

*The Giant Ohl and Tiny Tim.* By Christian Bärmann. Translated and edited by Jack Zipes. Detroit: Tiny Mole and Honeybear-Wayne State University Press, 2019.

*Fearless Ivan and His Faithful Horse Double-Hump: A Russian Folk Tale.* By Pyotr Yeshov. Translated and edited by Jack Zipes. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2019.

Reviewed by Jan Susina

The Children's Literature Association's annual Anne Devereaux Jordan Award is given to an individual who has made significant contributions in scholarship and/or service to the field of children's literature. At the 2019 ChLA Conference, the award went to Riitta Oittinen, partly in recognition for her extensive work as a translator of English-language children's texts into Finnish. In choosing Oittinen, the first translator and translation scholar to receive this award, ChLA was both recognizing her individual contributions and reaffirming the importance of translation as a vital, although sometimes overlooked and even controversial, form of children's literature scholarship.

Another important area that is sometimes given short shrift in terms of scholarship is the historical recovery and bringing back into print of significant older children's texts, accompanied by scholarly scaffolding. Thanks to Google Books and various digital archives, access to once difficult to obtain children's titles is increasingly available to scholars. But books, especially children's books, are more than literary works; they are also aesthetic objects of print culture.

Important series such as the New York Review Children's Collection and Princeton University's Oddly Modern Fairy Tales are reissuing compelling older children's books in print editions. When I teach my version of the history of children's literature course, I am grateful to publishers such as Dover and Broadview Press for offering historical children's books in affordable paperback editions. My own research on nineteenth-century literary fairy tales has greatly benefited from reprinted anthologies such as Jonathan Cott's *Beyond the Looking Glass: Extraordinary Works of Fairy & Fantasy*, Michael Patrick Hearn's *The Victorian Fairy Tale Book*, Nina Auerbach and U. C. Knoepfelmacher's *Forbidden Journeys: Fairy Tales and Fantasies by Victorian Women Writers*, Mark West's *Before Oz: Juvenile Fantasy Stories from Nineteenth-Century America*, and Jack Zipes's *Victorian Fairy Tales: The Revolt of the Fairies and Elves*. For those who do not have convenient access to special collections dedicated to children's books, facsimile editions, such as those reprinted in The Bodley Head's Osborne Collection of Early Children's Books or Garland's Classics of Children's Literature, are invaluable.

Zipes has contributed to this area of historical recovery of children's texts with two newly translated literary fairy tales, one from Germany and the other from Russia. Pyotr Yeshov's *Fearless Ivan and His Faithful Horse Double-Hump* is the better known of the two tales. First published in 1834, it quickly became a popular story for children and adults and was eventually recognized as a classic of Russian chil-

dren's literature. Inspired by the verse folktales of Alexander Pushkin, Yershov published *The Little Humpbacked Horse*, which features Foolish Ivan, a well-known figure of Russian folklore. Foolish Ivan is the Russian equivalent of Jack in the English Jack tales. In Zipes's translation, Ivan Petrovich is the foolish but kind-hearted third son who succeeds in various seemingly impossible tasks and eventually marries the Heavenly Princess, thanks to the guidance of his faithful little horse. Zipes acknowledges that he has taken "a good deal of poetic license" (Yershov 87) in translating and transforming Yershov's poem into a prose fairy tale, while retaining its oral style. Kornei Chukovskiy, the famous writer of Russian nonsense poetry and stories for children, praised Yershov's *The Little Humpbacked Horse* as "a work of genius" in his study of children's language, *Two to Five* (1933), and singled out Yershov's skillful capturing of the colloquial speech of common people (Yershov 81). The tale became so popular that it quickly appeared in multiple chapbook editions and re-entered the Russian oral tradition as a folktale. Part of its appeal is that it pokes fun at the ruling classes, particularly the Tsar—"Tyrants cannot be trusted nor their whims" (Yershov 70). After the Russian Revolution of 1917, *The Little Humpbacked Horse* was elevated as a classic of Russian children's literature. The story was subsequently turned into a play, a ballet, and an animated film. So popular was *The Little Humpbacked Horse* that it also inspired a series of postcards by well-known Russian artists. Zipes, who has previously published *Tales of Wonder:*

*Retelling Fairy Tales Through Picture Postcards*, uses a number of these colorful postcards drawn in the folk-art tradition to illustrate his edition of this popular Russian children's story.

While Yershov's story is well known, Christian Bärmann's *The Giant Ohl and Tiny Tim* (1918) is more obscure. As Zipes notes, "Bärmann's work appears to have escaped the eyes of scholars of children's literature and fairy tales throughout the world" (Bärmann 87). Bärmann even lacks an entry in the comprehensive *The Oxford Companion to Fairy Tales*, which was edited by Zipes. Bärmann is both author and illustrator of the story, and this edition features forty of his color illustrations. In some ways *The Giant Ohl and Tiny Tim* is a precursor to Roald Dahl's *The BFG* (1982). Ohl is a friendly, but lonely, giant who desires to live among humans. Knowing the importance of good first impressions, Ohl visits the village of Heide, where he inadvertently terrifies the inhabitants with his size and clumsiness. The only person willing to befriend him is Tiny Tim, who realizes that Ohl is both kind and a hard worker. Ohl reveals his true character when he manages to defeat Death and save Tiny Tim and the rest of the village from the epidemic that breaks out in the countryside. Bärmann's illustrations have a slightly haunted look; he was greatly affected and disturbed by the violence of World War I. Despite their grotesque overtones, the illustrations effectively frame the story and are reminiscent of the work of EVB (Eleanor Vere Boyle), the Victorian illustrator of Sarah Austin's 1868 translation of Friederich Wilhelm Carove's

*The Story Without an End*, and whose quirky illustrations to *Beauty and the Beast* feature a walrus-like Beast. Bärmann's *The Giant Ohl and Tiny Tim* would fit well in Lynne Vallone's examination of children's fascination with unusual bodies, real and literary, in her *Big & Small: A Cultural History of Extraordinary Bodies*.

Both of these translations by Zipes are useful contributions to the growing body of overlooked literary fairy tales reappearing in print. For those interested in examining children's literature from a more global perspective, these literary fairy tales make for useful companions to the more frequently used stories from the English tradition.

## Works Cited

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***Fantasy Fictions from the Bengal Renaissance: Abanindranath Tagore, The Make-Believe Prince; Gaganendranath Tagore, Toddy-Cat the Bold.*** Translated and annotated by Sanjay Sircar. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2018.

Reviewed by Anurima Chanda

The title of this book can be quite misleading. It might give one the impression that it is like any other book of translated literature, in which the translator, Sanjay Sircar, has carefully selected two priceless fantasy fictions from the Bengal Renaissance and has made them available (along with annotations) to a larger audience in English. In reality, nothing could be farther from the truth. This collection, preceded by a befitting foreword by Peter Hunt, is much more than just the translation and annotation of two much-loved tales (composed by Rabindranath Tagore's illustrious nephews, Abanindranath and Gaganendranath, respectively) from the land of Bengali into English. In addition to the exhaustive preface by Sircar himself, both of the actual translations in the book come equipped with hundred-page-long introductions that touch upon a wide gamut of areas that fall within the purview of the tales and their translations. These