March 10 - April 14, 2006

Betty Rymer Gallery
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Gallery hours: Tuesday - Saturday, 10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

#510: If the Shoe Fits...

Gladys Nilsson, Sorta Cinderella, 1990, watercolor on paper, 14 7/8" x 23 1/8"
Related program:
Thursday, March 16, 12:00 p.m.
Tour and discussion led by curator Kate Loague
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Texts for this brochure were written by exhibition curator and project organizer Kate Loague.
Folktales offer a humanity a portal to public civilization, providing an opportunity to comprehend societies and traditions other than one’s own. The exhibited artworks respond to tale type #510 and the complexities of gender, class, privilege and power at work in this universal narrative. Each artist and collaborative group was invited to critically assess the social and political factors of the tale and to respond with either a creative work that reflects this assessment or a new version of the #510 tale written from a contemporary or personal point of view.

The exhibition maintains an educational thrust that seeks to critically analyze culture and a citizen’s place within it. The resulting works reveal a platform for dialogue that allows comparisons of experience and perspective. In presenting works by established artists alongside collaborative student projects, the exhibition intends to challenge the notion of privilege within the gallery’s public space. As an underlying focus, the exhibition explores collaboration as a social and political force with a special consideration of simultaneous discourse and dialogue and the inherent diversity that results from these as manifested within the presented works.

#510: The Shoe Fits is curated and organized by Kate Loughe, who received her MAAA from the School in 2004 and is currently a second-year candidate in the MAEE program at SAIC. Selected works in the exhibition were juried by Lisa Hochtritt, Michael Miller, and Susannah Kite-Strang. Special thanks to the participating artists and educators for their support and special assistance with this presentation.

What is tale type #510?

Folklorists categorize tales by motifs and types. Each type is assigned a number. Tale type #510 is the oldest and most widely circulated tale of transformation known to humankind. Although the original tale type has been traced to a Chinese version from 850 A.D. entitled 誕生記 (Shōunkeki), Disney’s iconic Cinderella (appropriated from France’s Charles Perrault) is the foremost recognizable #510 tale in the United States.

Shared characteristics of the wonder tale include the introduction of magic elements and an assurance that anything can happen. The structure of Cinderellaesque tales follows a pattern of exposing a serious familial problem and inciting a series of magical adventures that ultimately lead to marriage or some variation of the “happily ever after” theme.

The standard criteria for tale type #510 (subtype A) includes the following:

A young girl is ill-treated by family members. She experiences this mistreatment during a time of menial service at home or abroad. Benevolent forces assist in her transformation. She marries the 'prince'. Her identity is revealed by a variety of means such as a special shoe, a ring that is hidden in food, or an ability to accomplish a difficult task. Finally, she marries the prince. Tale type #510 rarely includes fairy godmothers, pumpkins, and/or mice.

In older versions, the central character’s transformation and/or salvation is not dependent upon a magic wand but rather her recognition of and access to an internal power with which to overcome her own obstacles. Her transformation is hard-won consciousness.

Folklorists have classified numerous sub-types of #510. These include ones identified as: (subtype B)

- A young girl is ill-treated. She is forced to do menial service at home or abroad. 2) She is forced to do menial service at home or abroad. 3) An oppositional force assists her transformation. She marries the prince. Her identity is revealed. 4) A series of magical events lead to her salvation.

The above sub-types provide categories with which a teacher may develop critical curriculum. International versions of tale type #510 can provide students with an interface with which to explore shared notions of dating rituals, death, patriarchy, family dynamics (including step and/or mixed families), gender expectations, grief, magic, matriarchy, misogyny, privilege/power, psychological/sociological phenomena, sexuality and/or spirituality, as well as the unique perspective that each artist may use to interpret and present the tale.

Within the narratives, color functions symbolically to represent time and growth and corresponds to the roles of Maiden, Matron and Crone. White represents innocence and virginity; red symbolizes menstrual blood and/or a ruptured hymen (enabling conception of a child); and black signifies the unconsciousness of death. The maiden cannot pass from white to red without moving through blackness (sleep or work). The final color of transformation is gold. Such transformations are often indicated by a change of clothes and/or location.

