

Princeton University
FRESHMAN SEMINAR
Fall 2019

“Once Upon a Time . . .”
Magic Tales and their Meanings

Professor Margaret H. Beissinger
Department of Slavic Languages & Literatures
238 East Pyne (258-0869)
Office hours: Mon. & Wed. 11-12 (or by appointment)

Fall 2019
Tues. & Thur. 1:30-2:50
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COURSE DESCRIPTION

We will explore classic magic ("fairy") tales from around the world, focusing our attention on traditional narrative patterns and their meanings. We will view magic tales as stories that reflect significant moments and experiences of the life cycle (e.g., coming of age, marriage, etc.) and will explore symbolic journeys (often of initiation, both male and female), representations of the Other World (forests, faraway kingdoms, the land of the dead, etc.), and family relationships (between parents and children, siblings, etc.), to name a few. Topics we will examine include oral composition, variants and multiforms, storytellers and performance (including storytelling as a revived art form), the major critical approaches that have influenced the study of the genre (oral-traditional, historic-geographic, structuralist, myth-ritual, psychological, symbolic, socio-historical, and feminist), and how magic tales inform other types of narrative (in literature and film). Most of the seminar (8 ½ weeks) will focus on traditional magic tales and how they function not only in Euro-American but also non-Western cultures; during the last two weeks of the course (3 ½ weeks), we will examine how magic tales are adopted and adapted in Western literature and film. We will seek to understand how and why magic tales are composed and performed--how and why they resonate so profoundly and evoke such intriguing layers of cultural, social, and psychological meaning. Our goal in this seminar is to “read” the “texts” of magic tales and to understand how and why they so vividly express the human experience.

SYLLABUS

INTRODUCTION

Thur. 12 Sept.

“Little Red Riding Hood,” 11-13, *The Classic Fairy Tales: Texts, Criticism* [CFT]

MAGIC TALES: STORIES AND CRITICAL WRITINGS

Tues. 17 Sept.

CFT, Maria Tatar, “Introduction” (xi-xxvi)

CFT, “Introduction: Little Red Riding Hood” (5-14); “The Story of Grandmother” (14-16);

“Little Red Riding Hood” (16-18); “Little Red Cap” (18-21); “The False Grandmother” (21-22); “The Tale of the Tiger Woman” (26-28); “Tsélané and the Marimo” (28-29)
Zohar Shavit, “The Concept of Childhood and Children’s Folktales; Test Case: ‘Little Red Riding Hood’” (317-32), E-Reserves
Bruno Bettelheim, “The Struggle for Meaning” (269-73), E-Reserves

Thur. 19 Sept.

Steven Swann Jones, “Preface” (xi-xvii); Ch. 1, “The Folklore Origin and the Definition of the Fairy Tale” (1-18), *The Fairy Tale: The Magic Mirror of the Imagination* [SSJ]
CFT, “Introduction: Tricksters” (229-35); “Hansel and Gretel” (236-41); “Fulano de Tal and his Children” (242-44); “The Juniper Tree” (245-52)
Iona & Peter Opie, “The Three Wishes” (199-200), *The Classic Fairy Tales*, E-Reserves
CFT, Lewis Hyde, from “Slipping the Trap of Appetite” (456-59)
Bettelheim, “Hansel and Gretel” (159-66), *The Uses of Enchantment*, E-Reserves

Tues. 24 Sept.

SSJ, Ch. 2, “The Thematic Core of Fairy Tales” (19-31)
CFT, Tricksters, cont’d “The Rose Tree” (252-54); “The Singing Bones” (254-55); “Little Thumbling” (255-63); “Vasilisa the Fair” (263-69); “Momotaro, or the Peach Boy” (270-72); “Jack and the Beanstalk” (272-77)
CFT, Maria Tatar, from “Female Tricksters as Double Agents” (459-67)

Thur. 26 Sept.

