THE ROUTLEDGE COMPANION TO MEDIA AND FAIRY-TALE CULTURES

From Cinderella to comic con to colonialism and more, this companion provides readers with a comprehensive and current guide to the fantastic, uncanny, and wonderful worlds of the fairy tale across media and cultures. It offers a clear, detailed, and expansive overview of contemporary themes and issues throughout the intersections of the fields of fairy-tale studies, media studies, and cultural studies, addressing, among others, issues of reception, audience cultures, ideology, remediation, and adaptation. Examples and case studies are drawn from a wide range of pertinent disciplines and settings, providing thorough, accessible treatment of central topics and specific media from around the globe.

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CHAPBOOKS

Maria Kaliambou

In bibliographic terms, chapbooks are small, cheap books, with a wide variety of possible content, produced in Western Europe in the early modern era (ca. 1500–1800). They had few pages (eight, twelve, sixteen, twenty-four, or thirty-six), a small format (seven by five inches or smaller), and crude illustrations, were printed in large numbers, and were sold by itinerant merchants and peddlers (so-called chapmen). The word "chapbook" is a neologism of the nineteenth century, invented by librarians and bibliophiles who wanted to define popular cheap literature published in England since the invention of printing. The etymology stems either from the words "cheap" and "book" or from the words "chapman" and "book." Thus, one defining element is their low price; indeed, they were meant to be affordable to anyone.

Some believe small chapbooks first appeared in France (Weiss 1942, 10). However, almost everywhere after the beginning of print there has been production of cheap prints parallel with more elaborate publications. So, one can find printed chapbooks in many countries around the globe, such as England, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Italy, Spain, Greece, Bulgaria, the United States, Brazil, China, India, and parts of West Africa.

Chapbooks have different names in other European countries. In France, *bibliothèque bleue* (blue library) refers to the blue cover of small books, giving significance to their external appearance. In Germany, *Volksbuch* (the book of the people) underlines the social dimension of the readership. The Portuguese *literatura de cordel* (literature on a string) hints to the ways they were distributed, namely sold hanging on a rope. Other terms used by publishers are little books, small books, curious books, pamphlets, and ephemera, referring to various criteria such as the content, format, or use of these popular publications.

Their peak was in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. From the nineteenth century onward, chapbooks were gradually replaced by other popular print forms, such as pulp magazines, dime novels, and graphic novels. Today the term refers mostly to modern collections of poetry, which range from very low- to very high-quality publications. The current circulation of numerous zines, self-published poetry booklets, and online publications of poetry (e-chapbooks) may be considered contemporary versions of the form.

Chapbooks contributed to the wide popularity of folktales and fairy tales. From the first years of their appearance they included these stories. Gradually chapbooks with folktales became children's readings (Roth 1979). Even today one can find small and thin chapbooks with fairy tales sold in kiosks and in markets.

Because of their cheap appearance, chapbooks were overloaded with many negative stereotypes and were thus dismissed by some academics as unworthy of study. With the exception of early research on British chapbooks by Harry Weiss (1942), the academic acknowledgment of the importance of chapbooks is a relatively recent phenomenon. After the 1960s, bibliographic and social historians, literature scholars, folklorists, and sociologists praised the power

and value of chapbooks as important cultural artifacts (see Burke [1978] 2009; Chartier 1987; Neuburg 1972; Roth 1979; Roth 1993; Schenda 1970; Slater 1989; Spufford 1981; Watt 1995). Most scholars today agree that popular literature, including chapbooks, is a gateway to understanding and analyzing culture and society, in particular how they change. Yet there remains a considerable dearth of research analyzing chapbooks' value as a powerful means of knowledge and literature dissemination.

Despite their popularity, chapbooks are hard to find. First, because of their fragile construction, the majority could not last long. Second, until recently libraries were not interested in acquiring them. Yet some bibliophiles of the nineteenth century and other private collectors lovingly gathered and saved them from disappearance (Neuburg 1972, 11). The private collections by James Boswell and Samuel Pepys constitute two important sources for research of English chapbooks, now in libraries and university archives (Weiss 1942, 141). The Pepys collection from seventeenth–century England mirrors the literacy and reading tastes of English people at that time (see Spufford 1981). Today, ironically, chapbooks from previous centuries are recognized as valuable, and are sold at high prices in auctions, and thus are no longer "cheap books."