In his broad social-historical study, August Nitschke traced Cinderella’s behavior and social activity in early variants to hunting and grazing cultures at the end of the Ice Age when women were central to community providing a nurturing presence even after life; Cinderella’s mother fulfills this nurturing role in numerous versions of the tale, appearing as a benevolent force of nature (for example a bird, fish, or gift giving tree) to assist her daughter in overcoming obstacles (Zipes, 1979). In his research, Nitschke wove together the origin of a tale with socio-historical contexts and the story’s narrative. He demonstrated that allegory reveals the evolution of society’s behavior—as society changes, so does the direction of the tale. This is a radical idea for scholars who believe that the progression from folk tale to fairy tale was a literary phenomenon. His research called together theories of biology (ordered group behavior) and anthropology (behavior over time) with society’s perception of power as reflected in how tales were told. To that end, he studied the difference in tales told across borders, examining the autodynamics (hero’s fate is self-dependent) and heterodynamics (hero dependent upon outside forces for survival). In the earlier folk tales, it is the hero/heroine who shoulders the burden of transformation by his/her own action.

Until his death in 1977, Marxist Ernst Bloch supported activities that opposed political repression. He regularly used the structure of fairy tales to articulate his perspective about revolutionary change. His ideas were formulated in response to fascism of the 20’s and 30’s. Bloch imagined the fairy tale to be the single most powerful expression of the people:

It all adds up to this: the fairy tale narrates a wish-fulfillment which is not bound by its own time and the approval of its content. ...Not only does the fairy tale remain as fresh as longing and love, the demonically evil, which is abundant in the tale, is still seen at work here in the present, and the happiness of “once upon a time”, which is even more abundant, still affects our visions of the future. (1969, p.164)

Bloch hoped to demonstrate how logic and capability might overcome obstacles. In championing the strengths of the disadvantaged and disenfranchised, he saw fairy tales as exemplars of social change—moving in the direction of utopia. However, unlike Nitschke, Bloch did not take into account the diverse and distinct depictions of culture expressed in variants across boundaries or the difference between folk tales and fairy tales and their socio-historical implications.

Current scholarship covers many, often conflicting, perspectives including those of Carter, Dunsdon, Gould, Paradie, Rowe, Tatar, Walker, Warner, Wilson, and Zipes. Their research endeavors to study #510 tales historically and examines the cultural currency of tales marketed as various art forms: children’s literature, adult literature, film, dance, opera, etc. Their advanced critiques place the effects of consumer trends, as well as geographical and societal influences on archetypal characteristics, charting evolutionary developments of tale types across borders.

Note:

- Entitled: Cinderella: Three Hundred and Forty-Five Variants of Cinderella, Canton and Cup o’Rushes, Abstractions and Takabobles, with a Discussion of Medieval Analogues and Notes
- While all #510 heroines are named Cinderella, more than one storyteller has used this name for the main character. Adding to the confusion, various scholarship refers to stories about “Cinderella” with a focus on the character and community transformation characteristics. For purposes of this essay the name Cinderella is used to refer to #510 characters in general.
- The use of archetypes identifies an actual tale.
- “W. R. & R. Balfour’s 1879 essay ‘Cinderella’ was printed in The Nineteenth Century pp. 832-853 was most likely the initial (however limited) comparative study of tale type #510.”
- "If a young girl is ill-treated. 2) She is forced to do menial service at home or abroad. 3) She meets a prince or a prince becomes aware of her beauty. 4) She is identified by her shoe. 5) She marries the prince. 6) A series of 17 maps detailing 51 motifs.
- "Today those tale type #510 stories of European origin, that enjoy a following in the islands have crossed cultural boundaries where listeners rarely question differences in cultural currency (e.g. castles) because imagination is stimulated by archetypal qualities.
- Storytellers add their unique flavor and make the story relevant.
- "Thompson produced a six-volume index of folk literature in 1966, considered the international key to traditional material."

