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Pascale Auraix-Jonchière, *Le cas Blanche-Neige. Réception d'un conte littéraire. Lecture sociopoétique*. Clermont-Ferrand: Presses Universitaires Blaise Pascal, 2024. 331 pp. Notes, references, and index. Thirty-one illustrations. €23.00 (pb). ISBN 9782383772842; €16.00 (pdf). ISBN 9782383772859.

Review by Cristina Mazzoni, University of Vermont.

A magic mirror, a poisoned apple, and two women--these elements are enough to bring to mind one of the best-known and most enduring fairytales in the European tradition: "Snow White." Many scholarly articles and chapters have been devoted to this short text, but Pascale Auraix-Jonchière has produced something far more substantial. Her book *Le cas Blanche-Neige. Réception d'un conte littéraire. Lecture sociopoétique* is a wide-ranging and chronologically organized examination of how the Brothers Grimm's fairy tale "Schneewittchen" has continued to resonate in Western culture since its first appearance in the early nineteenth century. Auraix-Jonchière traces its many versions--including translations, adaptations in various literary genres, and visual and performative reinterpretations--that reflect changing notions of femininity, beauty, aging, power, and agency. Adopting a sociopoetic approach that combines close readings of literary and visual texts with attention to their socio-cultural context, Auraix-Jonchière reconstructs the reception history of "Snow White" from its early form in the Brothers Grimm's *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* (1812-1857) to striking twenty-first-century reimaginings. *Le cas Blanche-Neige* demonstrates how a text of just a few pages can carry vastly different and even contradictory meanings across time and space.

The book is divided into three parts, each comprised of two or three chapters. The first part, "Blanche-Neige et son histoire: prolégomènes," begins with the chapter "L'histoire éditoriale," a detailed account of the Grimm tale's editorial history. Auraix-Jonchière follows the tale's evolution from an 1810 manuscript--featuring only a father, daughter, and jealous mother--through the more familiar 1857 version, in which the biological mother dies and is eventually replaced by a wicked stepmother. In a discarded manuscript version, a father wishes for a daughter with features inspired by a haunting image (snow, blood, crow), suggesting an incestuous subtext. This darker undercurrent surfaces again in Angela Carter's unforgettable retelling, "The Snow Child," where a Count conjures a girl out of his own desire. The child appears naked, pricks her finger on a rose, and dies--an unsettling sequence that lays bare the tale's submerged motifs of incest, pedophilia, and necrophilia. By contrast, as the story was gradually adapted for a younger audience, the Grimms softened its harsher elements. In the 1812 edition, the queen who longs for her daughter's death is Snow White's biological mother, a disturbing figure of maternal violence. By 1819, however, she is recast as a stepmother, shifting

the source of danger from incest to rivalry between women. Similarly, while early versions dwell on Snow White's corpse-like beauty--her body preserved in a glass coffin and exposed to male desire--the Grimms later transform the prince into a chivalric savior who awakens her. Once again, the tale's violence is displaced from incest and necrophilia toward the more palatable theme of female envy. As Auraix-Jonchière observes, these editorial choices exemplify the "sociopoetic" work of reception: the tale's raw materials--incest, necrophilia, cannibalism--are not erased but reshaped into culturally acceptable patterns. She shows how the shift from mother to stepmother protects the sanctity of motherhood and secures the tale's place in the children's canon, while still leaving traces of the darker substratum that later authors like Carter bring back to the surface. Thus, as the tale was adapted to suit an increasingly young readership, the Grimms softened certain elements, redirecting the source of violence from incest to rivalry between women. This first chapter closes with a nuanced analysis of how French translations of the tale accentuate its sexual undertones and the antagonism between mother and daughter. The second chapter, "L'intertextualité," explores the tale's intertextual lineage, focusing on medieval and early modern precursors of central motifs, including the image of blood on snow and the tension between maternal figures.

Part two, "Réécritures et sociétés: le champ littéraire," explores literary rewritings of "Snow White" from the nineteenth century to the present. In "Perspectives dix-neuvièmistes," Auraix-Jonchière discusses naturalist and realist reinterpretations that infuse the tale with psychological depth absent from the Grimms' version. In Alexandre Dumas's "Blanche de Neige" (1858), Snow White's vitality and the queen's narcissism make the mother-daughter conflict explicit. Émile Zola's *Le Rêve* (1888) transforms the tale into a naturalist tragedy about the perils of female development. Jean Lorrain's "La Princesse Neigefleur" (1899) is a decadent meditation on fatal beauty, while Robert Walser's *Schneewittchen* (1901) offers a melancholic, symbolist reinterpretation emphasizing ambiguity over moral clarity. The next chapter, "Réécritures contemporaines," turns to contemporary retellings in prose, poetry, and drama. These texts often give Snow White a voice, revise traditional gender roles, and foreground psychological and sexual dimensions. In Howard Barker's *The Case of Snow White: How Knowledge Comes to Young Girls* (2002), Snow White's journey centers on sexual maturity and the pursuit of knowledge. Elfriede Jelinek's "Schneewittchen" (2001) features a defiant Snow White who critiques her own objectification. Other feminist rewritings include Jesús Del Campo's *The Secret Notebooks of Snow White* (1992), which portrays a reflective, self-aware Snow White rewriting her own story; Angela Carter's "The Snow Child" (1979), a stark depiction of patriarchal violence; Anne Sexton's "Snow White and the Seven Dwarves" (1971), a satirical poem about the commodification of femininity; and Philippe Beck's philosophical reimagining in *Chants populaires* (2007).

