D

Magic
Transformation

Motifs D0–D699

The very broad category of transformation is one of the most fundamental motifs in storytelling. A basic impulse in telling and listening to stories is a desire for escape from the everyday world, and stories involving magical transformations, while providing imaginative escape for the audience, often involve literal escape of the characters, as when someone changes from one form into another to avoid being caught by a pursuer (D671, “Transformation flight”). In the case of voluntary transformation, the process is called shape-shifting; when one is transformed by another, it is called enchantment or bewitchment.

In tales the world over, people shape-shift into the opposite sex (D10), a higher or lower station in life (D20), a different race (D30), a different size (D55), into the likeness of another person (D40), into an older person (D56.1) or a child (D55.2.5). A handsome man can become hideous (D52.1) and an ugly man can become handsome (D52.2). In addition, people transform into various animals (D100–D199) and objects (D200–D299). The Motif-Index also covers animals transforming into people (D300–D399), other forms of transformation (D400–D499), the means of transformation (D500–D599), and miscellaneous transformation incidents (D600–D699).

Thompson points out that transformation and reincarnation are related. “A person or animal or object changes its form and appears in a new guise, and we call that transformation; but if the living being dies between the two stages, we have reincarnation. Yet in spite of this clear theoretical distinction, we have a great interchange of motifs between these two categories” (1977, 258).

In the Motif-Index Thompson lists a motif for “Enchanted person” (D5), remarking, “No real difference seems to exist between transformation and
enchantment. Unlike a transformed person, however, a bewitched or enchanted person may retain his original physical form, but may be affected mentally or morally.

Examples of transformations in folklore and literature are so numerous that this essay can mention only a fraction of them.

The motif of a person being transformed by a witch or other malevolent figure into an animal is a familiar one to all readers of European fairy tales. In "The Frog Prince" (AT 440), a prince is changed into a frog; in "Snow White and Rose Red," a prince is changed into a bear; in "Beauty and the Beast" (AT 425C), a prince is changed into an unidentified animal. In the Odyssey, the enchantress Circe transforms Odysseus's men into pigs, but changes them back into men again when Odysseus requests it (Book 10).

In Islamic folklore, the jinn were shape-shifters, thought of as supernatural creatures with bodies of flame, often traveling about as whirlwinds (Irwin 1994, 203–204). An Ifrit (powerful jinn) who suspects the narrator of "The Second Kalander's Tale" in the Arabian Nights of cuckold him asks his victim to choose "into what shape I shall bewitch thee; wilt thou be a dog, or an ass or an ape?" The narrator declines to choose, and the Ifrit "set me down on a mountain, and taking a little dust, over which he muttered some magical words, sprinkled me therewith saying, 'Quit that shape and take thou the shape of an ape!'"

Popular characters in Hawaiian folklore are the *kupua*, nonhuman creatures who have extraordinary powers, including the ability to take human shape and "transform themselves, stretch or shrink themselves, fly through the air, take giant strides over the land and perform great feats of strength" (Puiguant 1967, 53).

**REPEATED TRANSFORMATION**

In one of the most spectacular instances of transformation, a person rapidly transforms into one form after another (D610, "Repeated transformation"). This striking image occurs in the Odyssey when Proteus, the Old Man of the Sea, changes into a lion, a serpent, a leopard, a boar, running water, and a tree as Menelaos and his men hold him, demanding to know how they are to find their way home. The goddess Eidothea tells Menelaos:

> As soon as you see him [Proteus] lying down, you must summon up your strength and courage and hold him fast there despite his struggles and his endeavours to elude you. He will seek to foil you by taking the shape of every creature that moves on earth, and of water and of portentous fire; but

you must hold him unflinchingly and you must press the harder. When at length he puts away all disguise and questions you in the shape he had when you saw him resting, then cease from your constraint; then, O king, let the ancient sage go free and ask him which of the gods is thwarting you and how you are to reach home again over the teeming ocean. (Book 4)

Another Old Man of the Sea in Greek mythology, Nereus, also shape-shifts when the hero Herakles holds him fast and asks him the way to the Garden of the Hesperides.

An example of repeated transformation is found in the British ballad "Tam Lin" (Child 39), in which Tam Lin, held captive by the fairies, enlists the aid of a mortal lover to disenchant him by holding him fast while he undergoes rapid repeated transformations (D757, "Disenchantment by holding enchanted person during successive transformations"). In version A, he tells the girl that he shall be turned into "an esk [newt], adder, bear, lion, red hot gaud [bead] of iron, and finally a burning gleed," which she must throw into the well, and he will regain his human form (Child 1965, 342). Child gives an example of repeated transformation in a Greek tale that was taken down from the recitation of an old Cretan peasant between 1820 and 1830, which echoes the myth of Thetis and Peleus. A peasant who falls in love with one of the Nereids asks an old woman how he can win her and is told he should seize her by the hair and hold on, without fear, while she metamorphoses into various shapes. The instant he touches her, she changes shape, becoming a dog, a snake, a camel, and fire. The repeated transformation motif also occurs in folktales known as *The Magician and His Pupil* (AT 325), originally from India and found in Europe as well as North Africa (Thompson 1977, 69).

Repeated transformation is sometimes combined with the transformation flight motif (D671); these examples involve a girl taking successive shapes in order to flee from a suitor, but the suitor changes shape to follow and he catches her. An early example appears in the Indian *Brihadaranyaka-Upanishad*. In the beginning is self, in the shape of a person. He says, "I am," but felt no pleasure. Wishing for a second being, he caused himself to separate into two pieces, male and female. He approached his mate, but she transformed herself into a cow, but he became a bull and united with her, thus cows were born. She became a mare, and he a stallion, and thus horses were born. She became an eue, and he a ram, and thus sheep were born. In like manner he created everything that exists in pairs, down to the ants" (*Upanishads* 1897, vol. 2, Adhyaya 1, Brahmana 4, stanzas 1–4).

Child cites examples of songs with the transformation flight motif from France, Greece, Romania, Moravia, Poland, and Serbia (1965, 399–403). He gives the text for one version from Scotland, *The Twy Magicians* (no. 44), in
which the girl becomes a dove, and her suitor follows her as another dove; then she becomes an eel and he becomes a trout; then she becomes a duck, and he a drake; she becomes a hare, and he a hound; she becomes a mare, and he a saddle. Finally she becomes a silken plaid. “And stretched upon a bed, / And he became a green covering, / And gain’d her maidenhead.”

COMBAT TRANSFORMATION

Sometimes combatants will change form while engaged in battle (D615, “Transformation combat. Fight between contestants who strive to outdo each other in successive transformations”). A vivid example occurs in “The Second Kalandar’s Tale” from the Arabian Nights in the battle between the Ifrit and the king’s daughter Sitt al-Husn. She undertakes to disenchant a young man who has been transformed into an ape, by fighting the Ifrit, who first changes into a lion.

Then said he, “Take what thou hast brought on thyself;” and the lion opened his jaws and rushed upon her; but she was too quick for him; and, plucking a hair from her head, waved it in the air muttering over it the while; and the hair straightway became a trenchant sword-blade, wherewith she smote the lion and cut him in twain. Then the two halves flew away in air and the head changed to a scorpion and the Princess became a huge serpent and set upon the accursed scorpion, and the two fought, coiling and uncoiling, a stiff fight for an hour at least. Then the scorpion changed to a vulture and the serpent became an eagle which set upon the vulture, and hunted him for an hour’s time, till he became a black tom-cat, which mauled and grinned and spat. Thereupon the eagle changed into a piebald wolf and these two battled in the palace for a long time, when the cat, seeing himself overcome, changed into a worm and crept into a huge red pomegranate, which lay beside the jetting fountain in the midst of the palace hall. Whereupon the pomegranate swelled to the size of a watermelon in air; and, falling upon the marble pavement of the palace, broke to pieces, and all the grins fell out and were scattered about till they covered the whole floor. Then the wolf shook himself and became a snow-white cock, which fell to picking up the grins purposeing not to leave one; but by doom of destiny one seed rolled to the fountain-edge and there lay hid. The cock fell to crowing and clapping his wings and signing to us with his beak as if to ask, “Are any grains left?” . . . Then he ran over all the floor till he saw the grain which had rolled to the fountain-edge, and rushed eagerly to pick it up when behold, it sprang into the midst of the water and became a fish and dived to the bottom of the basin. Thereupon the cock changed to a big fish, and plunged in after the other, and the two disappeared for a while and lo! We heard loud shrieks and cries of pain which made us tremble. After this the Ifrit rose out of the water, and he was as a burning flame; casting fire and smoke from his mouth and eyes and nostrils.

And immediately the Princess likewise came forth from the basin and she was one live coal of flaming lowe [a blaze]; and these two, she and he, battled for the space of an hour, until their fires entirely compassed them about and their thick smoke filled the palace. (Burton 2001, 83–84)

An example from ancient Egyptian myth involves the son of Ra, Horus, who defends his father against plotters seeking to overthrow him. Horus changes into a winged sun disk and flies at the enemy, routing them.

The enemy were, however, not yet defeated, for they changed themselves into crocodiles and hippopotami and attacked the boat of Ra himself. Again, Horus and his followers routed them, harpooning them from the boat. Once more assuming the form of a winged sundisk and setting himself at the prow of the boat, Horus pursued the survivors throughout Upper and Lower Egypt inflicting terrible defeats upon them. (Ions 1968, 68)

When Herakles wrestles Akhelous, Akhelous shape-shifts into a bull, but Herakles knocks off one of his horns and defeats him. In the Finnish Kalevala, Lemminkainen changes into an eagle:

Thereupon young Lemminkainen,
Handsome Islander and hero,
Changing both his form and features,
Clad himself in other raiment,
Changing to another body,
Quick became a mighty eagle,
Soared aloft on wings of magic. (Rune 28)

THE TRANSFORMATIONAL BEDTRICK

In the area of seduction, myth and folklore are filled with examples of gods and mortals changing shape in order to make love to the object of their desire (D658.2, “Transformation to husband’s (lover’s) form to seduce woman”; D659.7, “Transformation: wife to mistress. Transformed wife substitutes for husband’s mistress”). Wendy Doniger explains what a “bedtrick” is: “You go to bed with someone you think you know, and when you wake up you discover that it was someone else—another man or another woman, or a man instead of a woman, or a woman instead of a man, or a god, or a snake, or a foreigner or alien, or a complete stranger, or your own wife or husband, or your mother or father” (2001, 1). An example from Hindu mythology involves the goddess Parvati, who transforms herself on occasion in order to trick her husband, the god Shiva. “Often she transforms herself
into, or disguises herself as, a seductive foreign woman, a woman of low class, or an Outcast woman” (2001, 17).

LOATHLY LADIES

The motif of the loathly lady (D732, “Man disenchanteth loathsome woman by embracing her”) was popular in medieval Europe; a version was immortalized by Chaucer in “The Wife of Bath’s Tale.” A knight who is under penalty of death unless he finds the answer to the question “What do women most desire?” meets an old hag who says she knows the answer and will tell him, if he will marry her. He agrees; she gives him the answer: “to have mastery over their husbands.” He reluctantly goes to bed with her, and she gives him a choice: to have her as she is, “a true, humble wife,” or to have her young and fair and “take your aventure of the repair that shall be to your house by cause of me.” The distracted knight tells her to choose and thus, by giving her mastery, breaks the spell she was under, and she transforms back to her original young and beautiful form. (In Chaucer’s The Wedding of Sir Gawain and Dame Ragnell and in John Gower’s Tale of Florent, the choice is different: whether to have a wife ugly by day and fair by night, or vice versa (D621.3, “Ugly by day, fair by night”).

Other stories involve a woman being disenchanted from an animal form if a man will kiss her three times, each time when she is in the form of a different terrifying animal (D735.2, “The three kisses”) (Thompson 1977, 259). There is also the motif of the loathly bridegroom (D733), Cross-referenced is the motif of magic beautification (D1860), the transformation of a plain person into one of great splendor, as in the Cinderella tales.

NORTH AMERICA AND AFRICA


As for transformation motifs in Africa, Schmidt remarks:

In European tales innocent persons frequently are transformed by evil forces into animals or objects, and one of the main topics is how heroes contrive their disenchantment. Enchantment and disenchantment are comparatively rare in African magic tales. Every now and then heroes as well as their antagonists can change their form. When the young hunter flees from the supernatural elephants he turns himself into various animals and the warthog who wants to have a human wife becomes a handsome young man. But it is exceptional that like in European tales a wicked person enchants heroes or heroines. (2001, 266)

Schmidt goes on to speculate that compared to African tales, in which the heroes tend to be killed outright by their adversaries, enchantment in European tales may be a metaphor for death, with the heroes returning to life by being turned back into their human form, while the African must grow back whole after part of his body is put into a calabash (266–267).