SSJ, Ch. 3, “The Literary History of the Fairy Tale” (32-43)
CFT, “Introduction: Sleeping Beauty” (117-22); “The Sleeping Beauty in the Wood” (123-30); “Briar Rose” (130-33)
CFT, Robert Darnton, “Peasants Tell Tales: The Meaning of Mother Goose” (363-74); Marina Warner, from “The Old Wives’ Tale” (405-14)

Tues. 1 Oct.

CFT, “Introduction: Beauty and the Beast” (30-39), “Beauty and the Beast” (39-50); “The Pig King” (50-55), “The Frog King or Iron Heinrich” (55-58), “Urashima the Fisherman” (74-77), “The Enchanted Frog” (77-79); “The Swan Maiden” (79-80); “Chonguita” (80-83); “The Dog Bride” (82-83)
CFT, Donald Hasse, from “Yours, Mine, or Ours? Perrault, the Brothers Grimm, and the Ownership of Fairy Tales” (435-46)
Christine A. Jones & Jennifer Schacker, “The Worn-Out Dancing Shoes” (242-45), “The Maiden without Hands” (252-56), *Marvelous Transformations*, E-Reserves

Thur. 3 Oct.

SSJ, “Bibliographic Essay” (119-40)
CFT, “Introduction: Snow White” (84-92), “The Young Slave” (92-95); “Snow White” (95-102)
CFT, Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar, “Snow White and her Wicked Stepmother” (387-93);
Karen Rowe, “To Spin a Yarn: The Female Voice in Folklore and Fairy Tale” (393-405)
Antti Aarne and Stith Thompson, “The Types of the Folktale” (373-78), E-Reserves

Tues. 8 Oct.

SSJ, Ch. 4, "Fairy Tales with Male Protagonists" (44-63)

Opies, "The Frog Prince" (238-44), "Rumpelstiltskin" (253-59), E-Reserves

Assen Nicoloff, "Three Brothers and the Golden Apple," "The Dragon and the Tsar's Daughter" (22-31); #25, "The Bear's Son" (78-83), *Bulgarian Folktales*, E-Reserves

David Cooper, "The Enchanted Forest" (3-10), "The Spinner of Gold" (21-25), *Traditional Slovak Folktales*, E-Reserves

Thur. 10 Oct.

SSJ, Ch. 5, "Fairy Tales with Female Protagonists" (64-90)

Opies, "The Fairy" (129-32), "The King of Colchester's Daughter" (207-10), E-Reserves

Jones and Schacker, "East o' the Sun and West o' the Moon," (276-83); "Tatterhood" (284-88); "Little Annie the Goose Girl" (288-90), E-Reserves

CFT, Hans-Jörg Uther, from "The Types of International Folktales" (491-97)

See also <http://oaks.nvg.org/folktale-types.html>

Tues. 15 Oct.

CFT, "Introduction: Cinderella" (139-45); "Rhodopis" (145-46); "Yeh-hsien" (146-48); "Cinderella" (148-53); "Cinderella" (153-54); "Donkeyskin" (154-62); "The Three Gowns" (162-66); "Catskin" (166-69); "The Story of the Black Cow" (169-71); "Cinderella" (171-75); "The Princess in the Suit of Leather" (175-81)

CFT, Ernst Bloch, "The Fairy Tale Moves on Its Own in Time" (349-50); from "Better Castles in the Sky at the County Fair and Circus, in Fairy Tales and Colportage" (351-55); Vladimir Propp, from "Folklore and Literature" (498-502); from "Morphology of the Folktale" (502-7)

Thur. 17 Oct.

"Cinderella" (57-59), *Folktales Told around the World*, ed. Richard Dorson, E-Reserves

Alessandro Falassi, "Cinderella in Tuscany" (276-93), *Cinderella: A Casebook*, ed. Alan Dundes, E-Reserves

William Bascom, "Cinderella in Africa" (148-68), Dundes, E-Reserves

Photeine Bourboulis, "The Bride-Show Custom and the Fairy-Story of Cinderella" (98-109), Dundes, E-Reserves

"Cap o' Rushes" (57-62), *English Fairy Tales*, ed. Joseph Jacobs, E-Reserves

"Tale of a Foolish Brother and of a Wonderful Bush" (55-61), *Gypsy Folk Tales*, ed. Diane Tong, E-Reserves

Margaret Mills, "A Cinderella Variant in the Context of a Muslim Women's Ritual" (179-92), Dundes, E-Reserves

Tues. 22 Oct.