Contents

Chapbooks cover nearly every imaginable subject. Their wide range of genres, blurred with each other, a tendency "deeply ingrained in their very nature" (Duval 1994, 41), makes their classification difficult. The first bibliographic systematization of their vast material was done by bibliographers at the Harvard Library in 1905 and is printed in the *Catalogue of English and American Chap-Books and Broadside Ballads in Harvard College Library*. Its subjects are: 1) religious and moral: Sunday reading, 2) cheap repository tracts, 3) household manuals, 4) historical, political, geographical, 5) geographical description and local history, 6) travel and adventure, 7) odd characters and strange events, 8) prose fiction, 9) legendary romances, fairy stories, and folktales in prose, 10) dramatic, 11) metrical tales and other verse, 12) song books, 13) jest books, humorous fiction, riddles, etc. 14) humorous metrical tales, etc. 15) dream books, fortune telling, and legerdemain, 16) demonology and witchcraft, 17) prophecies, 18) crime and criminals: collections, 19) crime and criminals: trials, 20) crime and criminals: executions, 21) crime and criminals: dreadful warnings, 22) crime and criminals: individual criminals and persons accused of crime, and 23) miscellaneous, including social satire, chapbooks on matrimony, manners and customs, proverbs, etc. (Harvard Library 1905).

Victor E. Neuburg (1972) follows this organization, whereas Weiss reduces the categories to eighteen (1942, 30). Margaret Spufford divides the small books into three groups: merry books (courtship, sex, and songs), godly books (popular religion), and historical and chivalric novels (1981, 156–257). Klaus Roth, based on popular printed material from southeast Europe, offers a more minimalistic division of chapbooks into two generic categories: literature (prose, poetry, and drama) and manual literature (religious and secular) (1993, 19).

Chapbooks often have catchy titles with superlative forms (such as "The Most Beautiful Fairy Tales," "Exquisite Fairy Tales," and "Special Chosen Fairy Tales") in an effort to capture their audience's interest. Some have extremely long titles covering a full page, almost resembling a table of contents (Weiss 1942, 30). Chapbooks' titles usually refer to their genre. However, publishers' uses of genres were very elastic. In many cases, producers filled the pages with whatever material was available. For instance, a chapbook with folktales can also include short stories, myths, songs, and riddles (Kaliambou 2006, 124–130). Publishers' sources were oral and written (Neuburg 1972, 5), both traditional and literary works, autochthonous or in translation, often in a highly condensed, adapted, and transformed format.

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Fairy tales in chapbooks could include a compilation of various translations intertwined with oral traditions. For instance, the unknown author of a Greek chapbook from the end of the nineteenth century borrowed motifs by Charles Perrault, the Brothers Grimm, and other sources to publish one of the first translations into Greek of "Little Red Riding Hood" (ATU 333) ("I Kokkinskoufitsa" N.d.). Some lines from the dialogue between the girl and the wolf are verbatim translations from Perrault; other passages go back to Grimm; the end resembles neither, with the girl screaming and thus alerting huntsmen to kill the wolf (see Kaliambou 2007b, 56).

Another translation and adaptation tactic was the domestication of the fairy tales to the audience's environment. Familiar localities with their traditions and customs make the set of the stories, as another example of "Little Red Riding Hood" in a 1914 Greek chapbook exemplifies. This version takes place in a Greek village of a minority ethnic group around Christmas time. Stylistic characteristics known from other genres of popular literature (popular novels, popular romances, crime stories, etc.) dominate. Linguistic elements (diminutives and superlatives forms, use of standard adjectives, direct speech, metaphors and comparisons, shifting from standard to everyday language, restricted vocabulary, use of colloquial expressions) and aesthetic characteristics (lengthy sentimental descriptions, gender stereotypes of the strong man and the submissive woman, polarization between good and bad characters, amplifications of narrative elements) make evident that chapbooks with folktales and fairy tales are in a constant dialogue with other genres of popular literature (see Kaliambou 2007a).