- Reference sources:
- "Has-ho bears more resemblance to Cinderella than the typical hero/masculine variants cited by Cox.
- "Melanoma’s Evacuo no Sideosmen [Cinderella in Echipt] published in 1964 is out of print and inaccessible.
- "Perin R. Lewis’s study was originally published in Canada. Cinderella syndrome: Canadian Medical Association Journal, 1976, 115. 189. In 1989 the Cinderella Syndrome was added to the Encyclopedia of medical eponyms derived from literary characters.
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- "Two extraordinarily different examples of contemporary films that use colorful costume changes to chart #510 character’s transformation are the domestic Pretty Woman (Marshall, 1990) and the surrealistic French Donkey Mus (Demy, 1977)."
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With the passage of time and an increase in scholarly interest beyond European, #510 variants, additional information regarding Chinese, Japanese, and African versions confirmed a global productivity for the tale. Keigo Seki’s research produced two examples of neglected variant types: Komoebara and Anahabaha* (Type 510 A) and Hoi-for (Ahs-foy) (Type 510 A).* In 1964, Kenichi Mizusawa published a manuscript that contained 75 overlooked Japanese versions of Type 510A and 19 versions of Type 510B which he discovered in Echigo prefecture (now known as Niigata). Later in Germany, Max Littl (1976) examined the impact of folk motifs within other literary genres. In the 1970s, scholars in the U.S. produced prolific work on the transformation of Jane Yolen’s Cinderella. Their primary interest was to question the margins of the discredited transformations of Cinderella stories rooted in infantile Persians. Such revelations bred a new genre of fairy tales: feminist revisions of tale type #510 (pened by men and women alike) reinstated the intrinsic strengths of bygone Cinderella roles. As part of this critical discourse, Jack Zipes challenged folklorists to re-evaluate tale types by considering the social-historical context of oral and written tales thus discovering their authentic dialogical role in the civilizing process of society.

William Bascom’s research uncovered African tales that were not included in fairytale indexes but nonetheless shared qualities of those in the Cinderella Cycle. Bascom’s (1972) critical questions, about an African variant, address inherent themes in tracking the Cinderella tale globally.

Some feminists have nailed against Cinderella as an unfortunate role model for girls. Eve Merriman (1975) defined Cinderella as a “prototype of the passive maiden who becomes a prince’s footnote instead of stepping out with her own imprint” (p. 11). Gould (2005) points out the fallacy of previous feminist arguments that claim fairy tale heroines, Cinderella in particular, are helpless victims who wait to be rescued or run to the arms of a prince. Her research cited the fact that Cinderella repeatedly runs from the prince while undergoing her transformation. For example, in the Brothers Grimm #510 tale Aschenputt, the character attends three successive nights of festivities versus the lone ball in Perrault’s French variant. Each night she risks life and limb in her effort to leave the prince (Tater, 2004). A larger question of independence arises as well in studying Disney’s 1950 animated tale. Her research cites the fact that feminist arguments that claim fairy tale heroines, Cinderella in particular, are either bursting with sarcasm or brimming with empathy, depending upon the teller’s intent. In the case of the exhibition #510: If the Shoe Fits… the objective is simply to look at the familiar through an alternative lens, to engage with, a different, if not foreign, perspective. In the wake of 9/11 and the fundamental darkness of its aftermath, it is essential to re-evaluate the objectivity of another’s perspective. Children require a forum in which they may develop skills for navigating a globalized society. In many cases, adults who share perspectives on rearing children are simultaneously in need of these skills. The exhibition intends to examine social similarities and differences through a single folktale that is simultaneously familiar yet reflective of distinct cultural heritages, providing the tools and an environment to foster inquiry that may result in a greater international awareness and appreciation of cultural differences. This exhibition intends to examine social similarities and differences through a single folktale that is simultaneously familiar yet reflective of distinct cultural heritages, providing the tools and an environment to foster inquiry that may result in a greater international awareness and appreciation of cultural differences. This exhibition intends to examine social similarities and differences through a single folktale that is simultaneously familiar yet reflective of distinct cultural heritages, providing the tools and an environment to foster inquiry that may result in a greater international awareness and appreciation of cultural differences. This exhibition intends to examine social similarities and differences through a single folktale that is simultaneously familiar yet reflective of distinct cultural heritages, providing the tools and an environment to foster inquiry that may result in a greater international awareness and appreciation of cultural differences. This exhibition intends to examine social similarities and differences through a single folktale that is simultaneously familiar yet reflective of distinct cultural heritages, providing the tools and an environment to foster inquiry that may result in a greater international awareness and appreciation of cultural differences.
measurements with those of local school children and made a planter cast of a 12-year-old boy who was nearest in size to the Stone Age man. Otzi’s shoes were then recreated according to the research findings. Replicas were made to fit Hlavacek, who journeyed to Tyrol in order to walk in the shoes on the very land where they had lived and worked. The emblems imprinted in the castings made by the SCAF artists are unique like Otzi’s DNA; their imprints are personal markings identifying individual life patterns. Their response to #510 tales rivals that of Hlavacek. Both Hlavacek and the SCAF artists each looked at a larger-than-life story and strove to understand the lead character by considering the implications of footwear.

