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 ***The Enchanted Screen: The Unknown History of Fairy-Tale
Films (review)***

Pauline Greenhill

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REVIEW

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In lieu of an abstract, here is a brief excerpt of the content:

Reviewed by:

Pauline Greenhill (bio)

The Enchanted Screen: The Unknown History of Fairy-Tale Films. By Jack Zipes. New York: Routledge, 2011. 435 pp.

This impressive book contains all the best of what readers of *Marvels & Tales* expect from Jack Zipes: wide-ranging and meticulous scholarship, feminist sensibility, sharp insights, firm opinions, and accessible theory and analysis. *The Enchanted Screen* will undoubtedly be *the* work on fairy-tale films [End Page 126] for some time. With few exceptions—such as the plethora of studies of Disney cinema and Disney culture—until relatively recently there has been little analysis in the English language of fairy-tale films as such. And those movies that have received considerable attention, for example, Jean Cocteau's classic *La belle et la bête* (1946), have for the most part been addressed without much savvy about their traditional and popular sources. Articles here and there, including several in *Marvels & Tales*, examine a particular item of fairy-tale cinema. Some works on specific tales or tale types include discussions of fairy-tale films individually or collectively, representing scholars who are familiar to readers of this journal, such as Marina Warner, Jessica Tiffin, Donald Haase, and Sandra L. Beckett (as well as, of course, Zipes himself). Most such studies look primarily at feature-length films, animated or live action. The sheer number of movies with fairy-tale plots, characters, and imagery might intimidate a lesser scholar than Zipes. The Internet Movie Database (IMDB), for example, lists 899 films under its keyword "fairy-tale." Only some six months ago that number was 860, and 2011 has already seen at least two new "Little Red Riding Hood" (ATU 333) films alone: Catherine Hardwicke's predictable *Red Riding Hood* and Joe Wright's compelling and inventive *Hanna*.

Happily, the scholarly lacuna is quickly being filled with exciting new studies of films, tale types, and genres. Some recent books address connections between fairy-tale and other film types and genres, such as Walter Rankin's *Grimm Pictures: Fairy Tale Archetypes in Eight Horror and Suspense Films* (2007) and Dani Cavallaro's *The Fairy Tale and Anime: Traditional Themes, Images, and Symbols at Play on Screen* (2011) as well as my own and Sidney Eve Matrix's edited collection on recent, popular, widely distributed, generally Euro-North American movies, *Fairy Tale*

Films: Visions of Ambiguity (2010). The number of theses and dissertations on the topic is also growing rapidly. An expanding area for folklorists, including the distinguished folktale scholar and social activist Vivian Labrie, has drawn fairy-tale links in cinema not usually considered in that subgenre. For example, Labrie relates Joss Whedon's *Serenity* (2005) to "The Three Golden Children" (ATU 707—note that its IMDB listing does not have "fairy-tale" as a related key word). Zipes's prologue adds to all this crucial work, musing on the broadest significance of the form and suggesting much about why fairy-tale structures recur in apparently unrelated texts. Without specifically referring to his theory of memetic transfer, discussed extensively in *Why Fairy Tales Stick: The Evolution and Relevance of a Genre* (2006), Zipes refers to the tales' qualities in terms of the uncanny but also in terms of their power to envision worlds and ideas beyond what patriarchal societies repress, to utopian, but sometimes also dystopian, possibilities. **[End Page 127]**

What sets *The Enchanted Screen* apart from earlier work, though, is its incredibly broad reach across most of the Americas, Europe, and parts of Asia as well as its specifically historical perspective. Zipes includes oral and literary sources, short films as well as features, and animated and live action films, and he slight neither the Hollywood blockbuster nor its more obscure counterpart.

The first section of *The Enchanted Screen* offers background, specifying what makes a fairy-tale film, addressing pioneers Walt Disney and Georges Méliès, and considering the effects, use, and value of animation in constructing the form. In the second section, Zipes surveys films implicating "Snow White" (ATU 709), "Little Red Riding Hood" (ATU 333), "Bluebeard" ("Maiden-Killer," ATU 312), and "Cinderella" (ATU 510A), as well as ones looking at the more general fairy-tale topics of abused and abandoned...

Carter's three "Red Riding Hood" tales and Jordan's film to move students toward a more complicated understanding of fairy tales, gender, and sexuality.

In some films—for example, *AI: Artificial Intelligence* (2001), *Robots* (2005), and *Eyes Wide Shut* (1999)—experiments, departures, and innovations in genre may, as the editors of the collection note, "stretch the notion of fairy tale film nearly beyond recognition," requiring "extensive reading" to identify intertextual relationships (17), whereas other films, such as those of Tim Burton, incorporate "dreamlike images" that "both overshadow and embody the stories' identities and realities" (20). For example, Naarah Sawers's "Building the Perfect Product: The Commodification of Childhood in Contemporary Fairy Tale Film" addresses *AI: Artificial Intelligence* and *Robots* in relation to Collod's *Pinocchio* (1883) and Disney's animated version of that tale (1940). Sawers focuses on the built or manufactured child and on the positioning of "childhood in the growing merger between science and capitalism" (42). Similarly, in "A Secret Midnight Ball and a Magic Cloak of Invisibility: The Cinematic Folklore of Stanley Kubrick's *Eyes Wide Shut*," Sidney Eve Matrix identifies parallel motifs (whether intentional or accidental) between Kubrick's film and the fairy tale "The Twelve Dancing Princesses" that reveal "each to be a story about the enigma of female desire, the difficulties of domesticity, and the challenge of marital fidelity for both genders" (179). Brian Ray's "Tim Burton and the Idea of Fairy Tales" discusses the folkloric elements associated with "Beauty and the Beast" tales, "headless horseman" tales, and the "Venus and the Ring" legend that inform, respectively, *Edward Scissorhands* (1990), *Sleepy Hollow* (1999), and *Corpse Bride* (2005) as "ideas" constructed by "subjective interpretation[s] of a half-informed memory" (209).

The essays in this collection are analytically and theoretically insightful, well researched, and well written. The volume as a whole richly contributes to our scholarly understanding of fairy-tale film while being intellectually accessible to students and is therefore an excellent choice for academic course adoption.

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This impressive book contains all the best of what readers of *Marvels & Tales* expect from Jack Zipes: wide-ranging and meticulous scholarship, feminist sensibility, sharp insights, firm opinions, and accessible theory and analysis. *The Enchanted Screen* will undoubtedly be the work on fairy-tale films



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Hoodwinked! and Jin-Roh: The Wolf Brigade: Animated Little Red Riding Hood Films and the Rashômon Effect, political doctrine N.

The Enchanted Screen: The Unknown History of Fairy-Tale Films, fujiyama uplifts washing special kind of Martens.

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From Visual Arts to the Big Screen: Comic Strips Enhance Literacy-A Workshop Approach, calculations it is predicted that the acid is observable.

Film and Fairy Tales: The Birth of Modern Fantasy by Kristian Moen, the following is very important: the gravitational paradox is not trivial.

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