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## Reviews

*Hans Christian Andersen: The Misunderstood Storyteller.* By Jack Zipes. 2005. London: Routledge. xvii + 171 pages. ISBN: 0415974321 (hard cover), 041597433X (soft cover).

Zipes's exploration of Hans Christian Andersen's literary works arrives just in time for the tail end of the celebration of the two hundredth anniversary of Andersen's birth. Through a series of essays, Zipes proposes that H.C. Andersen is, and has always been, misunderstood as a storyteller (a position that Andersen himself endorsed). To bridge this gap, Zipes offers a series of short essays that aim to elucidate the core of these misunderstandings. In the final chapter, he endeavors to show how popular film continues in the modern world to promote a persistent "misunderstanding" of Andersen's oeuvre. Although Zipes makes some gestures toward Andersen's complete oeuvre, he focuses his main theoretical attention on the fairy tales. This strategy turns out to be a good one, not only because this focus is of particular interest to folklorists but also because any attempt to present a unified theory of Andersen in a volume as short as this one would be doomed to failure.

The book is divided into four short essays that are only minimally interrelated. The opening chapter, "In Pursuit of Fame," offers a literary biography of Andersen, and then launches into an interesting (albeit brief) investigation of six Andersen tales, intended to reveal "hidden, ambivalent features" of the tales (p. 32). Already in the foreword, Zipes proposes to read Andersen as "pathetic" and he expands on this conceptualization in this essay, exploring Andersen's vanity, his obsession with acceptance, his narcissism and self-deception, his troubled relationships with his family and the Collins family, and his own difficulties in understanding his sexuality expressed both in the tales and in events in his life. Zipes mentions Andersen's sexuality throughout the volume, proposing at one point that Andersen "was apparently bisexual and did not know how to deal effectively with his bisexuality" (p. 82). Although this is a tantalizing suggestion, Zipes does little to back up this claim, and his discussion of this and other psychological aspects of Andersen and his tales often feels superficial. By contrast, the analysis of the tales that comprises the last half of the first chapter provides some nice close readings, informed by Zipes's considerable knowledge of the fairy tale. In turn, these readings help set up the arguments propounded in the following two chapters.

The second chapter, "The Discourse of the Dominated," is perhaps the most successful chapter of the book. A consideration of Oehlschläger's

“Aladdin” and the impact of the trope of Aladdin on Andersen, coupled to excellent readings of “The Nightingale,” and several other tales, allow Zipes to explore the concept of domination both inside the tales and in Andersen’s life. The only troubling discussion in the chapter is his characterization of Ørsted’s philosophy of the role of God as “intelligent design.” This term has become over-determined in contemporary American discourse, and may mislead readers to think of both Ørsted and Andersen as unabashed detractors of science and blind adherents of Creationism (p. 56). This notion of “intelligent design” appears in later chapters as well, and inadvertently attaches Andersen’s religious beliefs to a contemporary American political debate, muddying the waters of an already complex authorship. This rhetorical slip leads to more misunderstanding, rather than less, of Andersen’s storytelling.

The third chapter, “The Discourse of Rage and Revenge,” explores the deep anger that seethes below the surface of many of Andersen’s tales—and likely raged in Andersen’s mind as well. Zipes offers a discussion of Andersen’s troubled relationship with children—he did not have much experience with them—and proposes that Andersen had very strict ideas on how children should act; divergence from these norms leads to punishment in the tales. Again, Zipes is at his best when he is considering specific tales, and the readings he provides here—coupled to those in other chapters—offer a useful, often psychoanalytic, approach to many of these tales. But the comparison with J. M. Barrie that ends the chapter is unnecessary, and again muddies the waters of understanding.

The final chapter, “The Cinematic Appropriation of Andersen’s Heritage,” moves the discussion firmly into the arena of reception, particularly reception outside of Denmark. Zipes rightfully points out that Andersen and his tales have been subjected to at times ridiculous misrepresentation in cinema, from the 1954 RKO film starring Danny Kaye as Andersen to the more recent animated interpretations of his fairy tales. Keeping with the rest of the volume, Zipes places his analytical emphasis on the fairy tales. His discussion of two Russian films—Bychkov’s “Rusalochka” and Rytsarev’s “Printsesssa na goroshine”—along with a discussion of a Czech adaptation entitled “The Emperor’s Nightingale” by Trnka and Brdecka is informative and brings to the table films that are not as accessible as the larger popular releases, such as the Disney animated films. Zipes reserves particular approbation for the Disney films—a somewhat predictable stance, even though the initial Disney mermaid film is more true to the structure of fairy tale than the Andersen tale.

While the current volume could be used to augment courses in H. C. Andersen, or the fairy tale (particularly the literary fairy tale), it could by no means stand as the sole critical text in a course on Andersen. It should be seen as an interesting supplement to critical readings of Andersen’s

tales. Even with his precise focus on Andersen's tales, Zipes is hamstrung by an unwillingness to work with Danish secondary and primary sources. Indeed, his reliance on English and German scholarship (or Danish scholarship translated into either German or English) makes it impossible for Zipes to consider in a substantive manner the considerable secondary literature on Andersen written in Danish. Despite his insistence that one needs to read the tales in the original if one is to capture the "full flavor of Andersen's unusual use of the Danish language," Zipes himself leans heavily on Haugaard's 1973 translation (p. 30). Zipes also provides little discussion of the profound social, economic and political changes that rocked Denmark during the time Andersen's tales were originally written and received, even though he suggests that it is exactly that type of knowledge that could help clear up some of the issues that led to Andersen's status as "misunderstood." Zipes notes, for example, that Andersen produced "an immense, rich canon of fairy tales that reflects the . . . social injustices in the nineteenth century" (p. 46), without providing any meaningful discussion of any of these social injustices. Tellingly, Zipes refers to the Danish king Frederik VI as "Friedrich VI," using German instead of Danish (p. 8). Other small gaffes dot the volume, including numerous misspellings (*Mortsensen* rather than *Mortensen* (p. 78)) and occasional redundancies that suggest that Routledge rushed this book to press during the bicentennial celebrations. At the end of the volume, one finds a helpful film bibliography of Andersen related films, but even this is not without its flaws: the title of the recent Danish cinematic adaptation of the Snow Queen is misspelled (*Snedronningen*, not *Snedonningen*), and the release date of David Wu's television adaptation of the Snow Queen is listed as several hundred years in the future (2202). But despite its minor flaws, and perhaps overly psychological approach to Andersen's life and oeuvre, Zipes offers some thoughtful interpretations wrapped in a small, attractive package.

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*Hermanitos Comanchitos: Indo-Hispano Rituals of Captivity and Redemption.* By Enrique Lamadrid. 2003. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press. 264 pages. ISBN: 0-8263-2877-6 (hard cover), 0-8263-2878-4 (soft cover).

*Hermanitos Comanchitos* (literally, 'little brothers, Comanches') comes from a song that was sung in Tomé, New Mexico, inviting visiting Nuhmunuh traders to dance, once peace had been achieved between them and Hispanos. The term "Comanche" was actually a disparaging term the Utes