LITERATURE

Metamorphoses, written by Ovid in the first century CE, is a long work whose many stories all involve some sort of transformation. There are numerous stories from Greek myth involving shape-shifting gods, or mortals being changed into objects such as trees or rocks or spiders. While the colorful tales from myth are entertaining, there seems to be a more serious side to the theme of metamorphosis. In the last section, Ovid relates the teachings of Pythagoras, who speaks of different and ongoing kinds of change in the world, including geological (“For my part, I would have thought that nothing lasts for long with the same appearance. So the ages changed from gold to iron, and so the fortunes of places have altered. I have seen myself what was once firm land, become the sea: I have seen earth made from the waters: and seashells lie far away from the ocean, and an ancient anchor has been found on a mountainside”) and political (“So we see times change, and these nations acquiring power and those declining”) (Book XV).

Apuleius’s The Golden Ass (ca. 150) also deals with metamorphosis; when Lucius, the protagonist, sees a witch transform herself into a bird by taking a potion, and he tries to copy her, but becomes a donkey instead. The book has other references to metamorphosis as Lucius strives to turn back into a man.

Transformation is the primary theme of Shakespeare’s comedy A Midsummer Night’s Dream (1595).

A statue comes to life in the Don Juan legends of European folklore, first appearing in literature in Tirso de Molina’s 1616 play, El Burlador de Sevilla. The statue is that of the commander of Seville, which animates in order to punish his daughter’s seducer. Molière’s play Don Juan, ou le Festin de Pierre (1665) and Mozart’s opera Don Giovanni (1787) also use this theme (D435.1.1, “Transformation: statue comes to life”).

George Bernard Shaw wrote the play Pygamalion (1912) based on the Greek
myth of the sculptor of the same name who falls in love with his statue, which is transformed to a living woman by the goddess Aphrodite in response to Pygmalion’s prayers. The play, which features the transformation of a Cockney flower girl into a refined, polished young woman, was adapted as a musical, My Fair Lady (1956) by Frederick Loewe and Alan Jay Lerner.

In the coming-of-age novel or Bildungsroman—for example, Dickens’s David Copperfield—we see young people undergoing the metamorphosis into adults. In Dickens’s fairy tale—like A Christmas Carol, the elderly Scrooge is transformed from a selfish, unsociable miser into an engaged, caring member of society after being taken on fantastic journeys into the past, present, and future by a series of divine tutors.

As Edinger remarks, “Almost any long or complex work of literature deals with time and change, which are themes strongly associated with metamorphosis” (1988, 843). And Campbell states that in looking back on our lives we find in the end that we have experienced “a series of standard metamorphoses” common to all human beings (1968, 13).

Jane Garry

See also: Bewitching; Entrance into Girl’s (Man’s) Room (Bed) by Trick Flight (Magic).

REFERENCES


Flight (Magic)

Motifs D670–D674

Carl Jung suggests that the flight motif is a kind of inversion of the heroic quest theme, although both lead to the same end: “Instead of the quest we have flight, which nonetheless appears to win the same reward as adventurers valiantly sought, for in the end the hero marries the king’s daughter” (Jung 1968, 229). Marie-Louise von Franz sees the magic flight motif as representing an attempt to escape from the unconscious so as not to be consumed by it (von Franz 1982).

The magic flight motif (D670) usually appears in two main forms: the “Transformation flight” (D671) and the “Obstacle flight” (D672). In the transformation flight, those beings pursued (usually by an ogre or other monsterlike figure) shape-shift into another form in order to avoid being caught. In the obstacle flight, the fleeing persons toss behind them objects that delay the chaser. AT 313, The Girl as Helper in the Hero’s Flight, is a very common tale type that involves flight by the hero and his helper, during which they may both transform themselves and throw obstacles.

THE TRANSFORMATION FLIGHT

The transformation flight motif is extremely widespread. Thompson cites it in Irish, English, Greek, Jewish, Indian, Japanese, Philippine, Eskimo, North American, South American, and African collections. The motif has several subtypes. In the first (D671.0.1, “Fugitive transforms self to stone. Thrown to safety by pursuer”), the fleer transforms into stone in order to escape and is consequently thrown to safety by the chaser. It appears to be an African
redacted and has been collected from the Zulu, Bechuana, Gan, and in Northern Rhodesia. In the second (D671.0.2, “Fugitive transformed by helper to escape detection”), a helper transforms the fugitive in order to ensure escape.

Ancient Greek mythology offers some of the earliest recorded instances of the transformation flight motif. Daphne’s flight from Apollo represents a celebrated example of a transformation associated with the act of fleeing. When the nymph attempts to escape from the advances of the god Apollo (who became obsessed with Daphne after being struck by Cupid’s arrow), she prays to her father, a minor god, to preserve her chastity. He responds by turning her into a laurel tree. Among others, the Roman Ovid’s epic *Metamorphoses* (ca. 2–17 CE) and Giovannii Boccaccio’s *idyll Il ninfael fiesolano* (fourteenth century) have included this episode. Ovid’s work in particular includes a number of stories in which a male god pursues a female mortal (or one of lower status, at any rate). Other pursuit-transformation tales include the following: Syrinx seeks refuge in a river from the god Pan and turns into a reed, the nymph Arethusa is transformed into a fountain while trying to flee from the river god Alpheus, Pricus changes into a bird while attempting to resist Circe’s advances, and Artemis becomes a hind to evade Otus and Ephialtes (Daemmrich and Daemmrich 1987; Drabble 1995; Edinger 1988; Elkhadem 1981).

**THE OBSTACLE FLIGHT**

The obstacle flight (D672) is, according to Thompson, “one of the most widely distributed motifs in folk-lore” (1929, 333); indeed, it is “literally world-wide” (1977, 60). For example, the obstacle flight motif appears in Native American tradition “not only in European borrowings, but in tales . . . where it seems to be quite free from such influences. It is known both in Siberia and in South America, and the theory seems not unreasonable that it came to America from Asia a long time ago” (Thompson 1977, 349).

The story of Jason and Medea, an example of AT 313, *The Girl as Helper in the Hero’s Flight*, includes a grisly kind of obstacle flight: the body parts of Medea’s brother Apsyrtos are thrown into the sea. In an ancient Egyptian tale, “The Two Brothers,” Anup is married, while his brother Batu is not. When Anup’s wife accuses Batu of trying to seduce her (actually she tried to seduce him), Batu’s cow warns him to flee. Batu calls for help to the sun god, who creates a stream full of crocodiles to impede Anup’s pursuit (Thompson 1977). In a story from Halmahera, Indonesia, a giant’s son and his companions, in fleeing from his father, throw salt behind them, which becomes an ocean that delays the giant, though finally he drinks it up. When he again comes after them, they throw ashes behind them, blinding the giant. He continues to pursue and they continue to throw a variety of objects (Dixon 1916, 236–237). In a Chinese tale called “The Bank of the Celestial Stream,” a swan maiden tale (D361.1, “Swan Maiden”; F302.4.2, “Fairy comes into man’s power when he steals her wings”), a version that is dated to the second century BCE tells of a fleeing wife who uses a golden hairpin to draw a line in the sky which becomes a long, celestial river (Eberhard 1965, 43–44).

**Atalanta**

Listed under Captives and Fugitives (Escapes and Pursuits) is Motif R231, “Obstacle flight—Atalanta type. Objects are thrown back which the pursuer stops to pick up while the fugitive escapes.” In these cases, the objects become not obstacles but tempting distractions. In the myth of Atalanta, the person throwing the objects (Melanion) is not being pursued but is engaged in a footrace with the beautiful Atalanta. She has pledged to remain a virgin and will only marry the man who can defeat her in a race. When Melanion prays to Aphrodite to help him win the race, the goddess gives him three golden apples to throw during the race. Atalanta picks them up and loses time, enabling Melanion to win (H331.5.1.1, “Apple thrown in race with bride. DISTRACTS girl’s attention, and as she stops to pick it up, suitor passes her”).

Other manifestations of the Atalanta-type obstacle flight occur in the arrow chain stories of Coastal and Plateau tribes of North America. For example, in a Tlingit tale (“The Arrow Chain”), a heron makes an arrow chain to ascend to heaven; he rescues his friend and leaves a magic spruce cone to answer for him while they escape. To delay the moon’s pursuit, the hero tosses a piece of devil’s club (a shrub) that turns into a big patch of devil’s club, a rose bush becomes a huge thicket of roses, and a grindstone becomes a large cliff. In a Greenland Eskimo tale, “The Eagle and Whale Husbands,” a girl who weds a whale is rescued by her brothers who arrive in a boat; during the flight she throws first her outer, then her inner, and finally her long jacket in the whale’s path. These maneuvers detain him so that they safely reach the shore. In a Blackfoot Plains Indian tale, “The Bear-Woman,” an enraged woman transforms herself into a bear and pursues several children who delay her first by sprinkling a handful of water, which becomes a great lake, and then by throwing a porcupine tail (a hairbrush), which turns into a large thicket (Thompson 1929, 1977).

**THE GIRL AS HELPER IN THE HERO’S FLIGHT**

The magic flight also figures in the plotline of several *Märchen*. As mentioned above, Type 313, *The Girl as Helper in the Hero’s Flight*, typically begins with the hero somehow coming to the ogre’s home, where he is as-
signed impossible tasks (such as planting, growing, and harvesting a vast crop of grapes that must be made into wine by dinnertime) that he is able to complete with the supernatural assistance of the ogre’s daughter. It is the hero’s and the daughter’s decision to flee from the ogre that introduces episode III (The Flight). They may leave behind magic objects that answer for them and during their flight transform into various people and things in an effort to evade the ogre’s pursuit (D671, “Transformation flight”), or they may toss behind them magic objects that become obstacles in the ogre’s path (D672, “Obstacle Flight”) while they escape via a magic bridge. This folktale appears in the German Grimm and Russian Afanasyev folktale collections. It has been collected from a great many countries, but the most versions have been collected from Ireland—515 versions, according to Aarne and Thompson (1987). There are a number of subtypes of this tale, and the magic flight motifs figure in all but one (313J, The Sorceress and the Sunshine Fairy, in which the hero is saved by two figures, but apparently without means of a magic flight). Subtypes A, B, and C follow the same basic plot but with different introductory or closing episodes. In the other subtypes, the magic flight is followed by additional means of escape; for example, in 313D and E, the magic flight is followed by transformation into a bird—both these subtypes have a specifically Central-Eastern European distribution. In 313F and G, the characters escape in part due to the help of an animal; in 313F, Escape by Help of Sheep, a Polish variant, the character is aided by a sheep; while in 313G, Three Brothers Search for Stolen Cow, an Icelandic variant, an owl and a hair of a cow aid the escape. Type 313H, Flight from the Witch, includes both transformation and obstacle flights and appears in German and Russian tale collections (Aarne and Thompson 1987).

Thompson discusses the variety of ruses the fleeing couple can adopt in Type 313 to evade the ogre’s pursuit: “He sometimes finds only a rose and a thornbush, or a priest and a church... or [Or] they may throw behind them selves magic objects such as a comb, a stone, or a flint which become obstacles—a forest, a mountain, or a fire” (Thompson 1977, 89). This tale is immensely widespread and sometimes it is difficult to discern when a tale is really of this type or a parallel, because stories involving a supernatural woman, impossible tasks, and magic flight can be found in many disparate parts of the world without necessarily being derived from European sources. For example, a similar tale is found in the Ocean of Story, a nineteenth-century translation of an eleventh-century tale collection in Sanskrit. Thompson traces the appearance of this tale as unmistakably belonging to this type to the Renaissance, when it appeared in such collections as Giovanni Basile’s II Pentamerone (1634) (Aarne and Thompson 1987).

James Taggart sees the magic flight motif (in Spanish versions of Type 313) as expressing a woman’s efforts to break away from her natal family and transfer her loyalty to her new husband. He writes: “Ursula [the heroine’s name in this version] escapes from her father by casting away items that represent her former identity as a daughter as she develops her new identity as a wife. She leaves her spittle and casts away her comb, which becomes a thick fog blocking her father’s pursuit. She changes form, becoming a hermitage, and she makes Joaquin [the hero’s name in this version] the priest” (1990, 185).