In the words of Stephen Sonheim’s Cinderella:

You’ll just leave him a clue:
For example, a shoe,
And then see what he’ll do.

Now it’s he and not you
In a stew.

Who is stuck with a shoe,
And you’ll’ve learned something too.

Students of Chicago’s Eli Whitney and Rosario Castellanos elementary schools (under the guidance of Pablo Serrano and Alberto Sepulveda) in-vestedigated artifacts closer to home by working with their family members’ cast-off shoes. They searched for a social meaning behind the shoes, the social implications behind the tales. Questions included: Were the tales to incite the lower classes to revolt, or did they support the ruling class? What are the tales about? Are they about social issues that are not easily resolved?

Aaron Knochel’s students at Seoul International School provide a fresh perspective of #510 that challenges the passiveness of Disney’s version. They remind us that prior to the Enlightenment, folk tales provided a critical measurement of a community’s social justice. Issues that concerned the lower classes were woven into tales, often to the annoyance of the ruling class. At best, folktales initially hinted at utopian societies or, at worst, provided material for the ruling class to laugh at. Even after twelve centuries, tale type #510 continues to be passionately embraced around the world in endless versions and variations. Each wave of revision inspires fervent critique of the tale’s evolutionary trajectory. Regularly argued issues include archetypes, similitude, gender expectations, and the struggle to balance all aspects of teen life—issues that are not easily resolved yet transcended geographical borders. Notions of good and evil are articulated magical strategies with which to improve occupational concerns. The flash animations made by Knochel’s students do not defer to a literate upper class, all traces of the folk tale’s projected artistic fantasies of a utopian society were lost. The chapbooks eventually served to a literate upper class, marking the initial mass mediated treatment of fairy tales. With the ready distribution of chapbooks through print media. The development of the printing press made it possible to circulate messages of ideological intent. Chapbooks, similar to Disney’s, marked the initial mass mediated treatment of fairy tales. With the ready distribution of chapbooks (a-c) by studying 345 variants of the tale (Dundes, 1982; Sierra, 1992). Between 1893 and 1930, modest research of the tales was realized, with the notable exception that stories were anthologized and folklore indexes were devised. In 1932, R. D. Jameson, while a professor at the University of British Columbia, and his student of Baskin-Kita Home Entertainment: The Cinderella/Princess game among girls, which previously began at age six, is currently aimed at age 2 or 3. The trend increases the demand that Disney is only too happy to supply.


Hlavacek and the SCAF artists each looked at a larger-than-life story and strove to understand the lead character by considering the implications of footwear.
to any publication) or read Grimm’s (German) and/or Perrault’s (French) collections. Likewise, Kantor of the New York Times described the current phenomenon of girls “swearing their allegiance” to Disney’s Cinderella without viewing this film. Some introduced to Cinderella via a stage production are confused and impatient when she appears in rags; they demand the ball gown sans transformation.

