



Perspectives on the Jack Tales and Other North American Marchen

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This volume is about North American Märchen, a vernacular art form that is often strangely ignored or misconstrued. At the same time, the vitality and appeal of the genre are evidenced by its persistent presentation as written literature. The essays in this volume reexamine common assumptions about "magic" tales and their tellers, reconsidering the performance, collection, transcription, publication, and interpretation of narratives that continue to live orally—especially in the private realm—as one mechanism of intergenerational communication or as a symbolic expression of worldview.

In addition to four interpretive essays, six segments focus on storytellers and their transcribed narratives, accompanied by introductions that place them in context. Some segments compare editing practices or narrative styles; others represent the first publication of contemporary narratives or tales that have long lain in archives, unheard and unavailable. All attest to the skill of the tellers and the artistry of their creations.

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