**THE MAGICIAN AND HIS PUPIL**

In Type 325, The Magician and His Pupil, a father enrolls his son in a sorcerer’s school where the son learns magic secretly, allowing him to flee under various guises or by recourse to magic obstacles. Episode II (Magic Flight) is composed solely of the two main magic flight motifs: D671, “Transformation flight,” and D672, “Obstacle flight.” This folktale appears in the German Grimm (KHM 68), Danish Grundtvig (number 56), and Russian Afanasyev tale collections and has been collected in the most versions from Irish (189 versions) and Lithuanian (72 versions) tale-tellers (Aarne and Thompson 1987). Thompson calls it one of the most popular of the European Mächlen (1977).

**OTHER TALES**

Type 327, The Children and the Ogre, tells about children being abandoned by their parents in the woods. The children wander until they come to a witch’s gingerbread house (the children may end up at the house of the ogre-figure through some other means as well). The witch then tries to fatten the children so they can be eaten. Somehow the children escape, whether it be by burning the witch in her own oven or by means of a magic flight. In episode III (Escape), the children may escape via a transformation flight (D671) or an obstacle flight (D672) (Aarne and Thompson 1987).

In Type 314, The Youth Transformed to a Horse, a youth flees from the devil on an enchanted horse and throws magic objects behind him to impede the devil’s pursuit. Episode IV (Obstacle Flight) of this tale is composed of the obstacle flight motif (D672). Type 502, The Wild Man, is about a prince (aided by his faithful servant who, by way of a special horse, wins the hand of a princess. Episode II (Escape from the Wild Man) may include the obstacle flight motif (D672).

Kípple lists a tale called “Rasoaanzakomy and xa Mère” in a French collection of tales from Madagascar, in which a girl running away with a suitor scatters seeds along the way to detain her pursuing mother (1992, 415; Motif R231).
OTHER FLIGHT MOTIFS

In addition, Thompson lists three more magic flight motifs: “Reversed obstacle flight” (D673), in which magical obstacles appear to impede the fugitive’s flight (from Arabic tradition); “Magic flight with the help of a he-goat” (D674), in which the animal saves a girl that has been pledged to the devil (from Lithuanian tradition); and “Sea turns to ice to permit flight” (D675, from Eskimo tradition). The reversed obstacle flight figures in stories from Plateau (Nez Percé, Wasco, and Twana), Northern Pacific (Tsimshian), Plains (Pawnee), and Southeast (Cherokee) Native American groups (Thompson 1929).

In general, the magic flight motif can be employed whenever a pursuer must be evaded or at least delayed. Among its many uses, it can serve as a boon offered by the gods in a time of trouble or provide a means of establishing one’s own identity during a process of individuation.

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Magic Bodily Members: Human Eye and Hand

Motif D990

Throughout the ages, human bodily members have played significant roles in people’s cosmological and magical belief systems and daily lives. Of the human magic bodily members, the eye and the hand have been among the most widely spread motifs to disclose opposing power. The hand and the eye are thought to be imbued with cosmic, magical, and psychic forces that can be transmitted to human beings and other entities. Their widespread popularity is based on common experience people share when they become sensitive to their vitality and energetic power. In some contemporary cultures, particularly Arab societies, the hand and the eye represent archetypal notions of grace (baraka) and envy (husad), respectively (el-Aswad 2002).

Both the hand and the eye play a critical role in people’s everyday social interactions. They are vital parts of a person’s body that physically and symbolically connect him or her with the outside world. Though they are used differently, the eye and the hand, through glance and touch respectively, are crucial means of communication. The hand, as associated with touch, is an important means for establishing good relationships with others. In both traditional and modern societies, people clasp, shake, or wave their hands to salute each other. The hand is also used to express helpfulness; to “extend, lend, or give a hand” is to offer assistance, applause, or appreciation. Similarly, in specific social contexts, the eye is used idiomatically to express love and affection—to be in one’s eye—endearment (Z66.1) or to be the “apple of one’s eye.” Though eye contact is very important in the process of communication, cultures have
been observed to differ in the signaling of communicative intent by eye gaze (Argyle 2000). People in contemporary Arab cultures, for example, tend to make very short eye contacts rather than gazing or staring at each other since the hidden feelings of jealousy one might have toward another person are reflected in the eye (el-Aswad 2002).

THE EYE

As an omnipotent and all-seeing power, the image of the human eye has been regarded in many archaic cultures as an archetypal representation of deity as well as of the entire cosmos. In ancient Egypt, for example, the universe was portrayed as having two eyes, the sun and the moon, whose power could never be challenged by malevolent forces (Hocart 1942, 388). There were multiple eyes in ancient Egypt, including the Eye of Atum, the Eye of Ra, the Eye of Horus, and the Great Goddess Eye. According to one version of the Egyptian creation myth, Atum sends his Eye, udjat, in search of Shu, the god of air, and Tefnet, the goddess of humility. While the Eye is away, Atum replaces it with another, much brighter Eye. The first Eye, identified as a deity, is enraged at having been replaced and becomes a “vengeful and evil” Eye (A128.2.1.1). Ra appeases the eye by placing it on his brow in the form of the uraeus, the serpent, to govern the whole universe (Ions 1968, 27, 41). A variant of this myth tells that the Eye of Ra (a form of Atum) separates and, having its own mind, fails to return. Consequently, Shu and Tefnet are sent to bring it back. While resisting, the Eye sheds the tears from which humans are created. Humans, then, were born from the creator’s eye (A1211.4).

The Egyptian Eye, also a symbol for the Great Goddess, is identified as the Daughter of the High God and referred to as the Mother Goddess since all of mankind had come from her tears. This Egyptian Eye is also a source of danger, as represented in the myth of Osiris when Isis kills the son of the king of Byblos by a glance of her eye. As a destructive force, the eye of the High God is depicted as the Great Goddess of the universe in her terrible aspect (Clark 1959, 220). In early Indian mythology, the mother goddess, Shahtí, the source of all energy in the universe, appears in a variety of incarnations. As Sati and Parvati, she is loving and caring, but as the warrior goddesses Kali, she is most terrifying. As Kali, she “was portrayed as a black-skinned hag with pendulous breasts and a necklace of skulls or severed heads. Like Shiva, she had an all-seeing third eye in her forehead. Her male victims, made impotent without the goddess’ activating energy, had no way of resisting her attack” (Kinsley 1982, 150). In Japanese mythology, Amaterasu, the sun goddess, is born from the left eye of the primeval being Izanagi (Lurker 2000, 19–20).

As a representation of justice, might and good, the Eye of Horus had a special meaning to the ancients. Called the wadjet or udjat eye, it was ultimately worn as an amulet for magical protection. Horus is a symbol of the divine spirit as victor, so his fighting power is believed to come from the eye of the High God. In Egyptian mythology, the right eye is the original eye of the creator and the striking power of the High God in all his manifestations. The Eye of Horus, which gives life to Osiris, is called the “Slaughterer of the enemies of Horus.” Strictly it is Horus, the son of Isis and archetype of the pharaohs, who restores justice by overthrowing Set, the archetype of evil and injustice. Set “had red eyes and red hair, red being the colour of evil to the Egyptians” (Ions 1968, 63). During the fierce battle between Horus and his uncle Set, Horus castrates the latter, yet loses his left or weak eye (Ions 1968, 65), which becomes a symbol of sacrificial offering. It is interesting to note that in mythological contexts a “wound to the head or eye marks those who are sovereign (by virtue of royalty, sacrality, knowledge, magic, and/or righteousness) . . . and wounds to the lower body mark low-ranking persons, whose appetites for food or wealth may be perceived as ignoble or dangerous and who are reduced to positions of servile captivity” (Lincoln 1999, 131). One further wonders if this mythical event in which Horus loses his left eye provides a clue to the common belief among contemporary Egyptian folk that seeing a person with a blinded left eye, a’awar shamil, is a sign of shu’um, or a bad omen.

The eye has magical power that is simultaneously connected to psychological, natural, and cosmological spheres (el-Aswad 2002). The belief in the evil eye, the evil look, or the magic eye maintains that certain creatures, including men, animals, and other living (visible or invisible) entities, possess the magical power to cause negative, harmful, or bewitching effects by means of a glance (D2071, “evil eye”), including killing (D2071.2, “Person kills with evil eye”).

The evil eye is a power that has driven man to invent and use magic. The evil eye, also called the envious eye, is the source of a sickness transmitted by someone who is envious, even without intention. As related to the negative effect of the evil eye, envy is defined as the wish for a blessing to be removed from someone without any gain or benefit to oneself, as opposed to the wish for a blessing to be transferred from the other to oneself. Elworthy (1895) suggests that the evil eye is a sort of “animal magnetism” representing one of the hereditary and instinctive convictions of mankind.

It is common for people of the Middle East and other parts of the world to hang small plates and other round objects on the doors of their houses to distract the attention of envious people and prevent the negative effect of their eye. By distracting the glance’s attention, a person averts the evil eye (D2071.1.2.1). Round or eye-shaped objects, including the Arabic number
five, khamasah (connoting the five fingers of the hand), are taken to be symbols of good luck, protection, and group solidarity. In some cultures attuned to the evil eye belief, a person who praises a child immediately reduces the threat by touching or spitting on the child or uttering some phrases for the purpose of protection. The evil eye is averted by spitting (D207.1.1). In other cultures, children taken to public places are smeared with dirt. Sometimes the mother says something negative about her child to avert any possibility of envy. On happy occasions, such as weddings, salt is thrown into the air or on the gathering to avert the evil eye. Salt also acts as a guard against the evil eye (D207.1.4.3). In contemporary rural Egypt, the presence of the magical and psychic force of the malicious self is mediated through the indexicality of the eye, al-‘ain, or the inhaled breath of air or gasp, shuqqa. Women and children are believed to be vulnerable to the other’s dangerous self. To avoid the effect of the wicked self or the envious person, al-hasad, women deliberately cover themselves and their children or neglect their children’s appearance.

The concept of the evil eye reflects competition and conflict among members of a society. Usually those who are socially privileged are the main targets of the evil eye. Believing oneself to be the target of the evil eye, therefore, promotes self-esteem. Through an envious eye, however, a person can destroy himself as well as his assets as the returning glance of the evil eye blights the original glance (D207.1.5). In the Middle Eastern context, people use the simile “money (assets) is not to be envied by anybody but its owners.” Though the notion of envy resembles unhealthy relationships between members of the community, the envious eye as a negative psychic force goes beyond the social reality and imposes itself as an existing phenomenon. In contemporary rural Egyptian culture, two types of the eye are associated with states of both the cosmos and the person. On the one hand, there is the cool eye, ‘ain barda, which is harmless, and, on the other, there is the hot eye, ‘ain harra, which is evil or destructive, ‘ain radiya. To display good intentions when admiring someone, a person utters “may my eye be cool and cause you no harm,” ‘ainy ‘alaik barda. The envious eye is depicted as either the blue eye or the yellow eye, ‘ain saffrah. In the Arab culture, the color yellow denotes sickness, weakness, dryness, and impurity and is colloquially used to mean excrement (el-Aswad 2002).

Blue symbolizes protection and is cosmologically associated with the heavens. In this connection, people in various parts of the world use blue amulets to protect themselves and their property from the envious eye. Blue, then, is used as a guard against the evil eye (D207.1.4.1§, “Blue as guard against evil eye”). In addition to blue bead eye-charms, numerous other eye-design and hand-design amulets are used to repel the evil eye and counteract the malevolent, invisible psychic forces dispersed in the cosmos. The varied combinations of the iconographic elements include the eye, the hand, or both, such as the eye-in-the-hand. The eye is believed to watch not only the visible world as defined by culture, but also the invisible world that exists beyond human control. For example, the “all-seeing eye” located above the pyramid shown on the reverse side of the U.S. one-dollar bill suggests the importance of divine guidance in American society. It also means “the eye of God” (Campbell with Moyers 1988, 25).

**THE HAND**

Parts or products of the human body can cure disease (D1500). Miracles of physical healing by the hand of messiah are mentioned in the Bible. The hand is also seen as an embodied symbol of the benevolent, invisible (cosmic-heavenly) force, displaying itself through touch. The hand is a symbol of strength and power, and a picture of it has been regarded as a representation of God, or the Invisible Hand (H986). As a symbol of unseen protective power and blessing, the hand is used as an amulet for warding off the envious eye. The hand charm, known as al-kaff or the hand of Fatima (daughter of the prophet Muhammad), is used among Arabs for protective purposes. Pictures, paintings, and drawings of the hand are made by villagers to protect themselves and their property from the envious eye.