As demonstrated in the Grimm’s brothers, the dollar often governs what is fit for print based upon what will sell versus an authentically conceived tale. Since Harry Potter (tale type #510E) took the world by storm, Rowling’s overwhelming financial success has prompted many to try their hand at publishing for children. New York Times columnist Michiko Kakutani penned an expose on the contained pool of authors of children’s literature:

Once upon a time there was a land in love with fame and brand names. By and by, some famous brand-name people,老头ed up in their castles, discovered a new trade. They started writing books for children. (2003, October 23)

Kakutani advances the notion that the marketing of manufactured tales spun by celebrities (including obligatory gestures of multiculturalism and political correctness) lacks an authentic storyteller’s voice. The intent of such material is self-aggrandizement versus a social critique wrapped in a narrative. Kakutani produced a long list of the rich and famous who peddle mediocre material to reinvent their own persona while simultaneously lining their pockets. Such books share library and bookstore shelves with those titles promoted as multi-cultural retellings of tale type #510. In the race to cash-in, some authors are known for multiple versions of tale type #510 that they have penned to cover a wide variety of distinct cultures. As a consequence, the essence of an authentic archetype fair tale is nearly lost.

The Chicago Teacher Librarian Association surveyed its membership to discover which versions are currently shelved in Chicago Public School (CPS) libraries. “Attention was paid to the selection process and at whose request Cinderella versions were requisitioned (librarian, child, parent). According to respondents, of the titles provided, the following are most commonly found on their CPS library shelves: Cinder Edna, The Rough-Face Girl, Cinder-ella—A Caribbean Cinderella, Cinderella Skeleton, The Talking Eggs, and Maggie’s Beautiful Daughters. In addition, Mois Green, Tish- hom, and The Gift of the Crocodile have a noted presence within the Chicago Public Schools. The survey revealed that most requisitions were placed at the solicitation of students. Titles in the top-thirty were recommended by respondents representing the following communities: Algonquin Indian, Appalachian, Carib- bean, Chinese, Creole, South African, and Indonesian. 

Warner (1994) paints a clear picture of the intrinsic value of fairy tales with:

"The pedagogical function of the wonder story deepens the sympathy between the social categories women occupy and fairy tales. Fairy tales exchange knowledge between an older voice of experience and a younger audience, they present pictures of perils and possibilities that lie ahead, they use story to set limits on choice and offer consolation to the wronged, they draw social outlines around boys and girls, fathers and mothers, and the rich and the poor, the rulers and the ruled, they point out the evildoers and guard the virtuous, they standup to adversity with dreams of vengeance, power and vindication." (p. 21)

There are those who currently produce versions of tale type #510 to both critical and popular acclaim. Celebrated revisionist Gregoire Maguire’s Confessions of an Ugly Stepsister proves that the public will appreciate a #510 tale told from an alternative perspective. What is typically a 16-page picture book, in the hands of Maguire, becomes a novel of substantial delight all ages. While Philip Pullman’s His Dark Materials is a richly absorbing adult reader with the notion that at the stroke of midnight one of Cinderella’s co-conspirators was transformed back to his original identity, creating intriguing circumstances and consequences.

The cultural coding of each character and motif (original, appropriated, censored, revised and/or parodied) in tale type #510 provides endless critical, pedagogical possibilities for contemporary audiences.

As long as there are conflicts and different voices and interests articulated within cultural fields, there will always be hope that folk and fairy tales may provide counsel and moral learning to expose the crazed drive for power that many individual politicians, corporate leaders, governments, church leaders, and petty tyrants evoke and to pietify the hypocrisy of their moral stances. (Zipes, 1979, p. ix-x)

Notes:
- Most notably the brothers Grimm (Jacob and Wilhelm) and Clemens Brentano.
- The tale is also referred to as Donkey Skin. It has often been a muse for surrealists. Jacques Demy’s 1977 feature film is a cult classic.
- “Incised tales, in which original girls are pursued by their fathers, were commonplace in the Middle Ages. (Paradise).
- In 1960 Tom Burns devoted a single day to watching television to note the use of folklore. He recorded 101 traditional folklore items or themes. Four of five commer- cials linked products to folklore in the pursuit of a sure sale. On that day, Proctor and Gamble employed Cinderella, the Fairy Godmother and the phrase endtone Mr. Clem.” Of late, Cinderella has been called upon to sell shoes, credit cards, Hallmark cards, dating services, hotels, Odor Eaters, and Goldfish crackers, to name just a few.

