

forming of opinion, presentation of self, the telling of paradigmatic stories about *filotimo* (generosity) and hospitality, group stabilization, gender display, and the didactic of children's stories.

In two appendices, about twenty stories or fragments of stories are introduced in phonetic transcription and in English translation. The references list only English language titles except for one German and three Greek titles.

The stories are generally unique, full of life, and well told. They accurately reflect the reality of Greek storytelling. For the phonetic transcription of the orally told stories, the author uses special signs to indicate accents, pauses, lengthenings, and emphases, and also to render some Greek letters in English for which a corresponding letter in English does not exist. Although the result is a quite accurate representation of the dramaturgy of storytelling that is useful for recreating stories, a "native speaker" will find it difficult to decipher the system. The system is partially flawed and as a whole it is superfluous because the texts are not recorded in some dialect but in Standard Modern Greek. The special signs could have been rendered with Greek letters. For the reproduction of printed texts, however, Greek letters are used. Those not familiar with the Greek language will not be able to read any of these texts (they will have to rely exclusively on the English translations). Greek readers, or scholars of Greek, will be disappointed by the nonaesthetic presentation of the texts. In fact, one may rightly ask for what kind of readership these transcriptions were prepared.

Sociologists, cultural anthropologists, folklorists, and scholars of modern Greek will welcome this book and no doubt find parts of it useful. In order to clearly show the dramatic and theatrical manner Greek storytelling can assume and how important it is in the most variegated conversation situations (e.g., political debates, coffee house discussions, neighborhood gossip), it would have been necessary to contrast different types of contemporary Greek storytelling with traditional and folkloristic material, or with relevant sociological material. In conclusion, it can be said that the author has addressed a wide field for research that cannot be exhaustively treated in a single case study, but it is hoped that this study will encourage others to follow the path the author has shown us.

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GILET, PETER. *Vladimir Propp and the Universal Folktale: Recommissioning an Old Paradigm—Story as Initiation*. Middlebury Studies in Russian Language and Literature, volume 17. Bern: Peter Lang, 1998. 170 pages. Bibliography. Cloth FR. 58.00; ISBN 0-8204-3847-2.

This concise work is a carefully-crafted, comprehensive assessment of Propp's theory and its impact on the study of folk narratives. The author introduces his book by pointing out that the impetus for his study was a half-remembered "archetypal tale" about an abandoned child and an ogre that he had learned as a child, and his long-held feeling that behind all the permutations and combinations of that tale's elements, it remained one story and not many (1, 131, 148; cf. the Kabyle and Hausa tales below). Gilet's objective is to simplify Propp's (textual) structure based on Russian tales, and to adapt it to a more general form of the "Wonder Tale" (Aa-Th Types 300–749), and to relate that form to its context, thus uniting in one theory both textual and contextual positions (3). In order to test the viability of the modified form, it was applied to a "body of" (i.e., several) tales selected from either end of the Eurasian land mass and, at a later stage, from other places (10).

A broad survey of "past theories" follows. It begins with notions of ideal structures

postulated by early philosophers (Plato, Aristotle, Avicenna, and Averroes), and concludes with the current debate on poststructuralism and the political school (Zipes, Ellis, and feminist theory). A host of related theoretical orientations are adroitly presented and evaluated. These include “myth and ritual” (Tylor, Graves, and Raglan), “structuralism,” (Lévi-Strauss), “formalism,” (Propp and his imitators and modifiers), and “the psychological school.” Notably, other psychological approaches, such as the cognitive, are not included.

The principal refinement that Gilet introduced to Propp’s system of thirty-one “Functions” (narrative moves) is its reduction to five Functions. These are “still drawn from the action of the story-line,” and “will almost always be present in a given story.” To these five so-called Functions he added a division in the hero’s world between “a normal realm,” and, “a state or place which is ruled by a dangerous being endowed with magic powers.” Gilet labeled this site “An Other World.” The rationale for this addition is that it is “essential to the correct mapping of any tale of this sort since without it all Functions remain unsituated and to that extent ambiguous” (52).

Gilet then addresses the issues of “selecting a textual theory,” and “selection of a tool for analysis.” The aim of that segment “is to describe what appears to be a common underlying form for the ‘Wonder Tale.’ This structure... concerns the text of the tales, not their context” (49). Practices by a variety of scholars are described and evaluated. These include approaches by several cardinal figures such as Lévi-Strauss, Propp, J. Campbell, O. Rank, and B. Holbek.

Demonstrative treatments of selected texts from diverse cultures follow under the title of “Analysis of Tales” (59–89, 101–19). Two chapters present Gilet’s findings about a “general form of the ‘Wonder Tale’” and the “‘Wonder tale’ and other structures” (91, 121).