In religious ceremonies, people seek above all to communicate with sacred powers in order to maintain and increase connection with them. Only the right hand, as imbued with grace, is fit for these beneficial relations since it participates in the nature of things and beings on which the rites are to act. The magic power of the right hand is used for good (D996.0.1§); thus sacred offerings are presented to the gods with the right hand. It is the right hand that receives favors from heaven and that transmits them in benediction (Hertz 1973, 15). In Arab culture, it is common to see a blessed man using his right hand to rub the bodies of sick people in order to heal them. The right hand here represents the blessed person as a whole and is believed to have a curative effect on the sick (el-Aswad 2002). For Muslims, the healing hand of the pious people of baraka (blessing) is called the white hand (recounting the miracle of the prophet Moses when he displayed his hand, which had turned as white as light, when he removed it from his garment), signifying purity, goodness, and health. The saint’s hand is said to illuminate darkness (D1478.1). While the right hand is associated with ideas of sacred power, purity, and benevolence, the left hand is associated with that which is profane, impure, and malevolent: “The preponderance of the right hand is obligatory, imposed by coercion, and guaranteed by sanctions; conversely, a veritable prohibition weighs on the left hand and paralyzes it” (Hertz 1973, 6–12).
If the left hand is despised and humiliated in the world of the gods and of the living, it has its domain where it commands and from which the right hand is excluded, but this is a dark and ill-famed region (D996.0.2.18, "Magic power of left hand for evil"). The power of the left hand is always somewhat occult and illegitimate; it inspires terror and revulsion. Thus the belief in a profound disparity between the two hands sometimes goes so far as to produce a visible bodily asymmetry. Even if it is not betrayed by its appearance, the hand of sorcery is always the cursed hand.

Metaphorically, the hand is classified according to its color (white or black), its position as related to the body (right or left), its condition (open or closed), and its moral connotation (blessing or cursing). In southern India, Shiva is portrayed as Nataraja, King of the Dance, with multiple hands. The upper left hand holds a flame, symbol of creative dissolution and purification. The upper right hand holds a drum, because the world is a manifestation of rhythm and vibration. The lower left hand points to the raised left foot, which, seeming to float above the ground, represents liberation. The lower right hand is in the gesture of abhyaya. "Fear not." The right foot presses down upon the demon (Watts 1963, 245–246).

There is contagious magic by touch (D1789§). The Nubas of eastern Africa believe that they would die if they enter the house of their priestly king. Also, among the Cazembes of Angola, the king is regarded as so holy that no one can touch him without being killed by the magical power pervading the king's sacred person. The common practice people have devised to rescue the person who violates this tabu relies on a ritualistic manipulation of the hands: the sinner, kneeling down before the king, "touches the back of the royal hand with the back of his own, then snaps his fingers; afterwards he lays the palm of his hand on the palm of king's hand, then snaps his fingers again. This ceremony is repeated four or five times, and averts the imminent danger of death" (Frazer 1951, 235–236).

In Egypt, devotees visiting the shrines of saints “pass their hands over the rails which enclose the tomb, then stroke themselves and their children as if they were collecting and dispersing an emanation from the saint himself. In the same way the ancient are to be seen in the bas-reliefs transmitting with their hands the vital principle represented by the ‘ankh symbol’” (Hocart 1942, 370; italics in original). Also, in the Bible, the raising of the hand to a god is regarded as an act of worship (Budge 1978, 467).

The belief in the mystical effectiveness of the hand and the evil eye is not confined to traditional people. Literate people participate in this belief, yet are unable to explain how bodily members exercise their magical power and produce fortune or misfortune.

ELITE LITERATURE

Direct and indirect references and allusions to magic bodily members are found throughout literature, including the works of Francis Bacon, William Shakespeare, and Edward Bulwer-Lytton. Shakespeare recognized the powerful image of the eye. Using the Egyptian symbol of the eye, he conjures up the image of the dawning sun:

Full many a glorious morning have I seen
Flatter the mountain tops with sovereign eye.
(quoted in Clark 1959, 220).

In literature, the eye is depicted as the source of vision for poets and creative writers. The eye, Bettina Knapp points out, is not to be compared with the brash intellectual/rational illumination of earthly humans. Rather, it may be likened to Siva’s divine eye or the eye depicted on sarcophagi in ancient Egypt: the eye within which a blackened pupil stares into the distance—sees the human in all of his conditions and states—follows him around the universe. The eye is the gateway leading to the source—the All: the omniscient and omnipotent essence of divine existence. (1989, 179)

In one of his novels, Ignazio Silone uses belief in the evil eye to account for an Italian peasant’s worldview. Anthony Mancini makes it the focal point of a detective story (Georges 1998, 194).

In the literature of contemporary interactive computer software, one finds the healing hand and Holy Vision of the Paladin and the powerful and all-seeing Eye of Kilrogg among other features related to bodily members, whether attached to or detached from the body. For example, the “Ogre-Mage creates a free-floating apparition in the form of a disembodied Eye that he can then direct through the air to look down upon enemy forces and encampments... [t]his ever vigilant eye transmits its view to the caster giving him the knowledge of both the lands it wanders and those creatures who live there” (War Craft II 1999, 76).

el-Sayed el-Aswad

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Soothsayer (Diviner, Oracle, Etc.)

Motif D1712

Soothsayers (prophets, fortune-tellers, etc.) are generally involved in foretelling the future or determining answers to questions through supernatural means. The word prophet comes from the Greek, meaning "speaker for." Prophets thus, in this sense, are people who speak for another, usually the gods, and reveal their will (Fiske 1911; Weber 1999). An oracle, especially in the ancient Greek sense, is "an answer given by a god to a question asked by a human. The answers were delivered through a priest or priestess, or by means of signs and dreams. The shrines in which these answers were delivered were also known as oracles" (Elkhadem 1981, 156).

An archetypal connection to the diviner can be seen in the figure of the alchemist. In medieval Europe, the alchemist stood as a symbol for the productive melding of science and mysticism. Nathan Cervo traces the provenience of the alchemist's practice: "The alchemists of the Middle Ages learned their art from the Arabs in Spain and southern Italy, who in turn had adopted it from the Greeks, who again had developed it on Egyptian soil in the fourth century BCE" (Cervo 1988, 19). Another archetypal figure related to the diviner is the divine tutor. Joseph Alfred identifies the figure of the divine tutor as a "divine or superhuman being who undertakes to educate a youth—usually a young man—to prepare him for some purpose or role" (Alfred 1988, 395). Biblical prophets offer a good example; they "relate to God as pupils receiving instruction for the people.... Their tutors—angels or other marvelous figures—explain to them the meaning of visions or experiences so that their instruction becomes ordered and unified" (Alfred 1988, 397).

Soothsayers and diviners, however, can also take on the archetypal
connotations of the scapegoat and become victims of the concept of killing the messenger. Weidhorn explains: “The bearer of bad tidings is in some irrational, primitive way associated with the evil events he tells about and is punished... as if he has become the scapegoat and as if ‘killing the messenger’ will somehow make the adverse events vanish as well” (Weidhorn 1988, 1109). Thus, a prophet, a figure at times not at the center of social life and who sometimes delivers prophecies that will not be well received, can be in danger of becoming a scapegoat.

Soothsayers, diviners, and oracles play an important role in early mythology. The blind Tiresias (D1712.2, “Blind man as soothsayer”), a Theban soothsayer, is himself father of the female Manto, who in turn is mother of the prophetic Mopsus. Tiresias prophecies perhaps most famously in Sophocles’ tragedy Oedipus Rex (AP Type 931) (ca. 428 BCE). Cassandra is another prominent prophet in Greek antiquity, with the dubious distinction of having her pronouncements perpetually disregarded (M301.01, “Prophet destined never to be believed.”) The ten Sibyls are mythic female prophets in Greco-Roman mythology. Perhaps the best known is the Cumeanean Sibyl, who inscribes her predictions on leaves and deposits them at the entrance of her dwelling to be consulted before being blown away by the wind (M301.21). The Sibyls appear in Vergil’s Aeneid and Ovid’s Metamorphoses (Ekkhardt 1981). The ancient Sibylline tradition eventually found expression in a parallel Judaeo-Christian one: the Sybilline Oracles. Their prophecies were incorporated into the works of the early church fathers Theophilus of Antioch and Clement of Alexandria and, later, Saint Augustine. Later in European history, elements of the Sybilline Oracles reappeared in popular texts such as the fourteenth-century Erlösung and the sixteenth-century Lacernen Anitchristspiel by Zacharias Blötz (Frey 1998).

Among the most famous oracles for contemporary readers are those in Sophocles’ Oedipus Rex. The first tells Laius that his newborn son Oedipus will one day kill him. Later in the story, Oedipus himself receives a prophecy from the Delphic oracle that he will murder his father and marry his own mother. In good Greek fashion, of course, he flees from what he believes to be his natal parents only to unwittingly kill his true father and marry his birth mother upon arrival in Thebes (M343, “Parricide prophecy”; M344, “Mother-incest prophecy”; M370.1, “Prophecy of death fulfilled”) (Ekkhardt 1981).

The ancient Israelite priests, meanwhile, were diviners; later on they came to adopt a role more like that of a teacher and received the title prophets. Samuel, the ancient prophet who appointed King Saul as leader, was, according to Fiske (1911), originally more a diviner or seer in the old sense than a teacher in the more recent sense, but came to be transformed in later texts into the newer incarnation of Israelite prophet. The early Israelite diviner-priests, called Levites, cast predictions by consulting an ephod featuring the image of a calf or bull. Like later prophets, too, they also credited prophecies to predictions received from angels (M301.10, “Angels as prophet”) (Fiske 1911). Their ancient oracles produced answers through the use of dice (to elicit “yes” or “no” answers) as well as through inducement of ecstatic states on the part of the diviner. M.F.C. Boudriot writes: “We find references to the use of oracles soon after the Hebrews settled in Palestine in the twelfth to eleventh centuries BCE” (Boudriot 1977, 128). But the later prophets condemned these acts, and the book of Deuteronomy explicitly forbids divination and soothsaying (Boudriot 1977).

The sayings of the prophets thus became the more important type of oracle toward the end of the sixth century (M301.7, “Biblical worthy as prophet”). Boudriot notes:

Rather than relying for their position on any particular events, wonders, or signs, the greater prophets and their schools appeared to acquire recognition from the stand they took in the history of the people; they were steadfastly loyal to the cult of Yaweh and the moral standards associated with it... Prophets are frequently cited as denouncing the popular adoration of foreign cults, especially in the early days of the fertility cult of Baal (Boudriot 1977, 131).

The case of Elijah demonstrates the way that the pronouncements of prophets served a function of regulating social behavior. He foretold the destruction of King Ahab’s line (in the first book of Kings), including that of his successor when he committed idolatry through use of a foreign oracle (in the second book of Kings) (M342, “Prophecy of downfall of kingdom”) (Boudriot 1977).

In addition, hagiography provides a rich source for the pronouncements of prophecies in early Christianity (M301.5, “Saints [holy men] as prophets,” and M364, “Various prophecies connected with saints [or holy men]”). In Prophecies, Miracles and Visions of St. Columba (Columcille), by the sixth-century Saint Adamnan, the various prophecies of the Irish saint are described. For example, Adamnan relates the legend of how Saint Columba supposedly made a posthumous appearance to the Saxon king Oswald to foretell his triumph over the enemy (M356.1, “Prophecies concerning outcome of war,” and M356.1.2, “Prophecies concerning heroes in battle”) (Adamnan 1895; Thompson 1955–1958).

