

Fitcher's Bird, the Robber Bridegroom, Mr. Fox, and the Jack Tales. In addition, mythology and the biblical tales also inform *Bluebeard*.

Bluebeard chapbooks exploded with popularity in 19th century England and were imported in large numbers to the United States. Surprisingly, these chapbooks, which could be read and colored and were largely aimed at children, revealed one of the most violent aspects of *Bluebeard*—the image of headless or hanging female corpses.

Despite the dramatic nature of the tale, in England and the United States Bluebeard came to the comedic stage often creating a comic disjunction between tragedy and burlesque. Harlequinades and pantomimes became popular—the performances disempowering aspects of some of the narrative elements of the tale. During this period, one could purchase directions for staging Bluebeard for home performances. In contrast, the Victorian era saw a less amusing Bluebeard. The story moved from spoof or comic text to a serious cultural narrative. By telling the story in a genre other than the fairy tale artists or authors could highlight themes of violence and gender inequality.

In the 20th century, the self-reflexivity of the tale has been used in many ways, especially to deconstruct certain narrative elements. Hermansson points out that Bluebeard has always been used as a gendered commentary, reflecting aspects of the historical period of the variation; in modern times, the story has often been used to comment on feminism, a conflict for some modern men. She concludes as that long as gender politics endures and evolves, so will the artistic engagement of the Bluebeard tale. Throughout *Bluebeard: A Reader's Guide to the English Tradition*, Hermansson's perceptive voice draws the reader into the extensive research, which is well documented. This is an excellent book.

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William Lynwood Montell. *Tales of Kentucky Ghosts*. 2010. Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky. 224 pages, geographical index. ISBN: 978-0813125930.

This latest of Lynwood Montell's rather good regional collections of supernatural narratives is companion to his recent themed volumes of Kentucky narratives. From university archives and recent fieldwork he has compiled over 270 ghost narratives covering the last half century. Unlike his earlier volumes this work contains little in the way of editorial comment or supporting material, simply presenting the narratives with basic source information (narrator and locale). Unlike

his other recent collections this also does not feature chapter introductions. There are some problems with this approach, but it results in an intriguing collection of primary material. This book may be designed for dipping into rather than reading straight through, but there is much to reward the narrative scholar in here, and it has the richness we have come to expect of Montell's collections.

The stories are arranged by broad themes familiar to students of supernatural narratives. Here are ghosts in cemeteries, family members returning as ghosts, haunted houses and other ghosts of place, ghosts of animals, headless ghosts, historical ghosts of the Civil War, etc. The categories are recognizable and convenient but they are not discrete classifications, and the placing of stories is somewhat arbitrary. That is no problem for the casual reader—and it may add to the book's charm—but it raises questions. Having "Ghostly Lights and Screams" and "Strange Sounds, Lights, and Unexplained Events" as separate chapters points to likely overlaps in material, but we also find thematically related stories spread through the book. We would expect to find stories about animals mistaken for ghosts in the chapter on animals, but they also turn up in the final chapter "Legends and Folktales".

The title of this last chapter might suggest it is where the more classical, traditional folk narratives are contained. Some judicious use of motif and tale type indexing and other references might have helped here, because such stories are not confined to this chapter. Variants of ATU1676B, Clothing caught in graveyard, can be found both there and in the first chapter, for example. Some thematic indexing (as in *Ghosts along the Cumberland*) might have helped orient the lay reader as much as the scholar. To give two examples close to my heart: I was happy to find a variant of *X828, Drunk person falls in open grave with humorous results, but some help could have been given with identifying this as a known motif. I was also struck by a comment that there were "relatively few" hospital ghost narratives: that is not the situation in the UK, and I would have welcomed some contextualizing reference.

Such an approach might also have shed light on the interesting questions the book poses for legend and narrative scholars. Montell's brief introduction highlights two particular questions. The first is the problem of reticence at sharing supernatural belief narratives. In some narratives here we see how narrators accommodate scepticism in their audience: the legend dialectic can acknowledge such responses from listeners without undermining belief structures more generally. (One cluster of narratives ends "that is ... the only logical explanation. But again, who really knows?")

The second point, which seems to have influenced the shape of the last chapter, is changing patterns of narrative. Montell notes his difficulties in collecting recent stories as “most of the old-time storytellers are now gone” and older forms of storytelling event have now changed. Despite this, his collection points to a rather healthy and diverse continued circulation of narratives. He does report stories written in archives but some of the more recent stories also appear to have been collected in written form. It would be interesting to know more about forms of narrative transmission here, as email and Internet transmission may be increasingly important even within this body of material. Brenda Lane’s “Ghost That Wasn’t A Ghost” (78-79) was collected two years after Paul Smith published a similar story in *FoaFTale News*. Lane’s variant has close verbal echoes of Smith’s Newfoundland version (which is available online), suggesting the possibility of a dominant circulating variant being transmitted electronically. In his regret at the passing of older storytelling forms, Montell may underplay this technologically changed role in transmission.

In part this stems from his concentration on the historical and legendary content of such narratives. He urges the collection of ghost stories for their “information about old houses, pre-pavement roads, family cemeteries, and so on.” Several narratives here, however, point to the continued establishment of complicated (and pseudo-historical) legend traditions on anomalous stories. Some more recent narratives also retain older motifs, pointing again to a healthy, but changing, mode of transmission. Given the absence of critical comment or apparatus the book is highly likely to appeal to an interested lay audience of ghost believers. This would make the book itself likely to be incorporated into the chain of transmission of belief narratives. Its standing as a faithful and unadorned source collection may thus have a significance beyond even a reflection of the contributors’ evident narrative skills.

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