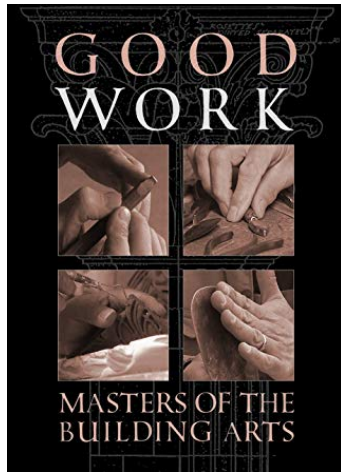


Journal of Folklore and Education Reviews



Good Work: Masters of the Building Arts, by Marjorie Hunt and Paul Wagner

(2016. 65 min. DVD format, black and white, and color. Smithsonian Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage and American Focus, Inc., Washington DC.)

Nicole Musgrave holds her MA in Folk Studies from Western Kentucky University. She currently serves as the Folk Arts Education VISTA member at Hindman Settlement School.

Good Work: Masters of the Building Arts is an insightful documentary film that captures the skill, commitment, and quest for excellence of master craftworkers within a variety of building art traditions. The film features artisans from the 2001 Smithsonian Folklife Festival program, Masters of the Building Arts, as they show the astounding precision, technique, and reverence that go into their work.

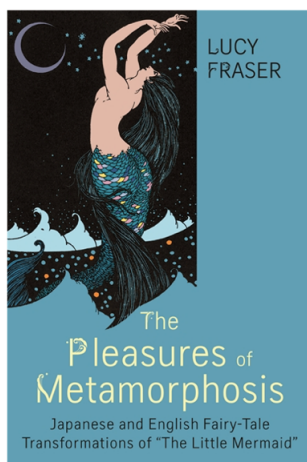
The documentary uses personal interviews alongside footage of the artists at work and historical photographs to curate eight vignettes, each focusing on a different tradition. The sit-down interviews with the masters take place in their workspaces, while the filmmakers also interview the artists as they work (although we don't hear the interviewers' questions). As the artists explain the techniques and processes that guide their craft, we see their hands cut, paint, mold, and shape their art. This approach is effective for helping viewers get a sense of the intricacies of the work—both within “high style” and vernacular traditions—but without overwhelming us with too many technical details.

The first vignette features Earl Barthé, a plasterer from New Orleans whose family has been in the business since the 1850s. The second vignette centers on Dieter Goldkuhle, a stained glass artisan who spent over 30 years fabricating and restoring stained glass windows in the National Cathedral in Washington DC. The third vignette follows third-generation stone carver and calligrapher Nicholas Benson of Newport, Rhode Island, as he designs lettering and carves inscriptions onto the World War II Memorial in Washington DC. The filmmakers then travel to Boston where the father-daughter decorative painting duo John Canning and Jacqueline Canning-Riccio work to restore the interior paintings of Trinity Church. Next, the film takes viewers to Lincoln, California, with Phillip “Pete” Pederson, an architectural terra cotta specialist with Gladding McBean & Co., a company that's been crafting ornamental façades from fired earth since 1884. The sixth vignette follows Joe Alonso, head stone mason at the Washington National Cathedral in Washington DC, as he and his crew work hundreds of feet in the air, setting stone blocks weighing several hundred tons with exacting precision. The film then turns its attention to Patrick Cardine, an architectural blacksmith in Chantilly, Virginia, who crafts intricate designs out of hot, glowing metal. Finally, the filmmakers travel to Abiquiú, New Mexico, to document adobe builder Albert Parra and his fellow craftworkers during their annual ritual maintenance of their adobe *morada*, a chapter house for the *Penitente* fraternity that was built in 1700.

Good Work: Masters of the Building Arts excellently captures the featured artisans' relation to their craft tradition. The craftspeople interviewed demonstrate a great reverence for the masters who came before them; in several cases we see the sense of import they feel as they teach their craft to the next generation. Viewers are left with an understanding of how the artists find joy in their never-ending plodding toward unattainable perfection and how they express a sense of satisfaction from a job well done. Additionally, the filmmakers illustrate how these artists find meaning in perhaps unexpected aspects of the craft traditions—such as how tools can carry stories, and the way that restoration work connects present-day artists with past masters as a continuation of vernacular traditions.