One of the most famous diviner-magicians in European legendry is Merlin (related to Motifs D1712.01, “Astrologer-Magician,” and M301.3, “Druids as prophet”). The wizard plays a seminal, albeit background, role in the Arthurian legend cycle, in which he uses his gift of foretelling the future to assist King Arthur in his battles. Merlin’s legend makes an early appearance in Nennius’s Historia Britonum (ca. 800) (Ekkhardt 1981). Horst and Ingrid Daemmrich
trace the introduction of Merlin as prophet-magician in literature to Geoffrey
of Monmouth's Propheta Merlini (1134), offering this description of the scene
in which his career is inaugurated: "Merlin is consulted by Aurelius, king of
the Britons, in order to solve the problem of the tower whose construction is
mysteriously disturbed each night. His revelation of the existence of two dra-
gons beneath the tower and his explanation of their allegorical meaning for the
Britons launched the motif of Merlin as prophet-consultant" (Daemmrich and
Daemmrich 1987, 179). Throughout the Middle Ages and into the Renais-
sance, Merlin appears as a prophet-consultant regarding battles and political
matters. For example, motifs M356.5, "Prophecy: end of Round Table for
apPEAR in Thomas Malory's 1485 work Mort e d'Arthur. In some versions of
his legend, Merlin is reputed to be the son of the devil, but born to a human
mother. While having inherited some of his father's magical abilities such as
that of transformation, he uses his power for good, especially as adviser to
King Arthur. Later, in Sir Walter Scott's Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border
(1802–1803), Merlin makes the leap into Scottish legendry as a forest-dwell-
ing prophet (Daemmrich and Daemmrich 1987; Thompson 1955–1958).

In sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Europe, soothsayers like astrologers
and alchemists were considered scientists, relying on visions and the move-
ments of the stars to make their predictions. Paracelsus and his teacher
Tritemius were examples of this type of soothsayer (D1712.01, "Astrologer-
Magician"). Also at this time, chapbooks and almanacs provided popular pro-
phesies and astrological readings. For example, the prophecies of Nostradamus
remain widely known even today. Weber explains that prophecy as a pseudo-
scientific practice was widely accepted in the seventeenth century and in fact
continued as a respectable activity into the nineteenth century (Weber 1999).
Somewhat similarly, the Welsh believed in so-called inspired people, or
Awnyddion. They employed spirit possession to deliver cryptic responses to
questions that were then interpreted for clients by a third party (Lehman 1911).

In the Scottish Highlands there were reputed to exist certain individuals
believed to possess "second sight." The so-called Warlock of the Glen, for
example, divined by peering through a hole in a round white stone (Motif
D1712.1, "Soothsayer at work by various means of divination"). One of his
pronouncements so displeased a powerful member of the Mackenzie clan
that she had him hanged for it (a particularly dramatic example of the prophet
as scapegoat). Sir Walter Scott, who was steeped in the manners and cus-
toms of Scotland and used them for dramatic effect in his fiction, has a
character foretell a murder through second sight in his story "The Two Dro-
vers" (1827). An old woman sees her nephew's hand and dirk (a short knife)
covered with blood and begs him not to take the weapon on the journey he is
about to undertake. He refuses to leave the knife, but compromises by giv-
ing it to a comrade to hold, but later takes it back, with tragic consequences
(D1825.1, "Second sight. Power to see future happenings"). The motif of
second sight appears also in Scottish, Irish, Icelandic, Indian, and North
American folklore.

In the genre of European Märchen, AT Type 516, Faithful John, contains
Motif M302.1, "Prophesying through knowledge of animal languages." The
story tells of a prince who falls in love with a princess by seeing her picture or
dreaming about her. His faithful servant overhears a conversation of birds (or
ghosts) foretelling the perils to come to the newlyweds and tries to prevent
them (M352, "Prophecy of particular perils to prince on wedding journey").
This folktale appears in a number of tale collections, such as Giambattista
Basile's II Pentamerone (1634–1336) and the Grimm's Kinder- und
Hausmärchen (KHM 6), and seems to have been especially popular in Ireland
(Thompson 1977).

Outside of Indo-European tradition, Mayan priest-prophets were called
chilan, meaning "mouthpiece" or "interpreter of gods" (Peterson 1990, 16).
These prophets relied on books and visions induced by drugs such as peyote
and hallucinogenic mushrooms to produce their prophecies, which frequently
played a role in the political sphere. The prophet would lie on his back at
home and receive his prophecies from a god or spirit believed to be perched
on his roof (related to Motif M301.11, "Spirit as prophet"). Chilan Balam
was a famous priest-prophet among the ancient Mayans who lived at the end
of the thirteenth and the start of the sixteenth centuries. His final prediction
refers to the Itzas, a Mayan group, and has traditionally been interpreted as
foretelling the arrival of the Europeans. Among the ancient Aztecs, the
astrologer-priests conducted the divining (D1712.01, "Astrologer-Magician").
One of their main functions was to determine if a child was born on an auspici-
ous or an auspicious date. To do this, they consulted the tonalamatl, or
"book of the days and destinies" (Peterson 1990, 39).

In Arab Islamic tradition, it is believed that God has placed "the Veil" be-
tween the heavenly and earthly realms. Because humans and jinn (popularly
known as "genies" in European and United States culture) are generally lim-
ited to the "other side" of this Veil, they are believed to be blocked from the
"boon of clairvoyance." But certain humans, including prophets and saints,
can divin in Islamic cosmology (M301.5, "Saints (holy men) as prophets,
and M301.7, "Biblical worthy as prophet"). These people can be granted clair-
voyance by God on the basis of their piety, and they therefore are able to read
from the "tablet of destiny" (which is believed to lie on the other side of "the
Veil"). Prophets are characterized as possessing the power of prophecy and
the power of miracles to validate their prophecies. Solomon, for example, is
believed to command the jinn and the wind, as well as having the power to understand the language of animals (M302.1, “Prophesying through knowledge of animal languages”). In addition, prophets and certain saints are said to know the time and place of their own deaths (M341.68, “Person knows place of own death”). While jinn cannot divine in the sense of foretelling the future, they can be called on to report on the past and present. Jinn, then, can determine the causes of past events and diagnose illnesses. While in an Islamic worldview the power of prophecy is believed to come from God, in folk Islam there are also believed to be those who conduct sacrilegious forms of divination. These practitioners are called shaykh (or shamans) who practice divination by sacred means. Thus, it is the source from which diviners obtain their power that marks them as “good” or “bad” (El-Shamy 1995).

In many societies, such as the Shona of Africa and the Berbers of Morocco, diviners play a role in politics, healing, and even cursing. But they often have to rely on their ability to keep their prophecies in line with the popular will. In other words, the “credibility of oracles depends on their apparent wisdom, and apparent wisdom is defined by the beliefs and opinions of those to whom it must appear as wisdom” (Bourdillon 1977, 126). Soothsayers, diviners, and oracles are with us yet today. Farmer’s almanacs and newspaper horoscopes can still be consulted. Prophets have continued to exert an influence on custom and belief well into the modern age. One example is the case of Wovoka, a famous (or infamous) Native American prophet who claimed to have experienced a vision from God foretelling the disappearance of the whites. In order to keep up the pretense, however, he became increasingly corrupt and ultimately incited the so-called Last Indian War. In addition, the American prophet Joseph Smith believed that he received a visit from the Angel of God in 1823 and subsequently founded the Mormon Church (Peterson 1990).

Natalie M. Underberg

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MAGIC INVULNERABILITY

Motif D1840

MAGIC STRENGTH

People around the word, from ancient times to the era of mass culture that produced Superman, ascribe magic invulnerability to their heroes. This supernatural protection is often paired with superhuman strength (F610, "Remarkably strong man"). Folktales of types AT 590 (The Prince and the Armbrunds) and 650A (Strong John) offer many examples. In the Norwegian folktale "The Blue Belt" (Asbjørnsen and Moe 1983, 2:196–210; AT 590), the hero receives extraordinary strength by means of a magic belt (D1344, "Magic object gives invulnerability"), by which he also is protected from stones rolled on him by a troll, attacks by lions, and more. In the Grimms' "The Young Giant" (KHM 90; AT 650A), a small boy, nursed on a male giant's milk, becomes superhumanly strong, and he uses his strength both offensively and defensively. In one episode he is sent into a well to do some work, and his overseer attempts to kill him by dropping a millstone on him. The boy at the bottom shouts back, "Shoo the chickens away from the well. They are scratching sand into my eyes." He then emerges wearing the would-be fatal millstone around his neck like a collar. In a Swiss variant, "The Hairy Boy" (Sutermeister 1873, no. 52), the title hero is attacked by 500 soldiers with firearms, but "the hairy boy calmly plucks the bullets from his body and throws them back at the soldiers, killing them all." And finally, in the Irish folktale "Adventures of Gilla na Cheirck an Gour" (the fellow with the goat-skin), the title hero, another superhumanly strong lad, overpowers a three-headed giant and takes from him "a bottle of green ointment, that wouldn't let you be burned, nor scalded, nor wounded" (Kennedy 1891, 21–28).

ACHILLES' HEEL

Like the Grimms' young giant mentioned above, the Greek hero Achilles may have derived his great strength, and with it a degree of invulnerability, from his childhood diet, which consisted of the entrails of lions and wild boars plus the marrow of bears (Apollodorus 1975, 3:172). However, an account by the Latin poet Statius (1957, 2:269) gives another explanation of the hero's invulnerability: Achilles' mother, Thetis, a sea nymph, dips him when an infant into the River Styx, holding him by his right heel. The magic waters do not penetrate her grip, and he is left vulnerable in that one spot (Z311, "Achilles heel. Invulnerability except in one spot"), the proverbial Achilles' heel. In the end, he is brought down by a poisoned arrow guided by Apollo to this one fateful spot.

Another hero from Greek mythology who was protected by an impenetrable skin is Caeneus, who—as Ovid tells the story in his Metamorphoses (1950)—is born female (book 12, lines 180–216). Caenis, as she was known in her early years, was raped by Neptune (Poseidon to the Greeks), and as a reward to her for the pleasure he had taken at her expense, the sea god granted her any wish. To prevent such a wrong from happening to her again, Caenis asked to become a man. This wish was granted, and Neptune added an additional blessing: magic protection against all weapons.

Siegfried (Sigurd) is a northern hero sharing many attributes of Achilles and Caeneus, leading some to theorize that these stories evolved from common Indo-European myths. As recorded in the Middle High German epic Der Nibelungenlied (1947), Siegfried, too, has one vulnerable spot on his otherwise impenetrable horn skin (D136.1.3.2.), a patch between his shoulder blades where a leaf had fallen while he was bathing in the blood of a freshly slain dragon (verses 100, 898–902). Jealous Brunhild conspires with Hagen to discover from Siegfried's wife, Kriemhild, her husband's one weakness; then Hagen literally stabs the great hero in the back (verse 981).

The most famous invulnerable being in Norse mythology is the beloved god Balder. As the story is recorded in the Prose Edda (Snorre 1954, 80–81), Balder the Good dreams that something threatened his life. To set him at ease, Frigg, the wife of Odin, “exacted an oath from fire and water, iron and all kinds of metals, stones, earth, trees, ailments, beasts, birds, poison, and serpents, that they would not harm Balder.” However, thinking that the little bush called mistletoe is too young to be a threat, she does not get the oath from it, thus unwittingly leaving the one thing that proves fatal to him (Z312, “Unique deadly weapon. Only one thing will kill a certain man”). After Frigg's intervention, the Aesir (pantheon of Norse gods) take great sport in throwing things at Balder, knowing that it is all harmless fun—harmless, that is, until the evil
trickster Loki, who knows of the one gap in Balder’s magic shield, makes a dart from mistletoe and gives it to one of the Aesir, who guilelessly throws it at Balder, killing him instantly. And, in the words of Snorri, “this was the greatest misfortune ever to befall gods and man.”

SAINTS’ LEGENDS

Belief in invulnerability against specific threats, including fire, poison, and weapons, has a religious basis in many cultures. The ancient Hebrews Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, having refused to bow down to a pagan idol, survive being cast into a fiery furnace (Daniel 3; Motif D1841.3.2.1, “Fiery furnace as a mean of torture for a saint remains ineffective”). Similarly, the prophet Daniel, accused of making a petition to Jehovah instead of to the secular king, is thrown into a lions’ den, but escapes unharmed (Daniel 6). And in the New Testament (Mark 16:37–38), believers are promised that “they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them.”

Christian saints’ legends abound in accounts of such divine protection (D1840.1, “Magic invulnerability of saints”). Saint George, probably the best known of all nonbiblical Christian saints, exemplifies a number of the protections promised to the faithful. According to The Golden Legend (1900, vol. 3, ch. 58), he is forced to drink strong venom, but it does not harm him. Then he is placed between two wheels covered with swords, but the wheels break, and the saint escapes unscathed. Finally Saint George is thrown into a cauldron of molten lead, where he appears to his tormentors to be having a leisurely bath. These miracles brought about many conversions to Christianity, but Saint George’s invulnerability is limited, and in the end he suffers a martyr’s death by beheading.

