

Betsy HEARNE, *Beauty and the Beast: Visions and Revisions of an Old Tale* (Chicago and London, University of Chicago Press, 1991, pp. 247, ISBN 0-226-32240-8).

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[Aller au sommaire du numéro](#)

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1960s may have been expected, given the degree of Latinization of the Ukrainian Catholic church in the old country and in its first decades in Canada. The most striking case, then, is the most recent church and its community. Its members have gone to great lengths to “purify” the Byzantine aspects of their building as much as possible, certainly beyond the experience of their previous parishes. This movement of “Easternization” is, to a large degree, a function of the high level of ethnic self-consciousness of the parishioners. It is further boosted by a complementary movement in the Catholic Church since the Second Vatican Council and other factors. In this case, the self-conscious ethnic (and somewhat theological) revival relates not to roots of 100, but rather 1000 years ago.

Other articles dealing with the church and material culture include reports by Diana Thomas and Brad Loewen on surveys of Ukrainian churches in Alberta and Manitoba respectively. Stella Hryniuk documents the story of one of Ruh’s churches which was recently demolished. A.M. Kosteci describes a variety of different forms of church and cemetery crosses. Bohdan Mewidsky looks at the material culture of three old prairie cemeteries, and Enrico Carlson-Cumbo comments on recent urban graveyards.

This volume of *Material History Bulletin* also includes a few short contributions on other topics; folk medicine by Andrea Klymasz, iconography by Sister Angelica (Hodowansky), an exhibition of Ukrainian breads by Olya Marko, and a description of the Ukrainian Museum of Canada by Vera Nokony.

Several of the articles in this volume provide the first rigorously academic treatment of the processes or objects involved. The collection contributes clearly to our understanding of the Ukrainian Canadian experience, the concept of “ethnicity”, and the Canadian experience as a whole. In all instances, it is welcome.

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Betsy HEARNE, *Beauty and the Beast: Visions and Revisions of an Old Tale* (Chicago and London, University of Chicago Press, 1991, pp. 247, ISBN 0-226-32240-8).

In 1756, Madame Le Prince de Beaumont wrote “La Belle et la

Bête" for *Magasin des Enfants*, basing it on a romance written in 1740 by Gabrielle de Villeneuve for the entertainment of courtly friends; in 1783, Beaumont translated it into English for *The Young Misses Magazine*. Since then, the story has been re-created in children's and adults' literature, opera, dance, plays, film, and oral tradition (and at this writing, a new Walt Disney film version is hitting the theatres). Betsy Hearne is fascinated by the power of "Beauty and the Beast" to lend itself to so many transformations, and in this study she traces its incarnations since 1783, as well as antecedent and cognate forms (notably "Cupid and Psyche"). "What makes it persist while other stories fade from memory?" (p. 1) she asks; the answer is, in part, that "in a kind of Darwinian scheme of literature, the story that has the capacity to bear different meanings in different times and cultures will survive" (p. 141). Although this is primarily a literary study, Hearne calls for more folkloristic attention to the interplay of oral and written tradition in folktale, as well as to children's literature as "the heir of fairy tales" (*Ibid*). With "Beauty and the Beast", she finds that "the most effective literary versions prove to share the same motifs that have been retained in oral variants, a pattern that suggests significant continuity of creative process between the two traditions" (p. 123).

Hearne approaches "Beauty and the Beast" largely from aesthetic perspectives. "This is a study of the art and artifice of the story rather than an analysis of its meaning", she writes, "I have occasionally but inevitably touched on interpretation in discussing points of view, style, plot, characterization, and historical nuance" (p. xiv). It is disappointing that she has chosen such a modest role in interpretation, because her intimate familiarity with the tale in all its permutations gives her comments particular authority; too often, though, they are offhand observations scattered among extensive description of various texts. Some of these descriptions are very long indeed; for example, there are three pages describing Angela Carter's 13 page story "The Courtship of Mr. Lyon"; four and a half on Tanith Lee's (1983) 40 page "Beauty". After a while the summaries have the wearying effect — ironic in a study devoted to "art" — of listening to someone recap the plot of a weekend movie; the listener attends distractedly, not having had the original artistic experience herself. Hearne's voice is lucid and engaging, but even so, after the *n*th version I began to feel like the third grader quoted as writing, "I lost my attanchon to the story. By the time it was done I was picking my shoe" (p. 104). But with a blitheness (born perhaps from her 25 years of telling stories to children) Hearne kindly assumes that the reader has sat up bright-eyed all along, and will say something like, "One cannot help remembering Cocteau's trouble with the recalcitrant swans" (p. 127), when one's mind is a complete blank as to swans. (One hunts for them in vain in the six-page discussion of Cocteau's film (pp. 79-86), and finally finds a reference to "Cocteau's death-scene swans" (p. 98); but how they were recalcitrant

remains a mystery.) And surely only the most devoted reader could recall the 22 versions individually characterized in a single paragraph on page 123!

The problem of summary is shared by anyone who would compare long, little-known, or hard-to-get texts — such as folk narrative or ephemeral popular literature — which cannot be presented to the reader in totality; unlike the critic of “elite” literature, the writer does not have the luxury of the reader’s knowledge of the texts as a starting point, and so has the double job of supplying enough text to “hook” the reader and to make her commentary intelligible. (The reader of this book should start with Appendices Two and Three — a facsimile version of Beaumont’s tale and a twentieth century oral French version.) Numerous illustrations are reproduced throughout the book, with the sometimes curious effect of being paired with a text from another time and place; a picture from “Aunt Mavor’s Toy Books” series of the late 1800s, for example, faces a discussion of Angela Carter’s story, with the result that now the two are paired (rather compellingly) in my mind. There is also a certain incongruity in the introduction of another authorial voice, with the appended essay by Larry DeVries, “Literary Beauties and Folk Beasts: Folktale Issues in *Beauty and the Beast*”, Hearne gave a marvellously solid and personable tour through several centuries of “Beauty and the Beast”, and it was satisfying to take leave of her at the end.

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Richard PRICE and Sally PRICE, *Two Evenings in Saramaka*,
(Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1991, pp.
xvi+417, ISBN 0-226-68062-2).

The two evenings referred to are “storytelling events” that take place in the complex of activities surrounding two wakes in central Surinam. This is not a collection of stories, but rather an attempt to recreate these evenings in full within the context of the broader social scene. Individual stories are presented as they actually developed, interspersed with bits and pieces of other narratives (called “tale nuggets” by the Prices), enlivened with music and dance, interrupted by conversation and commentary from active listeners.

The modest title leads us to expect far less than what the Prices have to offer after many years of personal and academic work in Surinam.