

Ruth B. Bottigheimer

*GRIMMS' BAD GIRLS AND BOLD BOYS. THE MORAL & SOCIAL VISION OF THE TALES.*

New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1987

Pp. XV + 211

Reviewed by Josef Schmidt

The book has a very endearing quality rare in studies on this popular genre: it makes for very enjoyable reading. In fifteen short chapters, the author advances her argument of gender-related inequality between "boys and girls" in the fairy tales. She advances this bias against females in the form of multifaceted discussions of a theme, or a string of themes, combining descriptive observation closely with analysis. Often, however, the sudden shift in focus and the witty anecdotal asides move the soundness of an argument down to the level of a catchy bon mot.

From among the predominating perspectives of recent fairy tale research (Freudian, Jungian, Marxist, and feminist), Professor Bottigheimer obviously chose the last. She does it, however, within a clearly and consistently viewed framework of historical philology. The crucial point is a comparison of the editorial changes (mainly) between the editio princeps, the so-called "small edition" for very popular use, and the last edition of 1857. She demonstrates how the Grimm brothers revised the tales in progressive versions according to their nineteenth-century moral code, a code that did not favor women. They consciously manipulated motif structures into stories of "weakened womanhood." Among the surprising finds is the fact that, contrary to the conventional view that progressive editions engaged the figures in an ever-livelier conversational style, women were, in general, overtly and covertly silenced. The chatty woman (*mulier loquax*) was often denied her female voice or reduced to tranquil obedience while males were given more lines, direct speech, and power. The social antagonism of the grim Grimm nineteenth-century world of social upheaval is directly visible in many textual tensions.

Professor Bottigheimer weaves her analysis with many themes. Social status, relation to natural elements, differences in male and female deaths and executions, witches, eroticism, etc., are key concepts which she develops in a witty and informed style, and shows in their gender-biased historicity. One of the qualities of the book is the obvious and successful attempt to make it readable. Quotations are abundant, but concise; and they are always given in a bilingual version. Titles of tales are listed; they can be easily checked. Sporadic references to specific illustrations in the history lend visual support to textual analysis. I find it a very good book in spite of disagreeing with two of its major conclusions. The "bad girls and bold boys" (153) are really targeted for chapter 13 where Bottigheimer makes the Grimm brothers' nineteenth-century Christianity the almost exclusive culprit; one of her exhibition pieces is No. 113, "The Jew among Thorns," a story featuring a semantic change (the medieval corrupt monk having been transformed into the modern demonized Jewish miser). The moral extrapolation is simply too direct. I also think that a one-paragraph mention of the famous passage in St. Paul's I.Cor. 14:34f. about

women's silence in the congregation is too much of a historical shortcut to explain a nineteenth-century (German) bias in a study that convincingly tries to explain the editors' prejudices with the historicity of the editions. The second qualification has to do with the listing (in clearly structured appendices) of the verbal vocabulary of speech in specific tales. While the word frequency lists clearly demonstrate valorization of persons in speech acts, the semantic attribution of the various words is overinterpreted. As for bibliography, one wonders why the widely read modern Jungian psychologist Verena Kast is not mentioned, particularly her *Mann und Frau im Märchen: Eine tiefenpsychologische Deutung* (Man and woman in fairy tales, an interpretation of depth psychology, 1983). But the study fulfills the primary requirement of a very good book: the reader will not be able to ignore many of Bottigheimer's questions when reading, viewing, or listening to a Grimm fairy tale next time.

Judith Ruderman

WILLIAM STYRON

New York: Ungar, 1987. Pp. 160 (including a chronology and a selected bibliography)

Reviewed by Valarie Meliotes Arms

Judith Ruderman is well situated for anyone wishing to write about William Styron. As Director of Continuing Education at Duke University, she has only a few minutes walk to the library at Duke, Styron's alma mater, to study a wealth of working notes and manuscripts donated by Styron, family scrapbooks and memorabilia donated by his father, and unedited films and cassettes of interviews. Ruderman has used these sources to excellent advantage in *William Styron*, so that biographical data and unpublished information are blended into critical insight.

William Styron has often received criticism for appropriating themes and characters with which he is unacquainted; Ruderman responds to that criticism with well documented chapters that justify Styron's oeuvre. In the first chapter "Revolutionary Works in an Ordinary Life," a play on the motto from Flaubert, Styron's consciousness of history is presented through his family history, school record and military service. Though Styron "dubiously submitted" his first paper to his college mentor, William Blackburn, Styron's father was sure of his son's future as a writer and consequently kept an enviable collection of childhood papers, attesting to his potential greatness.

Ruderman profits equally well from Styron's later donations to Duke in subsequent chapters that explicate the major novels. "A Dream Denied: The Confessions of Nat Turner" is informed by Styron's marginal notes to Drewry's *The Southampton Insurrection*. Based on Styron's Southern background and proximity to Nat Turner's world, Ruderman defends his right to tell the story: "By viewing the white race from a black person's point of view . . . Styron not only enacts a narrative tour de force but also attempts to expiate the sins of