CFT, "Introduction: Bluebeard" (182-88); "Bluebeard" (188-93); "Fitcher's Bird" (193-95); "The Robber Bridegroom" (196-98); "Mr. Fox" (199-201); "Mr. Bluebeard" (201-2); "The Forbidden Room" (203-4); "Mast-Truan" (204-5)

Cristina Bacchilega, Ch. 5, "'Be Bold, Be Bold, But Not Too Bold': Double Agents and

Bluebeard's Plot," *Postmodern Fairy Tales* (103-12: to "... death drive."), E-Reserves

Thur. 24 Oct. Storytelling; Guest storyteller: Susan Danoff

Short Paper #1 due by midnight--via email

FALL BREAK 26 Oct. - 3 Nov.

Tues. 5 Nov.

Jack Haney, from Ch. 6, "The Complete Russian Folktale: An Overview": "Wondertales" (92-106), *An Introduction to the Russian Folktale*, E-Reserves

Jones and Schacker, "Baba Yaga" (295-96); "The Maiden Tsar" (296-99); "Danilo the Luckless" (299-302), E-Reserves

Haney, #16, "Maria Morevna" (30-37); #35, "Sivko-Burko" (98-101); #39, "The Rejuvenating Apples" (115-18); #254, "Marko the Rich and Vasilii the Unlucky" (345-50); #24, "The Petrified Tsarevna" (67-70); #28, "The Mare's Head" (81-83); #20, "Ivan Tsarevich and the Gray Wolf" (44-56); *An Anthology of Russian Folktales*, E-Reserves

Thur. 7 Nov.

Margaret Beissinger, "Serbian Tales" (902-5), *Folktales and Fairy Tales: Traditions and Texts from around the World*, 2nd ed., Vol. 3, ed. Anne E. Duggan & Donald Haase, E-Reserves

Vuk Stefanović Karadžić, "A Castle Floating between Earth and Sky" (14-16), "The Nine Magic Pea-Hens" (25-34), *Nine Magic Pea-Hens and Other Serbian Folk Tales*, E-Reserves

Karadžić, "The Ram with the Golden Fleece" (102-10), *Serbian Folk Songs, Fairy Tales and Proverbs*, ed. Maximillian A. Mügge,

<https://archive.org/stream/serbianfolksongs00mg#page/102/mode/2up>

Andrew Lang, "Rapunzel" (282-85), *The Red Fairy Book*, E-Reserves

CFT, Max Lüthi, "Abstract Style" (375-87); Tatar, from "Sex and Violence: The Hard Core of Fairy Tales" (446-56)

Tues. 12 Nov.

Kirin Narayan, "Preface" (ix-xv), Part I: "Women's Ritual Tales," selections, *Mondays on the Dark Night of the Moon*

Thur. 14 Nov.

Narayan, Part II: "Winter Tales," selections, "Afterword"

LITERARY MAGIC TALES

Tues. 19 Nov.

CFT, "Introduction: Hans Christian Andersen" (278-83); "The Little Mermaid" (283-300), "The Little Match Girl" (301-3); "The Girl who Trod on the Loaf" (303-9); "The Red Shoes" (309-14); "The Emperor's New Clothes" (314-18); "The Nightingale" (318-25)

Jack Zipes, "Hans Christian Andersen and the Discourse of the Dominated," *Fairy Tales and the Art of Subversion* (71-96), E-Reserves

Thur. 21 Nov. Visit to Cotsen Children's Library (Firestone Library)

Tues. 26 Nov.

CFT, "Introduction: Oscar Wilde" (326-31), "The Selfish Giant" (331-34); "The Happy Prince" (334-41); "The Nightingale and the Rose" (341-46)

Wilde, "The Birthday of the Infanta," E-Reserves

Jones and Schacker, Mary de Morgan, "A Toy Princess" (333-41), E-Reserves

Zipes, "Oscar Wilde's Tales of Illumination" (167-73), *When Dreams Came True*, E-Reserves

THANKSGIVING BREAK 27 Nov. – 1 Dec.