The third and final section, *"*Reconfigurations et sociétés: le champ intermédial," focuses on visual reinterpretations. The first chapter, "Iconotextes," offers a compelling exploration of illustrated versions of the tale. These include Benjamin Lacombe's (2011) and Manuela Adreani's (2014) evocative illustrations featuring ravens as emblems of fate and psychological complexity; Ana Juan's haunting, wordless picture book *Snowhite* (2011), with its stark black-and-white palette and tragic realism; Pep Montserrat's Catalan version, which uses red to signify evil and merges the maternal figures; and Beatrice Alemagna's feminist *Adieu, Blanche Neige* (2020), which gives voice to the aging queen, portraying her as a woman confronting loss and

mortality instead of a one-dimensional villain. In the chapter "Peinture," Auraix-Jonchière examines Paula Rego's *Snow White* series, which reconfigures the heroine as a young woman negotiating coercion, shame, and agency. The paintings' chromatic register plays a central role, as Rego employs muted browns, shadowed blues, and flesh tones that produce a sense of confinement and heaviness. Occasional intrusions of red--whether in clothing, fabric, or bodily detail--disrupt this muted background and function as visual markers of violence and desire. Snow White's figure is rendered in ambiguous poses that emphasize the instability of her position within scenes of domestic tension. For Auraix-Jonchière, these choices make visible the latent elements of violence, erotic threat, and maternal hostility minimized in the Grimms' versions, situating Rego's canvases within what she terms a *sociopoétique du dérangeant*--a sociopoetics of the disturbing--where the tale's more troubling components are rearticulated in visual form. The final chapter, *"Cinéma,"* turns to Pablo Berger's *Blancanieves* (2012), a black-and-white Andalusian adaptation that restores the father figure and relocates the tale to 1920s Seville. This Spanish Snow White's story unfolds within the cultural codes of bullfighting, flamenco, and Catholic ritual, replacing the Grimms' northern forests with arenas, haciendas, and traveling troupes. Berger's regionalization is more than aesthetic, because it shapes the heroine's trajectory through Spanish patriarchal structures and the spectacle of the corrida. As Auraix-Jonchière observes, the film illustrates how fairy tales may be re-anchored in local cultural frameworks, generating versions that reflect regional histories even as they circulate across borders. This adaptability is central to the tale's survival: whether in northern forests, Iberian arenas, or contemporary literary and visual experiments, each rearticulation generates fresh configurations of gender, power, and violence.

Le cas Blanche-Neige is a deeply researched and elegantly written academic study, complete with detailed analysis, abundant notes, and a rich bibliography. Through attentive readings of texts from a wide range of cultural contexts and media, Auraix-Jonchière traces how the "Snow White" triad--mother, daughter, and father--has been reimagined across time and space. The volume is also visually striking, with many color illustrations that accompany the analysis and also shape the reader's experience, underscoring the central role of visual culture in the reception and reinterpretation of Snow White's tale. This design choice positions the book not only as a work of scholarship but also as a resource that encourages readers to engage directly with the images it examines--images being more accessible than the diverse texts in multiple languages that Auraix-Jonchière examines in her book. With its sustained focus on the representation of women, *Le cas Blanche Neige* traces the changing forms of agency and subjectivity accorded to women in cultural production. Auraix-Jonchière's integration of literary critique, cultural history, and visual analysis--enriched by the inclusion of carefully selected illustrations--makes this book an invaluable resource for students and scholars of literature, gender studies, and visual culture. At a time when fairy tales are often encountered in their most commercial forms, this study highlights instead the genre's historical depth and its capacity to register cultural anxieties around family, sexuality, and authority. Ultimately, Auraix-Jonchière's work invites both scholars and general readers to reconsider how a seemingly familiar narrative can illuminate broader questions of reception, adaptation, and cultural memory.

Cristina Mazzoni
University of Vermont

cmazzoni@uvm.edu

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