In an educational context, this documentary would be great for challenging students to shift how they think about their built environments, prompting them to consider the stories and experiences of the often anonymous individuals who create the structures in our everyday lives. This film is also useful for demonstrating fieldwork techniques, such as what topics to discuss in an interview or how intangible aspects of belief and community can be expressed through material culture. Instructors could pair a screening of the film with an examination of buildings or with visits from craftworkers. The Smithsonian Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage also has a free activity guide that can be used in conjunction with a film screening (<https://folklife.si.edu/masters-of-the-building-arts-activity-guide/smithsonian>). The structure of the film creates flexibility, too; one or two vignettes can be screened if time is limited. The only weakness of this documentary is the minimal inclusion of female voices. While it would have been nice to see more non-male representation, the felt absence perhaps points to the gendered nature of this work and could open the door for conversations about the role of gender in craft and occupational traditions.

Overall, Hunt and Wagner have created a thoughtful and thought-provoking presentation of master artisans within an array of building art traditions. This beautifully shot film is sure to inspire a deeper appreciation for and curiosity about the processes that underlie our built environments.



The Pleasures of Metamorphosis: Japanese and English Fairy Tale Transformations of "The Little Mermaid," by Lucy Fraser
(Detroit: Wayne State University, 2017, 221 pp.)

Shannon Branfield is a PhD student in the Department of English, University of Kentucky.

In *The Pleasures of Metamorphosis: Japanese and English Fairy Tale Transformations of "The Little Mermaid,"* Lucy Fraser explores adaptations of Hans Christian Andersen's "The Little Mermaid" across different cultures, focusing on the portrayal of gender and how these adaptations highlight the pleasure of transformation. She examines both

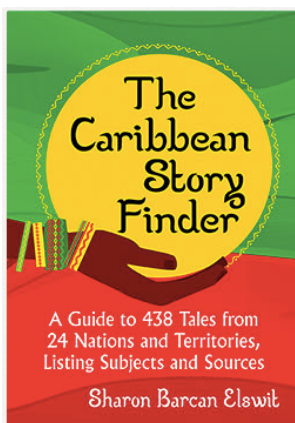
the transformations characters undergo and the transformation of the story as part of a rich intertextual framework that audiences bring with them. Her attention to pleasure as a theoretical framework allows her to draw connections between disparate texts, bringing together stories ranging across the globe, from 1891 through 2008. With her focus on a cross-cultural analysis, she is careful to avoid a Western-centric approach, engaging with texts and scholarship from Japan. She notes the problematic Orientalizing of framing texts in terms of "West" and "East," and avoids

such categorization. Throughout her study, Fraser's attention to the knowing audience and their informed enjoyment of fairy-tale adaptations adds a valuable dimension to understanding the uses and effects of transformation in this tale. Although this book focuses on "The Little Mermaid," a study of transformation has wide application across other fairy tale types.

For readers who may be unfamiliar with the multitude of adaptations of Andersen's "The Little Mermaid," Chapter 1 provides a history of the story, its reception, and its adaptations, in Japan and Anglophone countries. Chapter 2 focuses on two of the most well-known adaptations in those worlds, Miyazaki's *Ponyo* and Disney's *The Little Mermaid*, respectively. Chapter 3 continues the cross-cultural approach by examining literary stories from Japan and England that use familiar fairy-tale conventions, an approach that is contested in the Japanese feminist revisions of Chapter 4. Chapter 5 uses a girls' studies approach to understand the knowing audience of these retellings, while Chapter 6 further diversifies the analysis of these stories by incorporating postmodern engagements. The range, and sheer volume, of adaptations included make this a useful study for both fairy-tale scholars who want to expand beyond Anglophone fairy-tale retellings, as well as those with an interest in adaptation theory, gender theory, and global literature.

Given the number of tales that readers will likely be unfamiliar with, Fraser is diligent in her explanation of story and context. Her translations are particularly well done, including both the denotative and connotative meaning, so Anglophone readers can understand the nuances in these texts. At times, however, the expanse of the project seems to limit the depth of the analysis, as Fraser raises many points that are not fully explored. This is most noticeable in Chapter 2, as discussions of gender performance, and issues of voice, silence, and writing are cut short. Whether this is due to the difficulty of addressing two such long and influential adaptations in one chapter, or a desire to save space for less familiar texts, the familiarity of Disney's *The Little Mermaid* and Miyazaki's *Ponyo* make a detailed and attentive analysis of these texts more necessary.

In all, however, Fraser has compiled an impressive collection of stories from a variety of countries, time periods, and media. Incorporating literature, film, and television, her texts well represent the multimedia web of contemporary fairy tales and the way they influence and are influenced by other adaptations. She is careful to trace lines of influence from text to text, based on known encounters, not surmise, a precision that strengthens the connections she draws between retellings. The varied theories Fraser uses to engage with the texts gives this book applicability to a range of fields beyond folklore, such as film studies, gender theory, and narrative theory, and she ensures that the material is accessible to those not familiar with the source material.



