

# English 577.01: The Fairy Tale in Western Modernity

English 577.01

08189-0

Winter 2006

MW 11:30-1:18

Bolz Hall 422

Prof. Dorothy Noyes

Off. Dulles Hall 308E

Off. hrs. M 9-11, T 2-4

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This course examines the history and uses of the fairy tale in the modern Western world. It argues that the fairy tale is a principal means by which subordinate actors (such as women, children, and the poor) come to terms with dominant cultural constructions of reality, especially those relating to family life and economic success. We'll look first at the oral wonder tale as the European peasant's guide to survival in a world where the rules are both imposed from above and unreliable. Next, we'll see how oral tales are converted to the familiar fairy tales of literature and film, in which they are used to teach a wide variety of norms of conduct: good manners, religious resignation, economic aggression, and consumerism. Finally, we'll explore how attacking and reshaping the fairy tale can be a means of questioning the larger culture. In all these transformations, fairy tales explore the tensions between three responses to the promises of modern society: playing the game to win, escaping it, and changing the rules.

Our examples will be drawn primarily from late seventeenth-century France, early nineteenth century Germany, and Italy and the U.S. in the twentieth century. We'll also read excerpts from some of the best-known commentators on the fairy tale. In analyzing oral, literary, and filmed fairy tales, we'll learn some basic tools of narrative analysis and concepts in folklore research.

## Texts

The following books have been ordered at SBX only, and are required:

Tatar, Maria ed. *The Classic Fairy Tales: A Norton Critical Edition*. New York: W.W. Norton. 1999.

Mathias, Elizabeth, and Richard Raspa. *Italian Folktales in America. The Verbal Art of an Immigrant Woman*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press. 1985.

Alger, Horatio. *Ragged Dick and Struggling Upward*. Harmondsworth: Penguin. 1986.

Rushdie, Salman. *The Wizard of Oz*. London: British Film Institute. 1992.

All other readings are on on-line reserve through the Library Web site.

## Course Requirements and Resources

### General participation, in-class writings, and attendance--25%

Unreasonable absences, habitual lateness, and lack of preparation will negatively affect your grade. The success of the course, collectively and individually, has much to do with everyone being consistently present in both mind and body.

### Two take-home exams (ca. 5 ps.)--25% each

### Individual paper and group presentation, --25%

You'll write a 5-page paper analyzing an instance of the fairy-tale plot in contemporary mass culture (movies, celebrity culture, reality TV, self-help books, etc.) I'll break the class up into groups according to the genres you choose to work on, and together you'll present that genre to the class with the conclusions you draw from comparing your individual examples.

*Plagiarism:* Plagiarism is the representation of another's works or ideas as one's own: it includes the unacknowledged word for word use and/or paraphrasing of another person's work, and/or the inappropriate unacknowledged use of another person's ideas. All cases of suspected plagiarism, in accordance with university rules, will be reported to the Committee on Academic Misconduct. And bear in mind: it is much harder to plagiarize convincingly than just to do the work yourself.

*Disabilities:* The Office for Disability Services, located in 150 Pomerene Hall, offers services for students with documented disabilities. Contact the ODS at 2-3307.

*Help with writing:* All members of the OSU community are invited to discuss their writing with a trained consultant at the Writing Center. The Center offers the following services:

- One-to-one tutorials at Mendenhall (Monday-Friday, 8:30-5:30) or the Younkin Success Center (Monday-Thursday, late afternoons)
- One-to-one online tutorials via an Internet Messenger system (no ads or downloads)
- Online appointment scheduling (available 24 hours a day)  
Please visit [www.cstw.org](http://www.cstw.org) to make an appointment or have an online tutorial.

## Part One: Oral Storytelling in Peasant Communities

1/4

Introduction

1/9

Genre

Read

Structure

“Barbarina and the Black Snake,” “The Cats Under the Sea,” “The Ducks That Talked,” and

“Margherita” (Mathias and Raspa)

Aarne, Antti and Stith Thompson. From *The Types of the Folktale*, 1964 (Tatar 373-378).

Propp, Vladimir. From *The Morphology of the Folktale*, 1928 (Tatar 382-387).

**1/11  
Read**

Performance, transmission and oral form  
Falassi, Alessandro. “Cinderella in Tuscany,”  
1980 (online)

**Film**

Sobol, Joseph Daniel. “Jack in the Raw: Ray  
Hicks,” 1994 (online)

BRING IN Mathias and Raspa as well.