MAGIC TALES (PARODIES) IN LITERATURE

Tues. 3 Dec.

SSJ, Ch. 6, "The Fairy Tale Influence in *The Wizard of Oz*, *The Cat in the Hat*, and *Where the Wild Things Are* (91-109)

CFT, Roald Dahl, "Little Red Riding Hood and the Wolf" (23-24); "The Three Little Pigs" (24-26); Gabriel Garcia Márquez, "Sleeping Beauty and the Airplane" (133-37); Wilfred Owen, "The Sleeping Beauty" (138); Angela Carter, "The Tiger's Bride" (58-74); Anne Sexton, "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs" (102-6); Neil Gaiman, "Snow, Glass, Apples" (106-16)

James Thurber, "The Little Girl and the Wolf" (16-17), E-Reserves

Thur. 5 Dec.

CFT, Margaret Atwood, "Bluebeard's Egg" (205-27); Edna St. Vincent Millay, "Bluebeard" (228)

Jones and Schacker, Nalo Hopkinson, "The Glass Bottle Trick" (394-404), E-Reserves

CFT, Walter Benjamin, from "The Storyteller: Reflections on the Works of Nikolai Leskov" (356-63); Bacchilega, from "The Fairy Tale Web" (468-80)

Atwood, "Of Souls as Birds" in *Mirror, Mirror on the Wall: Women Writers Explore their Favorite Fairy Tales*, ed. Kate Bernheimer (22-38), E-Reserves

Cristina Bacchilega, Ch. 5, "'Be Bold, Be Bold, But Not Too Bold': Double Agents and Bluebeard's Plot," *Postmodern Fairy Tales* (112-19: "Because the struggle . . . alien territories."), E-Reserves

MAGIC TALES IN FILM

Tues. 10 Dec.

Walt Disney, *Snow White and the Seven Dwarves*, *Sleeping Beauty*, *Cinderella*, *Beauty and the Beast*, or *The Little Mermaid* OR one of the more recent (live-action) versions: *Ever-After: A Cinderella Story*, *Cinderella*, or *Beauty and the Beast* (choose one), Video Reserves

Joan Gould, Ch. 2, "Snow White: Tempted by the Witch's Wares: The Disney Movie vs. the Grimms' Fairy Tale" (21-38); Ch. 7, "Sleeping Beauty, American Style: How Walt Disney Changed the Meaning" (127-32), *Spinning Straw into Gold*, E-Reserves

CFT, Jessica Tiffin, from "Magical Illusion: Fairy-Tale Film" (481-91); Zipes, "Breaking the Disney Spell" (414-35)

Thur. 12 Dec.

A film adaptation (parody) of the magic tale genre: *Into the Woods* or *Shrek* (choose one), Video Reserves

Zipes, “The Radical Morality of Rats, Fairies, Wizards, and Ogres: Taking Children’s Literatures Seriously” (206-31), *Breaking the Magic Spell*, E-Reserves

Short Paper #2 due by midnight—via email

REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING

Students will be expected to participate in class discussions on assigned reading and topics—20%.

Each student will lead two class discussions--one on a particular magic tale and the other on a short critical text--20%.

Two short paper assignments (1500 words)--focused readings of magic tales--due on Oct. 25 and Dec. 12—30%.

A take-home final exam (ca. 2000 words)—due on last day of take-home exams—30%.

REQUIRED READING

The following books should be purchased (and are also on 3-hour reserve at Firestone Library):

Steven Swann Jones, *The Fairy Tale: The Magic Mirror of the Imagination*

Kirin Narayan, *Mondays on the Dark Night of the Moon: Himalayan Foothill Folktales*

Maria Tatar, *The Classic Fairy Tales: Texts, Criticism*, 2nd Edition

All other texts are on E-RESERVES (on Blackboard).