp and his morphological pattern of fairy tales; and the structuralists, conducting texual analysis within a wider cultural context, and among whom Trozzi distinguishes the critical work of Max Luthi. Along with these three main trends, there is a short mention to feminist criticism, characterised, according to Trozzi, by a negative view of fairy tales in their perpetuation of passive female stereotypes. These different approaches coincide in dividing the meaning of fairy tales in surface (moral) and hidden meaning.

Only at the end of this introduction, are we informed of the subject of the study: the fiction of Audrey Thomas and, more in particular, the uses of fairy-tale elements in the fiction of this Canadian writer. The three chapters that form the corpus of the book correspond exactly to Thomas's three different methods of introducing fairy-tale material in her works. Each chapter starts with an examination of the overt meaning and then moves to the covert, more complex, meaning.

The first chapter provides an analysis of what Trozzi calls the "evocative/imitative" method, consisting of the introduction of fairy-tale elements by way of parallels or comparisons. The section is divided into Thomas's use of well-known motifs and allusions (the slipper, the mirror, the figure of the witch, and so forth), and her direct references to tales or names of characters. Some of Thomas's short stories, such as "Initram" (*Ladies & Escorts*) or "Natural History" (*Real Mothers*), as well as her novel *Intertidal Life*, are examined here to show the way Thomas inserts direct or indirect fairy-tale allusions with the only intent, or so it appears, of evocation.

The "reinterpretative" method, implying the act of rewriting –and thus possibly subverting– old themes, occupies the second chapter. Here, a juxtaposition of the tradi-

tional tales "Rapunzel" and "Cinderella" and Thomas's stories "Rapunzel" (*Ladies & Escorts*) and "A Winter's Tale" (*Ten Green Bottles*) is enacted, respectively, to reveal the writer's manipulation of the old texts. In the first case, the title of the story and the name of the main character signal the ongoing subversion of the traditional "Rapunzel." In the second, the mention of Cinderella, in the middle of the narration, forces the reader to re-examine the text and to notice the differences between both tales.

In the third, and last, chapter, Trozzi focuses on Thomas's "The Princess and the Zucchini" (*Goodbye Harold, Good Luck*), to illustrate what she calls the "creative" method, this consisting of the writing of an altogether new tale. The first section of the chapter offers an analysis of this story in relation to Propp's morphological pattern, to prove how the new text remains loyal to the traditional model. An interpretation of this tale –that both subverts old themes and constructs new meanings– is suggested in the second section, where Trozzi centers on the re-version of traditional sexual symbolism.

Trozzi concludes her study by pointing out the importance, for criticism, of considering the two meanings of fairy tales (surface/hidden), along with all possible additional meanings they have acquired throughout the times. Although she considers Audrey Thomas as a feminist writer, she validates all different approaches to the former's handling of fairy-tale materials except the feminist approach, which is disregarded as simply destructive and lacking in "objective interpretation" (99). The enchantment of Audrey Thomas, Trozzi concludes, lies in her ability to enact positive subversions.

As the title suggests, this is a well-informed study from the point of view of fairy-tale criticism.Thomas's fiction, however, appears somehow forced into the structuralist, psychological and philological categorical patterns. For that reason, Trozzi's book seems perhaps more enriching for those interested in the history and criticism of fairy tales than for those concerned with the works of Audrey Thomas.

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