TRIAL BY ORDEAL

Such beliefs have led, and not only in the Judeo-Christian tradition, to the acceptance of ordeals as proofs of innocence (H220, “Ordeals: Guilt or innocence thus established”). The great Indian epic Ramayana (1870–1874, book 6, cantos 117–120) records how Rama’s wife Sita is abducted by the ogre Ravana, remains chaste during her imprisonment, and following her rescue proves her purity by walking unharmed into a blazing pyre (H221, “Ordeal by fire. Suspected person must pass through or jump over fire to determine guilt or innocence”). Walking through fire or carrying a red-hot iron (H221.2, “Ordeal by hot iron”) is mentioned as a lie-detector test in Sophocles’ Antigone (lines 260–268). The Grimm’s German Legends (Deutsche Sagen, 1816–1818) contains three accounts (DS 465, 480, 482) of wives who submit to fire ordeals in order to prove their own or a husband’s innocence: one woman allows herself to be set afire while wearing a dress made of wax, another carries a red-hot iron, and a third walks barefoot across glowing plowshares. All are miraculously spared any injury.

The ordeal of the hot iron is given a wonderfully ironic treatment in Gottfried von Strassburg’s medieval epic Tristan (1950, lines 1545–1576). Isolde, entangled in an adulterous affair with Tristan, agrees to undergo the ordeal of the red-hot iron to prove her innocence. Just before the ordeal, she contrives to fall into the arms of Tristan, disguised as a pilgrim. Then she swears before God that she has never lain with any man, except for her husband King Mark and the holy pilgrim. Because her oath is literally true, God protects Isolde, and she carries the red-hot iron without injury. One interpretation of this episode, which proves, in Gottfried’s words, that Christ is as “pliant as a wind-blown sleeve,” is that the poet is thus ridiculing a test of innocence that, whether officially accepted by the church or not, was nonetheless still widely believed. For a summary of medieval Christian attitudes, policies, and practices concerning trials by ordeal, see Leitmaier (1953).

Although the red-hot iron ordeal and its companion, the boiling water ordeal were codified into law throughout medieval Europe, their use was controversial. For example, Heinrich Kramer and Johann Sprenger, in their infamous Malleus Maleficarum, written about 1486 under the authority of Pope Innocent VIII, theorize at some length as to the legality of requiring or allowing accused witches to attempt to prove their innocence by carrying a red-hot iron (1928, part 3, question 17). Their conclusion is that to do so would be counterproductive, given witches’ demonic invulnerability (G229.4, “Invulnerability of witches”). They end their discussion with the account of “a notorious witch” who was seized by a count: “When she was being tortured and questioned, wishing to escape from their hands, she appealed to the trial by red-hot iron; and the count, being young and inexperienced, allowed it. And she then carried the red-hot iron not only for the stipulated three paces, but for six, and offered to carry it even farther... She was released from her chains and lives to the present time, not without grave scandal to the Faith in those parts.” (Kraemer and Sprenger 1928, 234).

Demonic invulnerability, to some degree, protects ogres and supernatural fiends throughout the world. For example, the ten-headed, twenty-armed ogre Ravana in the Ramayana immediately grows a new head or a new arm to replace one that has been cut off, although he too, like Achilles and Siegfried, has one vulnerable spot, and in the end Rama brings him down with an arrow to the heart (1870–1874, book 6, cantos 109–110). And in Beowulf neither the best nor the sharpest blade can harm Grendel, for through a spell he has made himself invulnerable against all weapons (1977, lines 800–805; Motif
SILVER BULLETS

In spite of the relative invulnerability of ogres, countless legends relate how they are defeated by heroes, often ordinary people, who take advantage of some unique deadly weapon (Z312). The most famous such device in northern Europe is the proverbial silver bullet, often prescribed against trolls, witches, werewolves, and other such creatures. However, it should be noted that to be fully effective the bullet must be made of inherited silver (Haas 1903, 98–99). Additional shields and weapons against supernatural foes include iron, calling the enemy by name, exposure to sunlight, Christian artifacts, specific herbs, incantations, inscribed runes, and of course the legendary wooden stake driven through the heart of a vampire. Throughout the world, local legends abound that tell how a seemingly invulnerable foe was overcome by a single well-chosen weapon. In such instances, the shaman with knowledge is infinitely more powerful than the warrior with conventional weapons.

If knowledge is power, then Odin is indisputably the most powerful of the Norse gods, for he is a master of runes, those mysterious chanted incantations and carved symbols that promise their users many things, but nothing more prominently than protection from foes. In the “Hávamál,” a proverb collection attributed to Odin and included in the Poetic Edda, the god claims to know runes and spells that can dull the swords of one’s foes, break the chains of the fettered, stop a spear in midflight, reverse another person’s curse, extinguish a burning building, guard a ship in a gale, frighten away witches, and even bring a dead person back to life (1962, nos. 148–157)—in short, provide magic invulnerability to the knowledgeable.

D.L. Ashliman

See also: Tests.

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Magic Invisibility

Motif D1980

Magic invisibility has fascinated people since ancient times. The Motif-Index lists fifty subcategories of magic invisibility, including many objects that make invisibility possible.

An invisible person can go wherever he or she wants to go, unfettered by society’s rules and restrictions. The absence of a visible body brings freedom to take what one wants, to experiment sexually, and to have adventures without risking sanctions and disapproval. This behavior fits Jung’s archetype of the trickster: the bold, daring rule-breaker who puts his or her own desires above society’s dictates. Jung views the trickster as the “unsocialized, infantile, and unacceptable aspects of the self” (Russo 1997, 242). The trickster archetype overlaps to some extent with the archetype of the Shadow, which represents aspects of the psyche perceived by society as dangerous, negative, and antisocial.

Invisibility sometimes suggests that a person is overlooked or disregarded. While many folktale characters that become invisible are dynamic and powerful, some are quiet. In contemporary times, invisibility has become a metaphor for the effects of oppression and marginalization, especially in relation to ethnic groups.

MYTHOLOGY AND EPIC

In ancient Rome, Discordia, goddess of strife, owns a ring that makes her invisible (D1361.1.17). Her Greek counterpart, Eris, is the instigator of the Trojan War. Perseus, son of Zeus, receives a cap of invisibility (D1361.15) for his battle with Medusa; Pluto, god of the underworld, owns a helmet of invisibility.

In Homer’s Iliad and Odyssey, gods appear and disappear at will; Homer uses a special term for the materialization of invisible gods. Sometimes gods in The Iliad protect themselves and their favorites from sight with a cloud of mist (D1361.1.1). Unlike gods, human beings usually require an object to become invisible. In his story “The Ring of Gyges,” Plato tells of a shepherd who takes a gold ring from a corpse that he finds in a cave. Discovering that the ring makes him invisible, the shepherd uses it to seduce the queen of the realm, murder the king, and become king himself. The corruptive power of the ring, which offers invisibility as a means to gain power, is irresistible (Plato 2000, 39–40).

Invisibility is also important in the corpus of folk literature that composes the epic of King Arthur. The mantle of Arthur and the ring of the moon goddess Luned, both of which grant invisibility, are among the thirteen most precious things of Britain (Bradley 1894, 517). Avalon, the enchanted isle to which Arthur is taken after death, is sometimes described as being rendered invisible by a magic mist (D1361.1). The motif of the magic mist is also found in North American tradition, among the Shuswap, Salish, and Pawnee (Thompson 1929, 339).

FOLKLORE

In tales, legends, customs, and beliefs, many objects have been given credit for causing invisibility; one of the most picturesque of these is fern seed (D1361.5.1). According to legend, the fern “bursis into fiery blossoms which disappear almost instantaneously, for evil spirits swarm thickly around them and carry them off” (Cox 1893, 517). Frazer explains that fern blossoms may appear on St. John’s Eve in midsummer or on Christmas night; in Switzerland, a ritual of sitting beside a fern on St. John’s Eve is connected to the legend of the devil bringing treasure to those who wait (1950, 816–817). Both Ben Jonson and Shakespeare were familiar with fern seed’s potential for this kind of magic. In Shakespeare’s The First Part of King Henry IV, can be found the line “We have the receipt of fern-seed, we walk invisible” (1960, 43). Apparently this means of becoming invisible was commonly known in Elizabethan times.

The Magic Cloak of Invisibility

One of the most popular objects for conferring invisibility is the magic cloak (D1361.12), featured in folktales of England, Ireland, Germany, the United
States, China, Japan, and the Philippines, among other areas. Thompson says the motif of the cloak of invisibility is found among the Ute and Micmac in North America (Thompson 1929, 339).

Perhaps the best-loved tale involving a cloak of invisibility is the Grimms’ “The Worn-Out Dancing Slippers.” A poor soldier, wishing to find out where the king’s daughters go at night, receives a cloak from an old woman who says, “When you put this on, you’ll be invisible and can then stalk the twelve maidens” (Magoun and Kruppe 1960, 475). Wearing the cloak, the soldier follows the princesses down to an underground kingdom, where he collects branches with silver, golden, and diamond leaves as tokens to show the king. As a reward, he is given the hand of the eldest princess in marriage, as well as the eventual inheritance of the kingdom. The hero of this folk tale exemplifies the archetype of the trickster who gets what he wants through stealth. On the other hand, if the reader sees the underground kingdom as a source of evil and seduction, the poor soldier is the princesses’ savior.

In the folktale “Cinderella,” variants of which are known throughout the world, invisibility is one indication of the dead mother’s protection of her daughter. In a Czechoslovakian variant, “The Princess with the Gold Star on Her Brow,” the princess’s mother appears to her in a dream, giving the gift of a white veil woven of mist that will make the wearer invisible (Waldau 1860, 502–518). In a Danish variant published in 1884, the ill-treated heroine receives magic dresses and a chariot from a tree that opens on command. A bagful of mist thrown in front of and behind the chariot makes the heroine “vanish like a shooting star into mist” (Cox 1893, 517). In this tale, the heroine is both a trickster and a virtuous young woman in need of aid.

Often a magic formula makes magic transformation possible. In the Disney movie Cinderella (1950), the fairy godmother repeatedly says “Bibbity bobbity boo,” a nonsense rhyme that echoes serious incantations from the past. Cross refers to magic formulas for invisibility in Irish folk literature (1952). Sometimes invisibility can be induced by reading a magic formula backwards (D1985.2).

The magic wand (D1361.25) and the magic staff (D1361.25.1) are well-known objects for inducing invisibility. Both of these objects are associated with the magician or wizard, a powerful figure that fits Jung’s archetype of the Wise Old Man. By waving his wand or staff, the wizard can cause invisibility and countless other magical effects. The magic cap of invisibility (D1361.15) that Perseus had also appears in a Chinese tale called The Wong-liang’s Magic Cap: a poor man confronts an ogre and forces him to hand over his straw hat, which makes its wearer invisible (Eberhard 1965, 95) The cap of invisibility occurs in North American tradition among the Omaha and the Zuni (Thompson 1929, 339). Among the many other objects that facilitate invisibility are a magic flower (D1361.6), a magic calabash (D1361.4), and a magic tiger’s hair (D1361.35). A dragon may have the power of invisibility (B11.5.2); so may a pig (B184.3.2.1). The related motif F241.3.1, “Fairy-swine,” reinforces the idea that pigs have a predilection for enchantment. This concept can be found in the Mabinogion, interpreted for children in Lloyd Alexander’s The Book of Three (1969).

Magic stones are also thought to have great power. Sometimes this power comes from an especially virtuous person, as in the Irish tale of the saint who banishes sorrow by blessing a stone (D1359.3.4, “Stone blessed by saint banishes sorrow”). According to Pliny, the precious stone heliotrope could make someone who carried it invisible (Cox 1893, 517). Stones that cause invisibility are often associated with evil personages. In Kittredge’s study of witchcraft, a magic stone is credited with causing invisibility (1958, 176; Motif D1361.2).

Some folk beliefs about invisibility suggest occult practices, as in D1361.8, “Heart of unborn child renders person invisible.” The most gruesome motif of this sort is D1361.7, the “Hand of Glory,” a charm made of a dead man’s hand that confers invisibility upon its owner. The name “Hand of Glory” is derived from the French mandragore or mandrake, a plant that is said to grow under the gallows. Sometimes a candle made from the fat of a man who has been hanged is part of the magic charm. Since fingers from unborn children were thought to be especially desirable providers of candles, some thefts in seventeenth-century Germany murdered pregnant women to obtain what they desired. A burning finger placed upon a table would show the thief that he could remain free from discovery until his work was done (Leach 1949, 477).