One striking characteristic of chapbook production from the fifteenth to the nineteenth century is the longevity of their texts. Based on trade lists and publishers' catalogues, Neuburg (1972, 75–81) and Spufford (1981, 258–261) could prove the continuing popularity of some titles printed throughout the centuries in cheap formats, such as "Valentine and Orson," "Fortunatus," "Guy of Warwick," and "The Seven Champions of Christendom." Similarly, "Jack the Giant Killer" (ATU 328), "Jack and the Beanstalk" (ATU 328A), "Cinderella" (ATU 510A), "Sleeping Beauty" (ATU 410), "Tom Thumb" (ATU 700), Charles Perrault's stories, and other folktales and fairy tales also circulated continuously. Thus, despite the stereotype that they are ephemeral, chapbooks could resist the obstacles of time.

Production

Various agents are involved in the production of chapbooks, including publishers, printers, illustrators, authors, translators, booksellers, and paper suppliers, forming what Robert Darnton calls "the communications circuit" (1982, 68). In order to keep production costs low, the same person could cover many jobs. For instance, a publisher could also be the printer, distributor, or even author of a chapbook. The majority of agents remained anonymous, and the date or place of publication were not always provided. Thus, very often we lack information about who wrote, translated, adapted, or edited the folktales and fairy tales in chapbooks.

The successful publishing companies were mostly family businesses; the involvement of different generations played a catalytic role for long-lasting success. For example, the biggest publisher in England in the eighteenth century was the Dicey family. In 1720 William Dicey started a publishing company with Robert Raikes in Northampton. In 1756, Cluer Dicey, William's son, took over and transferred the business to London (Neuburg 1972, 48). Similarly in France, the two family dynasties who dominated the market of the blue books were two generations of the Oudot family and three of the Garnier family (see Chartier 1987, 256).

The authors of those cheap publications remained in most cases anonymous. Some were authors of more respectable literature who accepted commissions for chapbooks for financial

reasons and used pseudonyms to cover their true identity. Most creators were skillful and highly efficient adapters who at a very fast pace had to produce great numbers of chapbooks. The texts were changed, minimized, condensed, or prolonged to fit the format, size, and page length (Weiss 1942, 11). Characteristically, one Glasgow publisher/adapter reduced the Bible to fit twenty-four pages including illustrations. Similarly, the length of folktales and fairy tales could be very elastic. The same narrative could be longer or shorter depending on the available pages. For instance, in eighteenth-century chapbooks one can find both a twenty-six-page version of "Cinderella" and a seventeen-page one.

Illustrations, often crude woodcuts apparently executed carelessly, are an integral element. Chapbooks from the early modern era have an illustration (usually woodcut) on the title page and few if any within. They thus differ from broadsides, single sheets that contained posters, advertisements, proclamations, and (most relevant to folklorists) ballads, circulated parallel to chapbooks but targeted more to their readers' visual tastes. Chapbooks looked more serious than their contemporary broadsides, being more substantial than the even more ephemeral broadsides (Newcomb 2011, 482, 484).

In chapbooks with folktales and fairy tales, the title page, which functioned as the best incentive for readers to buy, was covered with an illustration. Gradually, the cover of the folk-tale chapbook became the symbol for the whole booklet. Illustrations circulated from one example to another or were reprinted for many years despite having faded. Images were not always relevant to the text and sometimes were used just to fill the page. The illustrators, like the authors, were mainly anonymous.

Distribution

Chapmen were the main distributors in the early modern era. These itinerant peddlers carried chapbooks, together with other merchandise, on their shoulders and sold them in open markets, in stores, in bookstores, in kiosks, or privately to houses. Through them, chapbooks, an urban-created phenomenon, could reach remote villages. Like ballad sellers, chapmen might have performed the content of the booklet to help sell it. They had an interactive relationship with their buyers, which helped them sense the recipient's taste. These peddlers established a network of communication and played a crucial role in the distribution of social, historic, political, and religious knowledge. Tessa Watt argues that we can better understand the chapbook phenomenon if we understand the social relations within which they circulated (1995). Further, chapbooks probably reached more hands when adults and children borrowed, resold, or rented them.