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literature was challenged in 1942 with the introduction of Little Golden Books. At 25 cents each, children’s literature was made accessible to most by expanding print distribution to include sales in department and other chain stores. Amanda W. Freymann’s work is an altered Little Golden Book that uses Cinderella to parody the sensibilities of American women in the 1950’s.

Many of the works displayed in #510: If the Shoe Fits... demonstrate collaborative efforts. Marshall Fields’ treatment of Cinderella for their 2005 holiday window display with the cooperation of the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago and the inspiration from the integrated marketing campaign, most notably the brothers Grimm (Jacob and Wilhelm) and Clemens Brentano and were inspired by the illustrations of Diana Marye Huff. Huff’s original interpretation, submitted as an artist’s book, is of a young girl who has aspirations to become a fashion designer. In the end, she marries the prince who finances her dream to own a fashion boutique that, in turn, becomes a beloved store such as Marshall Fields. The exhibited sketches, models, and display props speak to the creative process behind this seasonal display, a process that involved numerous collaborating design teams both in Chicago and New York.

Kate Lantz fostered a similar collaborative experience with the design and construction of the giant book An Acoustic Fairy Tale, produced by a collective of artists. Contributions from two schools in Ohio, nearly two hundred participants contributed to the project including eight teachers and one librarian. In tiered succession, the dynamics of collaborative effort were illustrated and emulated first by teachers and the librarian followed by high school students who served as mentors to students in elementary schools. In the end, the students produced an international perspective which they presented to the primary students on technique in developing the book’s text and illustrations, the all the while, gaining valuable leadership experience for their effort.

William Bascom’s 1972 study of the diffusion of tale type #510 among African countries posed questions about the source of tales credited to #510. His inquiry examined the criteria assigned to #510 with particular attention to the cultural relevance and implications of stories germane to the continent. Contributions to #510: If the Shoe Fits... from students in Kenya deliver authentic folk lore from two distinct perspectives. Kenyan High School, the national girls school, collaboratively produced a mural that depicts the indigenous teachings of the Sodho clan of Kano. Drawings made by students at The Nairobi Boys School reveal the essence of a benevolent “fairy godmother” into ancestral spirits. The #510 shoe motif, just as Bascom suggested, does not translate to authentic African stories. Shoes have little relevance as they do not play a significant role in an African marriage.

In the end, #510 perspectives remain plentiful in all corners of the world. To quote Dylan Thomas, “All the gardens of spring and summer were blooming in the tale tales beyond the border.” #510: If the Shoe Fits... harnesses the multiplicity of ideas of a single tale teller, allowing us to begin to understand the cultural differences across the street or beyond our own borders.

References:
- “First binding began as a practice among royalty in the mid 16th century. By the end of the 17th century the practice was common regardless of economic position. A Chinese girl’s initial first binding took place between the ages of five and seven. The developed arch was broken and the toes (save the big one) were permanently bent under the foot. The ultimate desired effect was a three-inch foot shaped like the bud of a lotus flower. The small size symbolized and confirmed the capacity to endure great pain and the nature to follow orders. The beautifully crafted and delicately embroidered shoes signaled the ability to accept discipline. Matchmakers in China would bring a potential bride’s shoes (not the girl) to the fiancé’s family for inspection, accompanied by a statement of the father’s wealth and a description of his daughter’s dowry.
- In Disney’s animated feature Cinderella, the stepsisters are depicted as multi-cultural. Fairy tales exchange good and evil, right and wrong, and justice and punishment. Good always wins over evil, and the innocent are rewarded, while the evil are punished. The reflexive and ironic assessments of Good and Evil are articulated in the tale types with Cinderella as a prime example.

