In general, one can only say that this book is a valuable and informative source of data about the lives and lore of one Kentucky clan. Its publication format reinforces the folklorists' dictum that the texts must not be separated from at least a literary persona of the people who graciously have offered them up to the tape recorder but will continue to tell them for their own entertainment and enlightenment once the intruding folklorist has packed up his equipment and left.


Reviewed by Kay F. Stone.

Iona and Peter Opie are already known for their thorough research and fieldwork in children's folklore, through which adults have been re-introduced to their own childhood. In this book they once again present material usually considered as children's literature but intended for adult readers. In addition to the bawdy and violent content of many of the 24 tales they include, they also offer a scholarly 17-page introduction and extensive notes to each tale. All of the tales are from previously published sources, and all but the five Grimm tales are literary; Perrault, Madame Beaumont, and Hans Christian Andersen are among the authors represented. Because the Opies have reprinted the stories as they originally appeared in English, some differ from more recent versions which are accurate translations from the original languages. All alterations are noted by the meticulous Opies.

In some cases it is the recent versions that are altered to suit a young audience. The original Red Riding Hood of Perrault, for example, is devoured by the wolf after climbing into bed with him (psychoanalysts should enjoy that one), and Goldilocks is really an old woman who was hopefully "taken up by the constable and sent to the House of Correction for a vagrant as she was."1 Jack of giant-killing fame is also a good deal more bawdy and violent than that of the oral tales, as is Tom Thumb. The latter's many Abbelesian adventures include being swallowed and eliminated by a cow and swallowed and vomited up by a giant (more psychoanalytic material.)

Since these are popular tales, the heroines in them tend to be delicate and downtrodden, and the heroes bold and bawdy. The Opies note this in passing when describing "Thumbelina" as "an adventure from the feminine point of view."

    Tommelise (Thumbelina) is passive, the victim of circumstances; whereas the traditional Tom Thumb, despite his misadventures, exerts himself, and makes himself felt.2

Thus it is with these early fairy tales that our current images of fairy tale heroes and heroines begin. The women in all these tales
(except for the vagrant in "The Three Bears") are, like Thumbelina, "the victim of circumstances." In some cases they are made even more passive by their early translators. For example, the Grimms' Snow White is not allowed to watch her step-mother dance to death in red-hot shoes nor is the heroine of "The Frog Prince" permitted to throw her repugnant suitor against the wall, but instead allows him into her bed.

While the tales included here are not only entertaining and interesting from a historical point of view, the lengthy notes introducing them are equally fascinating. The literary history of each story is presented and occasionally there is even reference to oral versions. For example, "The Three Bears" was apparently an oral story before it was rewritten by Robert Southey in 1837, and even his printed version was predated by an 1831 version in which the heroine is a vixen. Goldilock's history is certainly one of the most interesting presented here. She did not become a young girl until 1849, when she was called Silver Hair. In 1858 she became Silver- Locks, in 1868, Golden Hair, and finally in 1904 she became Goldilocks. The Opies were spared a recent version in which the friendly bears promise the girl she can return if she remains a good little thing.

While the tales, notes, and illustrations of this book are good, the Opies' 17-page introduction will disappoint folklorists and mislead other readers. Apparently their research into folklore scholarship was quite dated, for they still assume that the Historical-Geographic school dominates folklore research. While they have referred to Linda Dégh's Folktales and Society, it seems to have had little effect on them, for they completely misinterpret Dégh's remarks about popular versus oral literature. Like the Opies, she feels that folklorists have too often ignored oral tales that show literary influence, and notes, as the Opies partially quote: "The fact that we can still find much material of literary origin in folklore collections is due solely to the ignorance of researchers concerning the field of cheap literature." In other words, we are fortunate that some folklorists have been ignorant, because it is foolish to separate oral and written sources which have constantly fed each other. The Opies decide that Dégh is supporting such researchers, however, and proclaim their book as a remedy.