The Caribbean Story Finder: A Guide to 438 Tales from 24 Nations and Territories, Listing Subjects and Sources, by Sharon Barcan Elswit

(Jefferson: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2017, 308 pp.)

Tricia Ferdinand-Clarke is at Indiana University, Bloomington.

There are any number of reasons to tell a story. They can be meant simply to entertain, to teach, to subvert those in power, or all of the above. As

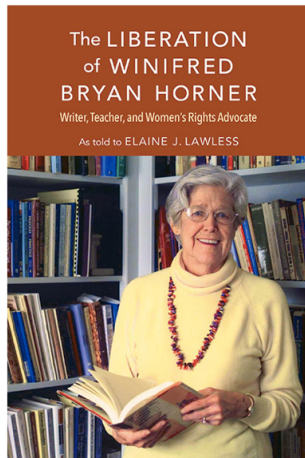
Sharon Barcan Elswit observes in her introduction to *The Caribbean Story Finder: A Guide to 438 Tales from 24 Nations and Territories, Listing Subjects and Sources*, for some people “storytelling, and wordplay may be powerful tools to keep their spirits alive” (3). This was certainly the case for those people who were taken from Africa, enslaved, and sent to various parts of the Caribbean region. For these people, and for the generations of people who came after them, storytelling held (and still holds) immense cultural significance.

The Caribbean Story Finder, one of several story guides written by Elswit, is a classification system of tales found in the Caribbean region. Elswit’s first story finder book was developed as a tool to help her locate tales that were often located in larger collections, and as a way to assist with educators who needed help “find[ing] the right story for the right time” (7). She originally intended to include Caribbean tales in her *Latin American Story Finder* but observed that despite their common origins, many Caribbean tales were so distinct that she decided to create a separate guide specifically for tales found in the Caribbean region. Elswit includes a very cursory history of colonization and creolization in the Caribbean and the resultant cultural production, and also briefly discusses the social and historical contexts of the tales. The 438 stories collected here come from a range of print and various online sources, including recordings and storytelling performances on the web. Elswit chose stories that were readily accessible to her in the U.S. and that were recorded either in English or in a creole that was easy for English speakers to understand. She included no sources that had not already been written or recorded somewhere. The large majority of the stories come from Jamaica, Haiti, Cuba, Puerto Rico, and Trinidad and Tobago, but there are a few stories from places like Belize and the U.S. Virgin Islands as well.

The book is separated into eleven different categories or subjects, which are then further subcategorized into related stories. For instance, under the subject “Musical Tales” there is a story titled “The Singing Bone.” Each story is numbered and under the title lists the author, the name of the source from which the tale was collected and, depending on the story, in what format it could be found (some are available both in print and online). For many of the stories, the guide also lists the ethnic group most associated with the tale as well as its country of origin. Each story is summarized, preserving the local spelling, grammar, and creole dialogue found in the source. Elswit also includes at least one variant for most of the featured stories. Some variants are what she calls “reappearances,” stories re-printed in new collections, while others are new versions of the same basic plot. The guide lists both kinds of variants, if applicable, under each featured story. Each entry also features a section called “connections,” which are essentially key terms that more resemble the folkloristic concept of motif. Elswit has also included three different appendices: Appendix A helps to identify and explain the geographic locations some stories originate from (for example stories from the Greater Antilles versus those from the Lesser Antilles) and to help differentiate between the terms “Caribbean” and West “Indies.” It also outlines some of the historical, cultural, and/or political connections between Caribbean islands and outside nations. Appendix B contains references for those interested in finding more tales in various creoles and Appendix C is the Glossary and Cast of Characters.

While not strictly a scholarly resource, this book readily references a number of scholarly sources as well as several important titles and collections from the fields of Caribbean literature, cultural studies, linguistics and folklore. Elswit was limited in her access to some collections, as some materials were out of print and others were only accessible in published form by local publishers

in the Caribbean. Furthermore, the fact that some stories are strictly relegated to oral tradition and have no written records also meant their exclusion from this guide. Nonetheless, Elswit acknowledges that *The Caribbean Story Finder* is not an exhaustive list of tales found in and around the region. While I am not entirely convinced that this guide is any more accessible or useful to educators than the Aarne-Thompson-Uther Classification system, it is particularly useful as a starting point for those interested in Caribbean oral narratives.



The Liberation of Winifred Bryan Horner: Writer, Teacher, and Women's Rights Advocate, as told to Elaine J. Lawless
(Indiana University Press, 2017, 232 pp.)

Lisa L. Higgins, PhD, is Director of the Missouri Folk Arts Program, a joint program of the Missouri Arts Council, a state agency, and the Museum of Art and Archaeology at the University of Missouri.