A concluding section addresses the problem Gilet faces in “uniting textual and contextual theories.” The problem is due to the diversity of these theories, and to the fact that the “world in which the tales are told and about which contextual theories speak is in fact a complex and contradictory place and not a single, comprehensible whole” (131).

Gilet argues that as result of his applying his adjusted paradigm to “peasant societies”—a term he uses in a broad sense—“A common form has been found for a number of ‘Wonder Tales’...” He then the following critical questions: “To what extent can this common form be found outside those... societies? To what extent can the ‘Wonder Tale’ be said to be uttered by a very much larger range of communities? To what extent, even, can it be said to be universal to, for instance, peasant societies everywhere?” (100).

To illustrate the viability of the new schema, Gilet applies it to a selection of tales from outside the Eurasian land mass. One of the cases treated is “The Seven Ogres,” from the Kabyle of North Africa (101–104). A sketchy identification of the Kabyle as an ethnic group constitutes the context in which Gilet treats the tale. Yet, additional discernible contextual factors include two facts: namely, that the narrator/collector are one and the same, and that an educated and elite female (Marguerite) learned the tales from her mother to whom she dedicates her work (AMROUCHE 1966).

Morphological labeling aside, Amrouche’s text may be outlined as follows: A spoiled young man (Mehend) disobeys his parents and marries a beautiful girl of unknown descent, after moving with her to live in the wilderness. He kills seven ogres and occupies their house with his wife. She discovers a surviving ogre and has an adulterous affair with him. She feigns sickness, demands fantastic medicines, and sends her husband on a series of fatal tasks hoping that he will perish. With the help of a wise man the husband succeeds. Finally, he kills the paramour, but declares that his wife is *unworthy* of death at his own hands. He curses her, and returns to the forest with his wise helper (AMROUCHE 1966, 117–25).

Reflecting on the syntax of events (“Functions”) in light of the hero’s presumed motives, Gilet speculates as follows: “Having accomplished the Difficult Tasks [i.e., surviving his

wife's plots], the hero [i.e., husband] might have been expected... to claim the Princess [i.e., the would-be murderer wife] from the Adversary [i.e., ogre/paramour] and to return home with the wealth he had found in the Adversary's home"(103). Then, applying the general structure of the "Wonder Tales" he developed, Gilet explains that the reason "that this does not happen is perhaps because in fact the story has been *told in reverse order*, with the hero's return to the normal world with a Princess [i.e., a girl of uncertain/lowly descent/a "vagabond"] at the beginning, and the actual adventures which should have led to such a return being described after this" (103). Gilet continues this line of argument by claiming that "the Princess [i.e., the "vagabond"]", too, appears to have cast her lot in with the hero at the start of the story and to be attached to the Adversary [i.e., ogre] in the second half of the tale, *another reversal of the usual order*" (emphasis added) (103).

These conclusions are indicative of a problem in Gilet's system. From a typological perspective, the tale belongs to Aa-Th Type 590A, "The Treacherous Wife," a subtype of 590, "The Prince and the Arm Bands," which is poorly labeled and needlessly set apart from Type 315, "The Faithless Sister." As pointed out elsewhere, "Narratives that may be classified under types 315, 590, and 590A actually belong to the same tale type. In type 315 the sister plots against her brother, in type 590 the mother plots against her son, while in type 590A it is the wife who plots against her husband. The differences among these three branches of the same tale type are mainly differences of *sentiment toward a female relative* rather than of narrative content" (EL-SHAMY 1980, 241; emphasis added).

In all its occurrences in the Middle East (some 110 renditions are found in the Arab world [see EL-SHAMY, forthcoming]), and in many other parts of the world, the sequence of events in all three types or subtypes of the tale is constant. Moreover, this syntax harks back to the thirteenth century B.C., where it appears in the ancient Egyptian tale of "The Two Brothers" (Aa-Th Type 318: II). It is the sequence of action Gilet postulates in relationship to these texts that is atypical and constitutes movement in "reverse order."

Also, similar problems of "Functions" exist with reference to the pattern postulated for the sub-Saharan Hausa tale "The Girl and Her Young Brother and the Ogre" (104-106). In this account a brother rescues his sister from her ogre-husband (cf. Aa-Th Type 312A), the sister's husband (ogre) perishes, and the brother and sister share his goods. (On the theme of "brother-sister" constituting a household, see EL-SHAMY 1999, 18, 29, note 75.)

For students of narrative theory, the book is highly recommended. The author presents an inclusive picture of the Proppian system in relation to the majority of morphological constructs and collateral theoretical schema. Yet, the viability of his revised model, at least with reference to Near Eastern and African tales, awaits the results of further testing.

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