**Renaissance and Reformation
Renaissance et Réforme**

Pask, Kevin. The Fairy Way of Writing: Shakespeare to Tolkien

David Katz

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Seminary in person; and who is clearly inspired by Mannermaa. This work belongs under the umbrella of Finnish Luther scholarship, so important is her treatment of the subject.

This book is a welcome contribution to Luther studies, and one that highlights the value of careful systematic analysis. It will be read in classrooms and beyond.

KIRSI STJERNA
Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary of California Lutheran University

Pask, Kevin.
The Fairy Way of Writing: Shakespeare to Tolkien.
Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2013. Pp. viii, 178. ISBN 978-1-4214-0982-5 (hardcover) $39.95.

Ranging from the sixteenth to the twentieth century, and covering a sometimes dizzying array of authors and genres, Kevin Pask's *The Fairy Way of Writing* has an ambitious scope for a study that clocks in at under two hundred pages. This literary history contends that the national canon of English literature was constructed through the self-conscious blending of popular and elite cultural formulations. This "fairy way" of writing, a phrase Pask adopts from Addison and Dryden, incorporates oral and popular culture for the fashioning of a national literature, a canonization based on the articulation of creative originality, "a heightened expression of the aesthetic" which emerges "partly *because* of its lack of credibility" (5).

Pask sees Shakespeare's reception as pivotal in this formation, and he begins by examining how his comedies and late romances appropriate folktales and Catholic ritual to produce theatrical magic, an appropriation made possible in the first place by the disenchantment brought about by the Reformation. The initial focus on *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *The Winter's Tale* soon turns to *The Tempest*, and to Caliban in particular, a character who integrates the imagination with sexuality—an association that adhered to the fairy way of writing into the twentieth century. Pask then suggests that popular superstitions became linked with empiricism throughout the eighteenth century; folk customs were categorized as part of an observable

reality that could be studied and learned from. Here the popular came to represent the "authentically" national, but this development would eventually lead to the confinement of the creative imagination to childhood and childlike credulity. Exploring Shakespeare's reception in the eras of sentimentality and romanticism, Pask next examines how the representation of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century painting became a site of erotic and rebellious energy, one associated with insurrection and nationalism. Chapter 5 examines the mediation of Keats's interest in fairy eroticism through Spenser's Bower of Bliss, Shakespearean tragedy, and the gothic novel. Finally, *The Fairy Way of Writing* claims that J. R. R. Tolkien offered a model of "second world" fantasy that counters the self-referentiality of Shakespeare's theatre, a conceptualization dependent upon a reader's absorption into a fiction, an immersiveness which pushes back against the correlation of fairy writing with eroticism and childhood. In Tolkien's hands, novelistic absorption works a nostalgic recuperation of the enchantments characteristic of old fireside tales. The effect of this recuperation, however, creates a demarcation between literature as high culture and fantasy as a form of escapism, excluding Tolkien and his followers from academic canonization while also endowing his storytelling with a kind of cultural magic and a vigorous popular appeal.

Pask's readings throughout are generally illuminating. Still, *The Fairy Way of Writing* could benefit from a greater consideration of both Edmund Spenser and his Italian predecessors, Ariosto and Tasso. Pask insists that "Shakespeare, rather than Spenser, captured the popular superstitions as his own" (21), but insofar as *The Faerie Queene* appropriates the conventions of medieval romance for a project that has clear implications for the development of a national literature, Spenser seems like an essential figure for the topic. Likewise, a work interested in representations of magic and eroticism needs more interaction with *Orlando furioso* and *Gerusalemme Liberata* than *The Fairy Way of Writing* provides. Pask only substantially turns to non-English literatures during his discussion of French fairy tales in his fourth chapter, yet the creation of the English canon was rife with foreign influence, and the boundaries between developing literatures is more porous than this emphasis suggests. Apart from these cavils, Pask's discussion of Tolkien in his final chapter, otherwise one of the strongest moments in the book, too readily accepts the common narrative that *The Lord of the Rings* inaugurated second world fantasy. Aside from downplaying the contributions made by E. R. Eddison, Frank L. Baum, and many

other fantasists who created detailed and internally consistent worlds for their readers to inhabit before Tolkien, Pask, who is after all a Renaissance scholar, misses an opportunity for comparison between Tolkien and authors closer to Shakespeare's time. Philip Sidney's conception of poetry as a "second creation" and a "golden world" would seem an obvious point of contrast.

All of which is to say that Pask could have allowed his readings more room to breathe. Given all the ground it covers, this is the rare work of scholarship that could be improved by being longer. Yet, facilitated by a brisk prose style and an engaging central thesis, Pask always keeps the sometimes rickety ship of his argument afloat as it traverses though what turns out to be a worthwhile journey. Because Pask is such a fluent writer, capable of condensing complex ideas without oversimplifying them, *The Fairy Way of Writing* has the potential to reach multiple audiences. Readers interested in how the construction of the literary canon interacts with and partly facilitates conceptions of national identity are this book's most obvious audience. Yet Pask's interrogation of the separation between genre writing and literary fiction—an examination of how fantasy achieved popularity while losing its cultural capital—gives this book an unusually broad appeal.

DAVID KATZ
University of Massachusetts Amherst

Polizzi, Gilles, Véronique Duché et Trung Tran, éds.
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Les contributions, réunies dans ce nouveau numéro de la revue *Réforme Humanisme Renaissance,* présentent le résultat des recherches individuelles effectuées par un groupe d'universitaires invités à participer à une table ronde (Lyon, 25 janvier 2014) pour réévaluer le rôle politique et culturel de François Ier au cours de son règne (1515–1547). Le volume d'études ainsi constitué permet de prolonger et de renouveler les conclusions établies par l'ouvrage, devenu classique, d'Anne-Marie Lecoq sur *François Ier imaginaire. Symbolique et politique à l'aube de la Renaissance française* (Paris : Macula, 1987).