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- Spark Design for Marshall Fields -

- The Princess Cinderella: A true story of love and happiness ever after. 2005 3D model property: Francois, pencil, marker
The Telling of Tales

Greeks affectionately remark that tales have no landlord. Like the “telephone game” that children play, once a tale is relayed it remains open to revision and interpretation by all. The telling of tales has always been a political act testing the reins of power, censorship, and authorship while simultaneously critiquing and informing societal structure. Whose voice is heard and whose is marginalized, appropriated and/or parodied is a reflection of societal structure. Whose voice is heard and whose is marginalized, appropriated and/or parodied is a reflection of societal structure.

In the history of folktales and fairy tales, women as storytellers have woven or spun oral tales. Folktales depict the dichotomy of class and power as measured by status and wealth. Within both oral and written traditions, changes to patterns within the evolution of well-worn stories reveal societal transformations. Jack Zipes (1997) acknowledged the collective value of tales in stating: “The telling of tales has always been a political act testing the reins of power, censorship, and authorship while simultaneously critiquing and informing societal structure. Whose voice is heard and whose is marginalized, appropriated and/or parodied is a reflection of societal structure.”

By the 17th century, Britain and France alike made a habit of publicly censuring the voice of working women. Broadsheets were posted maligning women who dared tell tales. Warner revealed that the tension between storytellers and authority is nothing new. She recalled that Phaedrus (15 BC—AD 50), the librarian to Augustus Caesar, was born a slave and had first hand knowledge about censorship. Phaedrus penned the following in his collection of animal fables:

Now I will briefly explain how the type of thing called fable was invented. The slave being liable to punishment for any offense, since he dared not say outright what he wished to say, projected his personal sentiments into fables, and ceded censure under the guise of jesting with made-up stories. (Wsumer, p. 153)

Ironically, as women of the aristocracy discovered their voices (via the salon—adapting folk tales into ritualized parlor games that preceded the performance of intellectual property, an authentic not-for-profit collective, all at a patriarchal viewpoint.)

Folk tales are historically cultural capital of feminine design. Karen Rowe reveals that:

In the history of folktales and fairy tales, women as storytellers have woven or spun their yarn, speaking at one level to a total culture, at another to a sisterhood of women who will understand the language, the secret revelations of the tale. (p. 57)

As women of the aristocracy discovered their voices (via the salon—adapting folk tales into ritualized parlor games that preceded the performance of intellectual property, an authentic not-for-profit collective, all at a patriarchal viewpoint.)

The capriciousness of oral tales was called into question prior to their publication and continually thereafter. In Germany, the poet Annette von Droste-Hülshoff encouraged the brothers Grimm to seek Dorothea Viehmann (an innkeeper’s daughter and teller of tales) as a primary source for their published collections. A woman of means, Viehmann was atypical of the more rough-hewn and rustic storytellers. She traveled to the brothers and recoupled her tales repeatedly for accuracy. The ironic portrait gracing the frontispiece of their collection entitled: “The True Portrait of Gannem Gretzel,” depicts an archetypal peasant to match the contrived name with which they anointed Dorothea. They sacrificed her tales at the marketing altar, refashioning her image to reflect tradition while sanitizing her narratives to appease clergy, educators, parents, and publishers. In the end, the published tales were anything but an authentic demonstration of Dorothea Viehmann’s oral tales.

Children who overheard and relished folklore garnered clues on how to navigate within society. Those intimidated by domineering or inattentive parents or guardians often sought the comfort of their nurse and the nurse’s family. In turn, they were rewarded with prolific and sometimes odigious oral fantasies compared to the distasteful pep talk considered suitable for print. The oral stories were filled with guidance and wisdom laced with humor while the written tales were threatening and moralistic.

An entire sub-type of #510 tales (#510B—Cinderella, or Donkey Skin) was all but deleted from the canon (Warner). Charles Perrault (author of the French Cinderella) wrote Peau d’Anse, a version that plated the common Cat-skin tale, where the heroine runs away to escape a lecherous father, with an additional motif—a magical animal, a donkey whose excrement was made of gold. With the godmother’s assistance the girl staves off her father’s pursuit by requiring her to wear different dresses: the first the color of heaven, the second the color of the moon, and the third the color of the sun. When he produces the goose, the godmother advises the girl to request the source of his riches—the donkey’s hide. Upon receipt, the girl dons the donkeyskin in disguise and flees into the arms of unknown adventure. Such tales of impending incest, which necessitated escape, were thought to be adult entertainment. Which is not to say that children were unaware of blue tales. It is thought that Perrault read a Cat-skin version as a child and his own Peau d’Anse was written tongue in cheek.

