

The book's title story parodies a beauty contest (based loosely on an article Kinsella found in a U.S. newsmagazine) in which Frank Fencepost vies for the Miss Hobbema crown in defiance of gender distinctions. However, any radicalism in *Pageant* is cosmetic. Is Kinsella growing gentler?.

The most significant change (given Kinsella's generally safe topicality) in *Pageant* takes place in the opening story, "Being Invisible," which is about Frank Fencepost's sudden desire to overcome his illiteracy. The joker whose gift is an inexhaustible resource of chatter turns to the narrator one day: "I don't know how else to say it, Silas, but when you can't read or write, it kind of like being invisible" (5). The story ends joyously with Frank scampering about, reading window signs and billboards and scrawls on walls, transcribing with his felt pen (an instrument like the artist Silas's): "SAVE THE SALMON, CAN AN INDIAN" (12). The figure of the artist who is articulate in one medium, but apparently incapable of expressing himself in another, is humorously depicted in Frank Fencepost, who must make himself visible by becoming literate.

Giving a symmetry to the whole of the book, the last story in *Pageant*, "The Medicine Man's Daughter," concludes with Silas about to give up writing. It is time, Etta tells Silas, "to start a new life" (198). The end of this story, centering on a rebirth ritual that is Kinsella's marvelous invention, is too good to reveal in a book review.

I suspect that W.P. Kinsella has now left the Ermineskin Reserve for other fictional territories.

Jack Zipes, ed. and trans.

FAIRY TALES AND FABLES FROM WEIMAR DAYS

Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1990. Pp. 211. \$25.00

Reviewed by Joseph Schmidt

This highly instructive and entertaining volume is comprised of more than two dozen fairy tales by 18 authors (including prominent writers like Kurt Schwitters and Oskar Maria Graf) of the Weimar period. (Anti-) Nationalistic, political, anarchistic, and proletarian-subversive, all kinds of orientations color them. The editor/translator's concise and illuminating introduction provides the background of this attempt to create a modern fairy-tale tradition, and the cultural and political reasons for its ultimate failure. Ironically, some of the stories, particularly by the most productive and creative author, Hermynia Zur Mühlen (20f.), made a comeback during the early seventies when anti-authoritarian educators rediscovered (and republished) them for a new young audience.

There are two irritating minor flaws. Zipes does not even touch upon the purely literary aspect of the problematic attempt to recreate modern fairy tales in a tradition of bookish literacy. And for a reader unfamiliar with German history, many of the authors' names mentioned in the introduction carry little or no meaning. A few capsule characterizations would have added more depth to the introduction of what is an excellent collection. (E.g., Hans Blunck (12), a *völkisch* nationalist, while publishing fairy tales became president of the Reichsschrifttumskammer (1933-1935); Lisa Tetzner (17f.), who had been director of the children's program of Radio Berlin and emigrated to Switzerland, managed to write a series of very successful books for young readers after 1940, thus truly carrying on, or even expanding on, this tradition.) The translation is very commendable and admirably conveys the different uses of the language of enchantment by modern authors. Illustrations by such prominent artists as George Grosz and Joachim Ringelnatz enhance the texts; an appendix with short portraits of the authors, and a concise bibliography, conclude the volume.

Jacqueline Chénieux-Gendron

SURREALISM

Trans. by Vivian Folkenflik

New York: Columbia University Press, 1990. Pp. 227

Reviewed by Steven Winspur

To write a history of Surrealism is a thankless endeavor for two reasons. First, as Dr. Chénieux-Gendron points out, Surrealism was not a system of thought, but rather a constantly changing program for a new way of living. Consequently, it cannot occupy a place within the history of ideas since it challenges the very split between philosophy and everyday living on which intellectual history is based. Second, the Surrealist movement in France repeatedly rewrote its own history, so that in order to chart the movement's development one must constantly untangle events from their subsequent rationalizations. Chénieux-Gendron's book, which first appeared in French in 1984, is the best study to date of France's longest lasting literary movement in the twentieth century. It avoids the two obstacles I have just mentioned by showing how the central concepts elaborated by Surrealism (the poetic image and objective chance, among others) gain their coherence only when inserted into the overall ethical program that was set out by Breton, Péret and fellow group members.

Built around three main chapters, Chénieux-Gendron's study successively traces the movement's official genealogy (its preferred writers among the Romantics and Symbolists), the three periods in its history (1919-1932, 1932-1940, 1940-1969), and the various debates that characterized each period. While the first decade of the movement was largely devoted to reflections on automatism and a theory of the poetic image, the 1930s saw investigations into what the Surrealists called "objective chance" (namely, occurrences that unveil our own creative power of agency) and into black humor, and the 1940s and