Affordability is one of the main characteristics of chapbooks. As their name implies (reminiscent of the later term "dime novel" for popular books in nineteenth-century America), chapbooks were accessible to almost anyone; prices were between two and six pennies, depending the number of pages. Chartier, examining the inventory of the Garnier bookshop for the year 1789, concludes that blue chapbooks were the cheapest of all ordinary books (1987, 256). Maria Kaliambou, comparing Greek nineteenth- and twentieth-century folktale chapbooks with other material goods, found that their price was equivalent to a piece of bread; even low-paid workers could afford them (2006, 68–70).

Although the information available is sparse, it appears that chapbooks were published in thousands of copies. For instance, French sixteenth- and seventeenth-century booklets of eight or sixteen pages were printed in editions of 1,250 to 2,500 (Chartier 1992, 280). A common strategy was the publication of a series, usually focused in one genre, such as short stories or folktales. However, publishers did not necessarily produce all the announced items.

Reception, Readership

Series subscribers' lists indicate the age, gender, and region of the readership; it is evident that the buyers of folktales were not only children but adults as well (Kaliambou 2006, 80–83). Yet it is notoriously difficult to find much detail about the actual readers, the real audience of the chapbooks. These cheap productions constituted a competitive business among publishers, which implies a considerable demand. But who actually read them? Literacy rates at the beginning of the sixteenth century were low, yet they increased significantly during the next centuries (Burke 2009, 342–352). Spufford sought to measure reading skills in English society in the second half of seventeenth century; she concluded that in East Anglia approximately 30 percent of the male population could read (but not write equally well) but fewer women acquired reading and writing skills (1981, 19–45).

Indirect sources provide information about reading skills. For instance, evidence of the participation of women in reading activities is the woodcut printed on the seventh page of the English chapbook *Cinderella; Or, the History of the Little Glass Slipper*, showing Cinderella reading a book (see figure 46.1). The accompanying text demonstrates her love of reading: "Her books were the only companions she had, and when her sisters went out, she used to take the opportunity of reading theirs" (N.d.). This eighteenth-century (fictional) woman reads in order to forget her sorrows and find an outlet for her interests. The chapbook was printed in York, priced one penny, and had thirty-two pages and nine unrefined woodcuts. The author or translator remains anonymous, but it is obviously a free translation of Perrault's version from 1697. Although it is not dated, based on a handwritten inscription, it must have been published at the end of the eighteenth century. On the last page, a list of published books provides helpful information on the preferences of publisher and audience. Titles from this list demonstrate that fairy tales and fairy-tale-like materials such as "Tom Thumb," "Enchanted Castle," "Fables," and "Tales of Past Times with Mother Goose" were printed alongside literary and legendary subjects such as "Robin Hood," "Robinson Crusoe," and "Gulliver's Travels" (*Cinderella* N.d.).

However, chapbooks did reach bigger audiences than literacy rates might imply. Reading aloud was an activity among family or community circles. One person who could read served as the pathway to the literary world for others. Chapbooks functioned as an educational tool: some readers practiced and developed their reading skills, and some listeners came into contact with literary texts that they memorized and reused in oral performance. Thus, chapbooks contributed to the interplay between oral and written literature; they have a role "in between" (see Roth 1993, 11–13).

Gradually, chapbooks with folktales became exclusively for children. On the last page of a 1950s Greek chapbook the publisher makes their significance for children explicit: "The most beautiful fairy tales. [. . .] With exquisite appearance and abundantly illustrated our fairy tales are the indispensable friend for every child. Chosen from the masterworks of the world literature they are the best nourishment for the child's mind and phantasy" (*Oi treis koutamares* N.d., 32). Publishers embellished them in order to appeal to young audiences and to have various practical and learning uses. Examples from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries had knowledge quizzes, tests, riddles, and painting games to entertain and educate. Some were combined with special offers: for instance, on the last page of the Greek chapbook *Modern Robinsons and Other Fairy Tales* (Monternoi Robinsones kai alla Paramythia N.d.), published in the mid-twentieth century, a knowledge quiz includes the inscription that if the child/reader finds the correct answer, she will have a discount on the next chapbook. All these strategies of publishers served the purpose of gaining bigger audiences.