ELITE LITERATURE

The folkloric dimensions of magic invisibility have appealed to many authors. In J.R.R. Tolkien’s The Hobbit (1937), Bilbo Baggins discovers a magic ring that, in rendering him invisible, allows him to escape from the threatening Gollum. Bilbo’s cousin Frodo becomes the ring-bearer in Tolkien’s Fellowship of the Ring (1955). Frodo finds that the ring makes him feel weak and overwhelmed; the ring functions as a metaphor for the corruptive power of evil. In C.S. Lewis’s Voyage of the Dawn Treader (1952), the Dufflepuds recite a spell of invisibility to protect themselves from a spell that has made them look ugly. In contrast to these works in which invisibility is linked to negative behavior or influences, Eloise McGraw’s The Moor Child (1996) presents invisibility as one of many skills necessary for fairies’ survival. Young Moq, who does not have the talent to become invisible, must find another way to live happily in a realm where survival skills are crucial.
The popular magic cloak motif is featured in the best seller *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone* (Rowling 1997). In his first year of study at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, young Harry Potter receives a cloak of invisibility as a Christmas present. Having once belonged to Harry’s father, the cloak symbolizes fatherly protection. It allows Harry and his friend Ron to glide through the halls at night, searching for answers they are eager to learn. In the second book of the series, *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* (1999), a magic device renders Ron’s car invisible. As Ron and Harry fly through the air in their magic car, the car suddenly vanishes.

Invisible places have also appealed to the imaginations of a number of writers. Marion Zimmer Bradley’s *The Mists of Avalon* (1984) tells of the magic isle of Avalon, visible only to those who have the power to raise the mists. Authors of children’s books have also written about places that are invisible to the eyes of most people. Julia Sauer’s *Fog Magic* (1986) tells of a town that becomes visible only when a heavy fog has come down; at that point, certain children have the privilege of visiting the town to learn important lessons that will guide them toward adulthood.

Invisibility through scientific experiments is presented in H.G. Wells’s *Invisible Man* (1897), in which chemicals render a scientist invisible. While science is the primary center of interest here, invisibility also seems to have magical connotations. This observation can also be applied to the recent film *Hollow Man* (2000), in which a scientist injects himself with a potent mixture of chemicals in order to become invisible. Although the injection comes from the world of science, its effects—including personality change and trickster-like behavior—come from the folklore of invisibility.

While literal invisibility has interested people for many years, metaphorical invisibility has been important in literature. In Ralph Ellison’s *Invisible Man* (1952), the black central character’s invisibility denotes powerlessness, oppression, and effacement from society. Similarly, in works by authors representing various ethnicities and gay/lesbian sexuality, invisibility has signified powerlessness. Through characters’ personalities and voices, invisibility is transformed into vibrant visibility.

Elizabeth Tucker

See also: The Trickster.

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Bewitching

Motif D2020

Bewitching occurs when someone with magic power enchants or transforms a person, animal, or thing. Most bewitching has a negative effect; people die or suffer injuries (D2060, “Death or bodily injury by magic”); animals are paralyzed (D2072.0.2, “Animal rendered immovable”); cows give curdled milk (D2083.3); beer is magically kept from brewing (D2084.1); and swords are magically dulled (D2086.1). The person who bewitches, in folklore and literature from ancient times to the present, is usually a woman.

These maleficia, acts of malice, fit the stereotype of the evil witch in the Middle Ages. The Malles Maiomaticum of 1486 offers many details of witches’ nefarious deeds: murder of infants, castration of men, and corruption of food, among other horrors. As Jeffrey Burton Russell explains in Witchcraft in the Middle Ages (1972), maleficia constituted a form of “low magic” feared by rural folk, while divination, “high magic,” was the province of philosophers and alchemists.

According to the Malles Maiomaticum, written by two Dominican priests, “All witchcraft comes from carnal lust, which is in women insatiable” (Summers 1968, 29). Many more women than men were identified as witches by clerics in the Middle Ages. This focus on women can be explained by the prevalence of the Great Mother archetype, which has, as Erich Neumann explains, both positive and negative poles. The positive elementary character, which is creative, loving, and nurturing, derives from the mother-child relationship, while the negative elementary character arises from “anguish, horror, and fear of danger” in the unconscious (1955, 147). Kali, the Indian goddess of death, is one embodiment of the Great Mother’s negative side. The witch figure, with its emphasis on death, injury, and destruction, is another.

MYTHOLOGY AND EPIC

In Homer’s Odyssey, the enchantress Circe transforms Odysseus’s men into swine (G263.1, “Witch transforms person to animal”). Only Odysseus himself, protected by the herb moly, is able to avoid transformation. He persuades Circe to change his men back into human form and spends a year on her island, learning how to respond to dangers he will encounter later in his voyage. Circe, both dangerous and kind, represents both sides of the Great Mother archetype.

In contrast to Circe, the Gorgon Medusa of Greek mythology has no redeeming qualities. With serpent hair, golden wings, and bronze claws, Medusa can turn human beings to stone if her eyes meet theirs (D581, “Petrification by glance”). In the legend of Perseus, the hero avoids this fate by looking at Medusa in a shield or mirror.

Another powerful female figure is Morgan Le Fay of the Arthurian cycle. In some versions of King Arthur’s story, Morgan uses her skill with herbal medicine to try to heal the wounded King Arthur. Late medieval narratives of King Arthur’s death describe Morgan as an abhorrent sorceress; this approach dominates the film Excalibur (1981). In Malory’s Morti Darthur, Morgan plans for Arthur’s downfall (1982). Records from pagan times link Morgan with the Irish goddess Morrigan and mermaids of the Breton coast (Loomis 1950, 747).

In Jewish lore related to the book of Genesis in the Bible, Lilith, Adam’s first wife, is a demonic figure who threatens the lives of newborn infants. Girls are endangered by Lilith until their third week of life. Some amulets of protection against Lilith bear the names of the three angels who tried to bring Lilith back to Adam: Sanvi, Sansanvi, and Semangela. In The Book of Lilith (1996), Jungian Barbara Black Koltuv analyzes Lilith’s archetypal features, explaining the importance of integrating her powerful energy into the psyche.

SYMPATHETIC MAGIC

Sympathetic magic (D2061.2.2) is another means of bewitchment. The abuse or destruction of an object or animal may cause someone’s murder (D2061.2.2; Kittredge 1958, 73). In Irish mythology, piercing a person’s shadow with a spear may cause the person to fall down dead (D2061.2.2.1; Cross 1952). In Great Britain and the United States, many people believe that the destruction of a person’s picture leads to death (D2061.2.2.3). Similarly, the burning of a person’s hair may cause death or serious illness (D2061.2.2.4.1). In one picturesque form of sympathetic magic noted in England, boiling a person’s glove is a good way to make sure that the person will never need gloves again (D2061.2.2.5.1).
In the southern United States, a magic hair-ball facilitates bewitching (D2070.1; Hand 1964, 668). Witches’ balls of opaque glass have been sold in American mail-order catalogs in the recent past, suggesting that people are still interested in traditional modes of enchantment.

Among the Azande of Zaire, witchcraft is caused by a substance inside the witch’s body. After the witch’s death, this substance can be discovered and removed. Male and female witches consume the souls of their victims, who fall ill and waste away (Parrinder 1958, 133). Like Azande witches, Ewe witches of Dahomey and Togo steal souls; they also suck people’s blood. Female Ewe witches stay inside during the day and wander around at night; their feet are pointed backwards, and their favorite mode of locomotion is walking on their hands (Parrinder 1958, 135).

According to Native American folklore, which has been influenced to some extent by European beliefs, witches can be either women or men. The Navajo belief in skinwalkers—witches who wear the skin of wolves, mountain lions, and other animals—has created many narratives. Among Eastern Woodlands Indians, witch bundles made of sticks, cloth, and other materials are believed to injure and kill people. Each year, the witch bundles must be fed with human flesh, preferably the flesh of the witches’ own family members (Metraux 1950, 1179). In the movie The Blair Witch Project (1999), the witch bundles frighten the young filmmakers and lead them astray, one of the most horrifying scenes in the movie shows a piece of human flesh caught inside the witch bundle’s folds.

THE EVIL EYE

How do witches enchant their victims? Folklore from Europe, India, and North America heavily emphasizes the evil eye (D2071.1, “Evil Eye. Bewitching by means of a glance”). In Irish folklore, the evil eye develops because of exposure to a magic concoction (D2071.0.2; Cross 1952).

The evil eye can cause sickness (D2064.4) or insanity (D2065.5). A magic glance can be so powerful that it reduces a tree to ashes (D2062.1). According to British folklore, someone with the power of the evil eye cannot look at any living thing before breaking fast in the morning without causing the living thing to wither and die (Baughman 1966). Animals are especially vulnerable to this menace; even a brief glance can cause farm animals to sicken and die (D2071.2.1).

Just as amulets of protection can fend off Lilith, certain magic ornaments can keep the evil eye at bay (D2071.1). One popular method for averting the evil eye is spitting (D2071.1.1); another involves swinging a cut over a child’s cradle (D2071.1.2). Dressing a child in clothes appropriate for the opposite sex may confound the evil eye so that it misses its mark (D2071.1.3). According to Indian folklore, returning the glance of the evil eye can seriously injure the giver (D2071.1.5).

TALES AND BALLADS

Bewitchment is an important event in many folktales. In Sleeping Beauty, AT 410, a witch or evil fairy, excluded from the princess’s christening, places a curse upon the princess. When the girl reaches maturity, she pricks her finger upon a spindle or another sharp object and falls into an enchanted sleep. In the Grimms’ version of the story, “Dornroschen,” it is not just the princess who is enchanted; all of the people and animals at the king’s court fall asleep for one hundred years (D1960.3, “Sleeping Beauty. Magic sleep for definite period (e.g., a hundred years”); Magoun and Krappe 1960, 183–184). The Disney movie Sleeping Beauty (1959) portrays the evil Maleficent as a powerful, determined woman who can irresistibly draw the princess toward her preordained enchantment.

In “Beauty and the Beast,” a version of The Monster (Animal) as Bridegroom (AT 425A), a young woman goes to live with a hideous beast who was once a handsome prince. Because of a spell that has been placed upon him, he can regain his true form only if someone loves him unconditionally. Once the young woman has proved her devotion, he becomes a handsome prince once more (Opie and Opie 1974, 182–195). Similarly, in The Frog King (AT 440), the first story in the Grimms’ collection, a witch has deprived a young man of his rightful appearance; only true love will free him from his enchantment (Magoun and Krappe 1960, 3–6). The movie Shrek (2001) reverses the usual direction of transformation: instead of choosing to become beautiful by traditional standards, the young woman who has been enchanted decides to keep her ogrelike appearance.

Various folk ballads feature enchantments. One of the most colorful ballads is “Allison Gross” (Child 1965, 35), in which “the ugliest witch in the North Country” unsuccessfully attempts to seduce a young man. When he resists her advances, she turns him into a “lairy worm” and makes him “toddle about the tree.” Fortunately, the Queen of the Fairies comes by on Halloween and reverses the spell. This ballad is unusual in that a fairy reverses the spell of a witch. Another ballad involving a spell is “Kemp Owyne” (Child 34), in which three kisses break the spell placed on a girl by her cruel stepmother; the girl has become a fierce sea monster, and only true love can restore her to her original form (D735.2, “Three redeeming kisses”).

Some enchantments result in magic love-sickness (D2064.0.1). Attraction by magic (D2074) can leave the victim weak with longing for the spell-maker.
According to one specific prescription, a girl’s heart magically removed and fed to a man draws her to him (D1905.1). Some contemporary witches in New York State have said that if a man eats a steak marinated in a witch’s menstrual blood, he will feel irresistibly attracted to the witch who prepared his dinner.

ELITE LITERATURE

Among Shakespeare’s characters who can bewitch others are the three cauldron-stirring sisters in Macbeth (G201), “Three witch sisters”) and the mischievous fairies in A Midsummer Night’s Dream. Macbeth reflects the medieval stereotype of the evil-minded witch, while Midsummer Night’s Dream includes love magic that represents widespread folk belief.

In Charlotte Brontë’s 1846 novel Jane Eyre, Mr. Rochester tells Jane that she has the look of another world: “When you came on me in Hay Lane last night, I thought unaccountably of fairy tales, and had half a mind to demand whether you had bewitched my horse: I am not sure yet” (127).