**1/16**

“Swapping Stories: Folktales from Louisiana”  
NO CLASS—MARTIN LUTHER KING  
HOLIDAY

**1/18  
Read**

Gender roles and courtship  
Cinderella versions (Tatar 101-137)

Mills, Margaret. “Sex Role Reversals, Sex  
Changes, and Transvestite Disguise in the Oral  
Tradition of a Conservative Muslim Community  
in Afghanistan,” 1985 (online)

**1/23  
Read**

Review tales in Mathias and Raspa  
Abundance

Del Giudice, Luisa. “Mountains of Cheese and  
Rivers of Wine: Paesi di Cuccagna and Other  
Gastronomic Utopias,” 2001 (online)

Grimms, “Clever Gretel” (online)

Ernaux, Annie. From *A Man’s Place/La Place*,  
1983 (online)

Pellegrini, Angelo. “The Discovery of  
Abundance.” From *The Unprejudiced Palate*,  
1948 (online)

McClintock, Harry. “The Big Rock Candy  
Mountain,” 1921 (distributed in class)

Hill, Joe. “Pie in the Sky,” 1911 (distributed in

**1/25**  
**Read**

class)  
Mobility and migration  
Grimms, "Godfather Death" (online)

Mangione, Jerre. "Annicchia and the Baron."  
From *Mount Allegro*, 1942 (online).

"The Gourd of Blood" and "The Three Brothers  
and the Fig Tree" (Mathias and Raspa)

Mathias and Raspa, part I, "Background," pp. 1-  
60, and part III, "Narratives of Personal  
Experience," pp. 243-295.

**1/30**  
**Read**

Take-home midterm distributed.  
Storytelling and power  
"The Man Who Had No Story." Two Irish  
versions: from County Cork, 1933, and from  
County Donegal, 1965 (online).

Ramanujan, A.K. "Towards a Counter-System:  
Women's Tales," 1991 (online)

Review Mathias and Raspa, part I

## **Part Two: The Literary Fairy Tale and the Civilizing Process**

**2/1**  
**Read**

Orality, literacy and the invention of childhood  
"Little Red Riding Hood." (Tatar 3-24, but pay  
special attention to the first three versions)

Zohar Shavit, "The Concept of Childhood and  
Children's Folktales: Test Case-'Little Red  
Riding Hood,'" 1983 (Tatar)

**Due**  
**2/6**

Take-home midterm on Part One  
Manners and the civilizing process in ancien-  
régime France

**Read**

Perrault, Charles. "Riquet of the Tuft," 1697  
(online)

Leprince de Beaumont, Jeanne-Marie. "Beauty  
and the Beast," 1756 (Tatar)

L'Héritier, Marie-Jeanne de. "Ricdindon," 1696

	(online)
<b>2/8 Read</b>	Perrault, Charles. "Puss in Boots," 1697 (online) The family life of the Brothers Grimm Zipes, Jack "Once There Were Two Brothers Named Grimm," 1992 (online)
	Grimms, "The Three Spinners" (online)
	Grimms, "Hansel and Gretel," "The Juniper Tree," "Red Riding Hood" (Tatar)
<b>2/10 Read</b>	Tatar, Maria. "Sex and Violence: The Hard Core of Fairy Tales," 1987 (Tatar) Repression and transcendence Andersen, Hans Christian, selections (Tatar 212-245). Rags to riches
<b>2/13 Read</b>	Alger, <i>Ragged Dick</i> (1868) and <i>Struggling Upward</i> (1890)
<b>2/15 Read</b>	Disney and consumer education Zipes, "Breaking the Disney Spell," 1995 (Tatar)
<b>Film</b>	Bendix, Regina "Seashell Bra and Happy End: Disney's Transformations of 'The Little Mermaid," 1993 (online)
	Excerpts from "Snow White," dir. Walt Disney, 1936, and "The Little Mermaid," Disney Studios, 1989.
	"Sleeping Beauty," from "Bullwinkle and Rocky," dir. Jay Ward, 1960

### **Part Three: Fractured Fairy Tales**

<b>2/20</b>	Love, career, and money Hoffmann, E.T.A. "The Mines of Falun," 1819 (online)
<b>2/22 Read Film</b>	Faith in wizardry Rushdie 1992 Excerpt from "The Wizard of Oz," dir. Victor Fleming, 1939
<b>2/27</b>	After abundance

**Film**

“Little Otik,” dir. Jan Svankmajer, 2000

NOTE: This film is too long for the class period: we will arrange a late-afternoon session this week in lieu of our regular meeting.

**3/1**

Gender roles and proper stories

**Read**

Tatar, Maria. Introduction (Tatar ix-xviii)

Gilbert, Sandra, and Susan Gubar. “Snow White and Her Wicked Stepmother,” 1979 (Tatar)

Sexton, Anne “Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs,” 1971 (Tatar)

Carter, Angela. “The Tiger’s Bride,” 1993 (Tatar)

Garner, James Finn “Little Red Riding Hood” from *Politically Correct Bedtime Stories*, 1994 (online)

Keillor, Garrison. “My Stepmother, Myself.” 1983 (online)

**3/6**

Group presentations: the fairy tale in contemporary mass culture

**3/8**

Group presentations: the fairy tale in contemporary mass culture

**Due  
3/15**

Paper

Take-home exams due: leave in my mailbox in Denney 421 OR email them to me as Word attachment