(7)

the very newest fashions. Her books were the only companions she had, and when her sisters went out, she used to take the opportunity of reading theirs.

The poor girl bore all patiently, and dared not to tell her father, who would have rattled her off; for his

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Figure 46.1 Cinderella; Or, the History of the Little Glass Slipper (Chapbook), circa late 1700s, printed for Wilson, Spence and Mawman, York, UK

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Significance

The importance of chapbooks, as well as of other popular publications, is now accepted and under-scored by scholars. Particularly for fairy-tale studies, chapbooks constitute a significant research resource because they played a crucial role in the wide dissemination of folktales and fairy tales into the population. In some cases, chapbooks are the first written documentations of oral tales (see Rubini 2003, re: ATU 566, "The Three Magic Objects and the Wonderful Fruits" [Fortunatus]) or functioned as the vehicle for translations of Western European stories into the peripheries of Europe (see Kaliambou 2006 for Greece). Chapbooks testify to the reciprocal influences between oral and written sources and underline the ongoing exchange between orality and literacy.
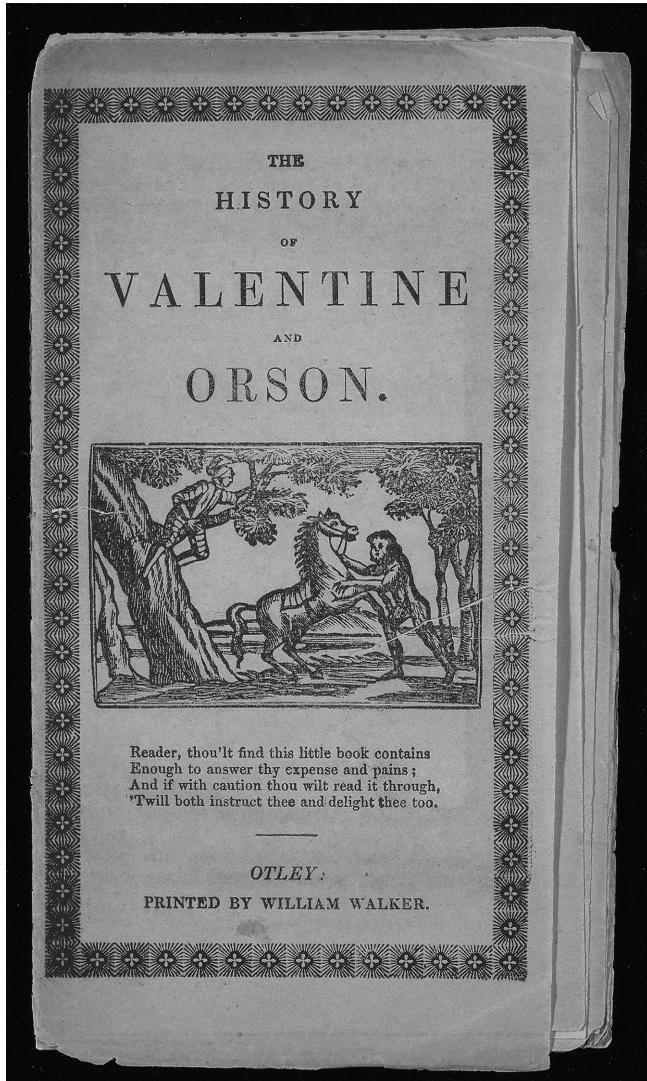
Figure 46.2 Walker, William, N.d., *The History of Valentine and Orson* (Chapbook), Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University

Their power lies in the combination of easy and cheap pleasure with moral edification. At the end of the eighteenth century the publisher of one widely circulated chapbook (see figure 46.2) explains to the reader right away on the title page why its content is so important:

> Reader, thou'lt find this little book contains
> Enough to answer thy expense and pains;
> And if with caution thou wilt read it through,
> 'T will both instruct thee and delight thee too.
> (*The History of Valentine and Orson*, 1)

Related topics: Children's and Young Adult (YA) Literature; Children's Picture Books and Illustrations; Print

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