The capriciousness of oral tales was called into question prior to their publication and continually thereafter. In Germany, the poet Annette von Droste-Hülshoff encouraged the brothers Grimm to seek Dorothea Viehmann (an innkeeper’s daughter and teller of tales) as a primary source for their published collections. A woman of means, Viehmann was atypical of the more rough-hewn and rustic storytellers. She traveled to the brothers and endeared her tales repeatedly for accuracy. The ironic portrait gracing the frontispiece of their collection entitled: “The True Portrait of Gannem Gretzel,” depicts an archetypal peasant to match the contrived name with which they anointed Dorothea. They sacrificed her tales at the marketing altar, refashioning her image to reflect tradition while sanitizing her narratives to appease clergy, educators, parents, and publishers. In the end, the published tales were anything but an authentic demonstration of Dorothea Viehmann’s oral tales.

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The telling of tales has always been a political act testing the reins of power, censorship, and authorship while simultaneously critiquing and informing societal structure. Whose voice is heard and whose is marginalized, appropriated and/or parodied is a reflection of societal structure. Whose voice is heard and whose is marginalized, appropriated and/or parodied is a reflection of societal structure.

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As the revised tales were collected, the bourgeoisie championed a new literary form, the fairy tale, appropriating only what would serve a rising middle class desiring all else as insignificant. Published tales were initially intended as an adult’s witty distinction and/or social critique. They soon became a child’s primary source of moralistic training and subsequently underwent radical transformation. The common fairy tale appropriated folk had no access to the widely publicized cheap chapbooks. Folk tales generated from the people’s voice gradually morphed into the recognizable literary form of fairy tales. Such stories represented power as the fantastical otherworldly possession of fairies versus the depictions of class struggle found in folk tales.

Linda Delgh’s 1994 study American Folklore and the Mass Media illustrates how the cultural industry employs folklore characters and motifs in the pursuit of successful tales. Her argument is easily commodified with the commodification of tale type #510 in the hands of Disney and the subsequent mediation of the cultural industry to cash in. In modern society, Cinderella, adopted and raised by Disney, has become such an imposing brand that she targets children and adults alike with promises of hope, happiness, and idealism. The Cinderella brand is a marketing study in projected success. An ill-treated and unappreciated young girl overcome adversity (with a little help from a fairy godmother, mysticism, and magic) to grab the brass ring. She has proved to be such a wunderkind at promotion that unrelated stories from the oral tradition were folk art, neither originally classified as fairy tales, were appropriated only what would serve a rising middle class desiring all else as insignificant. Published tales were initially intended as an adult’s witty distinction and/or social critique. They soon became a child’s primary source of moralistic training and subsequently underwent radical transformation. The common and illiterate folk had no access to the widely publicized cheap chapbooks. Folk tales generated from the people’s voice gradually morphed into the recognizable literary form of fairy tales. Such stories represented power as the fantastical otherworldly possession of fairies versus the depictions of class struggle found in folk tales.

By the 17th century, Britain and France alike made a habit of publicly censoring the voice of working women. Broadsheets were posted maligning gossip while some authorities physically muzzled those found guilty of slander or blasphemy insisting upon moral conformity between privileged and nonprivileged classes. Those who collected oral tales with the intent to publish systematically sanitized folk tales beyond recognition in an attempt to restrain their inherent imaginative vision, which illustrated a desire to rise above social obstacles but limited change. Having repeatedly told their tales to collectors for clarity and accuracy, storytellers did not resist the publishers’ edits; job security took prevalence over revealing the source or situation that inspired their oral versions. In most cases, they would not have had access to the printed publications or the ability to read them. The authentic voice of the oral tale was preserved among the commoners.

[Image 53x431 to 319x633]