In their zeal to represent what they take to be the opposite of folklore scholarship, the Opies reverse the problem by considering only written versions of the tales (even the Grimm tales were reworked by the 19th century translators). Their material might have been considerably more interesting if, for example, they had contrasted Perrault's "Cinderella," "Sleeping Beauty," and "Diamonds and Toads" with oral versions—or at least somewhat accurate translations of the Grimm versions.

The Opies' bias against oral material is expressed in several places in this book. For example:

At the end of the seventeenth century the lives of certain fairy tales were wholly transformed by their being set down in a manner so vivid that no retelling could improve them. They ceased to be stories whose survival depended on cottage memories and became literature.
Like Wesselski, they obviously feel that good stories could not possibly be created by non-literate. Similarly, they hint that folktales must be a product of a higher culture because the main characters are always noble:

In the most-loved fairy tales, it will be noticed, noble personages may be brought low by fairy enchantment or by human beastliness, but the lowly are seldom made noble. The established order is not stood on its head. Snow White and Sleeping Beauty are girls of royal birth. Cinderella was tested, and found worthy of her prince.

They conveniently ignore lowly heroes like Jack, and do not mention that there are exceptions to noble princesses—like the bold British heroines Nelly Whuppee and Kate Crackernuts, for example.

The Opies further disdain earthy oral tales by insisting upon their removal from reality:

In the history of 'Jack and the Giants' it comes as a jolt when an actual location is mentioned ('a market-town in Wales'); the tale hereafter seems a foolish tale, the spell has been broken.

They would most likely reject oral tales collected by Vance Randolph and Leonard Roberts, in which Jack might be the new boy in town and Cinderella might live over the next mountain. They do not fully understand that it is the juxtaposition of touchable reality and untouchable magic that gives the tales their impact. Magic can be interpreted literally or symbolically, as a 15-year-old emphasized to me:

I think they're (fairy tales) fascinating because it could happen: not in the same way as in the stories. There doesn't have to be a dragon, it could be the representation of something else.

Her friend added that she knew several dragons, princesses, and wicked stepmothers!

The value of the Opies' book, then, is in showing us where our misconceptions of fairy tales originate. Like the Opies, many of us (even folklorists) still believe that fairy tales must be situated in never-never land, and that heroes are always bold and heroines dainty, and that such tales do not compare with "real" literature. The one misconception that the Opies do shatter is that fairy tales are meant only for children.

A just jacket quote describes them as "the amazing Opies, those pioneer anthropologists of the previously uncharted world and the lost tribes of childhood." In other words, we might see them as modern bearers of the thorough but anachronistic Great Team tradition.
NOTES

1. The Classic Fairy Tales, p. 204.
2. Ibid., p. 219.
3. Ibid., p. 5. They do not footnote their quotation, which comes from Dégh’s Folktales and Society, p. 147.
5. Ibid., p. 11.
6. Ibid., p. 16.

Acompanying 7 inch, 2 track monaural 61 minute tape recording, 7 ½ ips, $12.50.

Review essay by Steve Feld.

John Blacking needs no introduction to Africanists, ethnographers, nor ethnomusicologists; the pertinent facts for the general folklorist are the following: Blacking was trained as a musician and then as an anthropologists. He has done extensive research on music and cultural symbolism among the Venda of South Africa, and secondary research on the music of many other East and South African groups. In the last fifteen years he has published many detailed analyses, including Venda Children's Songs (Witsetersrand University Press, 1967), and many papers in Ethnomusicology, the International Folk Music Council Journal, African Music, and African Studies.

Recently, Blacking’s writing has taken on a new dimension. Papers like "The Value of Music in Human Experience" (1969), "Toward a Theory of Musical Competence" (1971) and "Extensions and Limits of Musical Transformations" (1972) turn from the specific problems of description and analysis of African music to the pan-human question of the nature of musicality. In these articles Blacking draws largely from his own culture and musical background, as well as from his ethnographic work. His theoretical perspective has broadened, extending beyond contextual ethnographic study to considerations of human biology and psychology; in addition he has borrowed insights from both theoretical linguistics (particularly the writings of Noam Chomsky), and from cognitive