Readers of Elaine J. Lawless's bountiful scholarship in folkloristics might find *The Liberation of Winifred Bryan Horner* to be a departure from the acclaimed folklorist's usual themes in the sociolinguistics of belief, the transformative power of narrative, and the utilization of performance theories toward social justice. Lawless's seventh book is the unexpected result of a decades-long friendship between two feminist educators. The book is decidedly the life story of Winifred Bryan Horner, "as told to" Elaine J. Lawless, especially during Horner's final months, when they recorded stories and conversations that Horner intended to share in her autobiography: *I want to tell this story because from my present vantage point it seems unbelievable as I look back* (xviii). After Horner died in 2014, Lawless "liberated" Horner's narratives from her friend's extensive personal archive, many hours of recorded interviews, and a deep well of memories. In the research and writing, Lawless remains true to her folklore training and theory of reciprocal ethnography. In their collaboration, Winifred Bryan Horner fulfilled her desire to author her memoir. The rhetorician's stories are foregrounded, while the folklorist has framed the composition.

In eight chapters, organized chronologically, Lawless has assembled Horner's life story, from precocious young "Wini's" childhood in St. Louis, Missouri, to Professor Horner's illustrious career in the field of Rhetoric and Composition studies—a life and career that were fraught with challenges not atypical for a female (and a feminist) educator of her era. Upon retirement from her prestigious endowed chair at Texas Christian University, Horner returned to Columbia, Missouri, at age 76 to live out her days with that which she always loved the most: family, friends, and writing. In "retirement," Horner continued to teach, and she intended to write her autobiography. In effect, Horner hoped to age creatively, writing a memoir and teaching adult learners the art of crafting their own life stories. Teaching came more easily than writing, and Lawless eventually convinced her friend to sit for conversations that Folklorist Darcy Holtgrave video-recorded. All hoped that telling the stories aloud and working from transcriptions would surmount Horner's uncharacteristic writer's block.

Horner and Lawless fatefully met in 1983 in Columbia, Missouri, when the latter came for a campus visit at the University of Missouri (MU) during a job search. Lawless soon accepted an

offer for the tenure-track position in Folklore in the Department of English, and their friendship took root. Perhaps it is only in a university's Department of English that an expert on Scottish rhetoric and a scholar of Pentecostal folk beliefs can forge a lasting relationship inside and outside the halls of academia. When English departments are homes to Rhetoric *and* Folklore, as well as the more standard literary and linguistic studies, the departments may tend toward internal, interdisciplinary approaches to narrative and writing. In that academic "home," Lawless credits Horner, then a full professor in Rhetoric and Composition, as a key mentor at MU who provided relentless encouragement and distilled wisdom in all things, including departmental politics. As a folklorist myself, I read the book as a documentation of occupational folklife, via both written and oral personal experience narratives, of a female professor navigating academia in the second half of the 20th century. By extension, these two feminist educators also document a cohort of their predecessors, their peers, and their mentees—the next generation of female and feminist scholars who bridge the 20th and 21st centuries. In fact, I studied both Folklore and Rhetoric at MU (and worked as a graduate assistant briefly for both Lawless and Horner) at the turn of the century and count myself a member of that cohort and a beneficiary of their legacy.

When Horner died somewhat unexpectedly at 91 in 2014, Lawless inherited the project with Horner's family's blessing. Lawless, ever a narrative scholar, worked to cull the most salient stories from Horner's repertoire and to position them chronologically and strategically. She placed Horner's voice verbatim, written or spoken, extensively in long quotes cut from childhood diaries, personal journals, and their recorded interviews. Lawless consulted Horner's family members to choose twenty-eight photos that illustrate Horner's life, from a St. Louis childhood through World War II, life on a rural Mid-Missouri family farm, and decades of persistence as she achieved recognition as a writer, professor, and ground-breaking scholar.

The Liberation of Winifred Bryan Horner is part Bildungsroman and part operation manual. Lawless and Horner offer a window into piecing and stitching a life story from primary and secondary sources. The final product is a complex ethnographic negotiation between two writers, teachers, and women's rights advocates. I plan to recommend and share the book with my colleagues, especially those in folklore, rhetoric, and women's studies. Additionally, the book would be an engaging and inspiring text for courses in Educational Leadership, or simply in job search workshops for professional and graduate students, especially in the humanities and education. Win Horner's story is also one that I hope to share, perhaps in a virtual book club, with friends and family members who strive to forge their own paths amidst staid cultural traditions and persistent patriarchal challenges in occupational settings and personal relationships. In Horner and Lawless's pages, I hope readers recognize the progress that ensued since Horner launched her career and the power of narrative to displace the barriers that remain.