Arthur Miller’s play The Crucible (1952) explores accusations of bewitchment in Salem, Massachusetts, showing how the slave Tituba’s magical practices led others to fear widespread occult influence.

Novels of the mid- to late twentieth century and early twenty-first century have moved from depiction of Satanic witchcraft, as in Ira Levin’s Rosemary’s Baby (1967), to playful portraits of beautiful women with magical power, as in John Updike’s The Witches of Eastwick (1984). Both of these books were made into motion pictures, and there was a popular television series in the 1960s and 1970s, Bewitched, about a benign modern witch.

Two books for children that sympathetically portray young women suspected of practicing witchcraft are Elizabeth George Speare’s The Witch of Blackbird Pond (1958) and Monica Furlong’s Wise Child (1989). In J.K. Rowling’s Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone (1997), female witches and male wizards teach students to become expert in using magic power. Talented students like Harry learn to use their powers well; “Muggles” (ordinary humans) with no magic power are regarded with contempt.

Literary interest in Native American witchcraft has increased. Louise Erdrich’s Tracks (1989) tells of Fleur Pillager, who bewitches men in unusual ways. In Tony Hillerman’s detective novel Skinwalkers (1990), Navajo witches create a puzzle that is almost impossible to unravel; only a detective of Native American descent can find the answer that eludes others.

Elizabeth Tucker

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Wishes

Various Motifs

“In olden times, when wishing still did some good...” This opening phrase of the Grimms’ “Frog King” (KHM 1; AT 440, The Frog King or Iron Henry) serves as a motto for their entire collection of Children’s and Household Tales. Because a principal function of fairy tales (more precisely, magic or wonder tales) is fantasy wish fulfillment, it could be argued that most such stories are about wishing, both the explicit wants verbally expressed by the characters and the unspoken (sometimes unconscious) desires of the storytellers and their listeners. Persecuted heroines escape kitchen drudgery by marrying into royalty (AT 510A, Cinderella). Poverty-stricken, abandoned children discover great wealth, then legally and justifiably kill the adults who are abusing them (AT 327A, Hansel and Gretel). Soldiers too old and too severely wounded to remain in service become rich and powerful by marrying beautiful princesses (AT 562, The Spirit in the Blue Light). Young brides turn life-threatening arranged marriages into happily-ever-after romances (AT 425C, The Girl as the Bear’s Wife). The list could be extended endlessly.

The antiquity of the wishes motif in folklore is attested by the presence of stories in Ovid’s Metamorphoses (first century CE) and a fifth-century Hindu collection, the Panchatantra (known in English as the Fables of Bidpai), described below.

There is no better example of the tales featuring explicitly formulated wishes than the widespread story of the simpleton whose wishes always come true (AT 675, The Lazy Boy). One of Europe’s oldest recorded magic tales, this story is found both in the pioneering collections of Straparola (1989, 3:1) and Basile (1932, 1:3), as well as in nineteenth- and twentieth-century collections from most European countries. The Grimms’ version, “Hans Dumb,” is one of the most concise formulations extant, but they included it only in the first edition of their Children’s and Household Tales (1812, no. 54). The story begins when a misshapen village idiot gets a princess pregnant by merely thinking about her (T513, “Conception from wish”). Through a magicaternity test, the king discovers who the father of his grandson is, then sets father, mother, and newborn adrift at sea. The simpleton, now faced with the most extreme challenges of fatherhood, wishes his young family safely ashore, with a castle for their new home. He then wishes himself into a good-looking and intelligent prince, and they settle into a happy married life. Thus at every turn the simpleton hero changes his life through magic wishes. In some versions of the tale, the lad’s extraordinary power is explained (a fairy’s gift or a reward from an enchanted fish, caught and then released), but in others, for example the Grimms’, no explanation is offered. It is as though the power of fantasy, properly approached, can change anyone’s life, with no special intercession from outsiders required.

WISHES GRANTED BY MAGIC OBJECTS

Magic wish-granting items abound in folklore and mythology: rings (D1076), lamps (D1162.1), bottles (D1171.8), carpets (D1155), horses (B181), snuff boxes, tinder boxes, mirrors (D1163), orbs, staffs (D1254), cloaks (D1053), boots (1056.1), purses (D1192), weapons (D1080), books (D1266), stones (D931), sacks (D1193), tables (D1153), amulets (D1274), and talismans (D1734.1). Some are single-purpose items with the power to render the users invisible, carry them to a distant place, serve food, assure victory in combat, impart information, or provide endless wealth; whereas others grant their owners any wish (D1470.1). The most famous such all-purpose, wish-fulfilling magic object is Aladdin’s enchanted lamp, and as was the case with the Type 675 tales discussed above, there is no obvious moral logic behind fate’s selection of the person blessed with the magic lamp. In fact, Aladdin, like Hans Dumb, is not the virtuous, deserving lad that one might expect, but rather is introduced as “a headstrong and incorrigible good-for-nothing” (Tales from The Thousand and One Nights 1973, 165). A large number of Aladdin-inspired European tales (Types 560–595) follow a similar pattern, with their heroes more often coming from the ranks of simpletons and rogues than from any other group. This feature has made it all the easier for generations of ordinary people with no special virtues or gifts to vicariously enjoy, if only in their fantasies, the wish fulfillment around which these tales are constructed.

No single folktale group better exemplifies the granting of wishes to individuals of questionable character than does type 330A, The Smith and the
Devil. A Gypsy version from the Indian subcontinent, “How the Gypsy Went to Heaven” is typical. In return for hospitality, God grants a Gypsy blacksmith four wishes. The smith’s enigmatic response is that no person can descend from his apple tree without his permission, no one can get off his horse blanket without being released, no one can escape from a certain iron box without his permission, and he can never be separated from his turban. Years later, when the angel of death comes, the smith tricks him into the apple tree and will not release him until the angel promises him another twenty years of life. The same thing happens with the horse blanket and the iron box, but finally the smith dies and reports to heaven. God responds, “No, I don’t want him here,” but he goes agree to let the smith look inside. God opens the door a crack, and the smith throws his turban in and sits down on it. No one can remove him from his turban, and that is how the Gypsy goes to heaven (Tong 1989, 15–17; Motif K2371.1.1, “Heaven entered by trick; permission to pick up cap. Trickster throws a cap or leather apron inside the gate”).

At first look, the smith’s wishes seem to be absurd, but there is method in his madness. In other instances, the opposite is true. A wish appears, at least superficially, to be beneficial but turns out to be catastrophic. The most famous example of such a shortsighted wish is “Midas’s Golden Touch” (AT 775; Motif J2072.1). As Ovid tells the story, Silenus, a tutor and companion of Bacchus (Dionysus), is captured by a band of peasants and taken to their king, Midas. The king, recognizing the importance of his captive, receives him with honor and then returns him to Bacchus. The god of wine and revelry rewards Midas by promising him any wish. The greedy king asks that everything he touches would turn to gold. His pleasure with this new source of wealth is short-lived, for he nearly starves to death when all his food and drink turns to gold. His prayers for release are finally answered when Bacchus instructs him how to divest himself of the magic touch by bathing in the Pactolus River (1950, book 11).

FOOLISH AND RECKLESS WISHES

Other folkloric wishes are so grotesquely absurd that only a fool would request them, and therein lies the appeal of the stories featuring them. The simplest everyman can take pleasure in comparing himself with these characters. An excellent example is found in “Slow, the Weaver” from book five of the Panchatantra, dating to the fifth century CE. When a weaver named Slow receives one magic wish from a fairy, he consults with his wife before making his decision. She theorizes that if he had a second head and a second pair of arms, he would be able to operate two looms and thus double their meager income. Seeing the logic of her theory, he so wishes, but he is unable to put his new head and limbs to the test, for when his fellow villagers see him they take him for a demon and stone him to death (1964, 449–453; Motif J2070, “Absurd wishes”).

“Slow, the Weaver” belongs to the tale type 750A, titled simply The Wishes. Most commonly the number of wishes granted is three. In the usual formula, the first wish is squandered on a trifle, the second is uttered in reckless revenge with disastrous results, and the third must be used to undo the consequences of the first two. “The Sausage” from Sweden is typical. A woman performs a service for a fairy and is granted three wishes. While fantasizing about what she might request, she remembers that her husband is expected home for dinner soon, so she wishes for a big sausage, which magically appears. When her husband learns that she has thus squandered a wish, he angrily wishes the sausage onto her nose, and immediately it attaches itself. They have to use the final wish to free her from this unnatural appendage (Djurklou 1901, 27–32; J2071, “Three foolish wishes. Three wishes will be granted: used up foolishly”). Essentially the same story is also told with reversed gender roles, for example, “The Three Wishes” from England (Jacobs n.d., 107–109).

A ribald version that follows the above formula is found in the Thousand and One Nights. Allah grants three wishes to a certain man, who consults his wife before executing them. Her advice, in the Persian translation of Richard Burton (1885–1888), is, “The perfection of man and his delight is in his prickle; therefore do thou pray Allah to give thee thy yard and magnify it.” He follows her advice, and his member immediately grows so large that “he could neither sit nor stand nor move about.” He forthwith prays to Allah that he be freed of the monstrousity, only to find himself “beggarly as a eunuch.” They now find no other recourse but to wish him back to his original state (6:180–181).

This writer heard a similar joke in southern Utah in 2001: A cowboy spares a snake’s life, and the snake grants him three wishes. “Make me as strong as Arnold Schwarzenegger, as good-looking as Robert Redford, and as well hung as the horse I’m riding,” responds the cowboy. Arriving home, he looks in the mirror and admires his handsome face and rippling muscles, but then screams out, “Oh no! I forgot that I was riding a mare!” The same story—almost verbatim, but with Joe Louis and Clark Gable as the icons of popular culture—was collected in the early 1950s in Michigan by Richard M. Dorson (1967, no. 206).

In a subcategory of type 750A tales, one wish is granted to two different people with positive results for one and negative for the other. The playful pseudo-etiological legend ‘Origin of the Island Hiddensee’ is typical. During heathen times, the story goes, the island was a peninsula attached to the large island of Rügen in the Baltic Sea. A Christian missionary seeking shelter is
turned away by one woman, but hospitably received by her neighbor. The
generous woman’s reward is the magic gift to continue all day her first ac-
tivity of the morning (J2073.1, “Wise and foolish wish; keep doing all day what
you begin”), which in her case is to measure a piece of linen that she has
woven. She continues to measure all day, filling her house with valuable cloth.
Envyng this good fortune, the selfish neighbor now invites the missionary to
lodge with her. The next morning, the guest departs after granting her the
same wish that had benefited her neighbor. She decides to count the money
she has saved in a jar. However, first of all she has to go outside to answer an
unexpected call of nature. Suddenly the holy man’s blessing takes effect, and
with such force that the land is flooded and becomes separated from Rügen
(Haas 1903, no. 201).

The above tales forcefully illustrate that care must be exercised in making
wishes; we may well get what we ask for. This cautionary note is scattered
through folktales of many types, as illustrated in the following examples, five
from the Grimm brothers and one from Hungary. A queen wishes, “If only I
had a child as white as snow, as red as blood, and as black as ebony,” and soon
afterward she has a baby girl as white as snow, with lips as red as blood, and
with hair as black as ebony (KHM 53; AT 709, Snow White). A childless
woman wishes for a baby, “even if it were ever so small — no larger than a
thumb,” and seven months later she gives birth to a perfectly formed baby, no
larger than a thumb (KHM 37; AT 700, Tom Thumb). A childless man ex-
claims, “I will have a child, even if it is a hedgehog,” and his wife gives birth
to a half-human, half-hedgehog baby (KHM 108; AT 441, Hans My Hedge-
hog). A husband and wife with seven sons finally have a baby girl, but she is
sickly, so the father sends her brothers for water to perform an emergency
baptism. The boys are slow in returning, and, fearing that the girl will die
without being baptized, the father cries out in anger, “I wish that those boys
would all turn into ravens.” They turn into ravens and fly away (KHM 25; AT
451, The Maiden Who Seeks Her Brother). A mother, irritated at a misbehaving
daughter, says, “I wish that you would turn into a raven and fly away,” and
the girl turns into a raven and flies away (KHM 93; AT 401, The Princess Trans-
formed into Deer). An unmarried woman says to herself, “I wish God would
give me a sweetheart, even if one of the devils he were,” and a young lad comes
to court her, who turns out to be the devil himself (Degh 1965, no. 4).

An important variation on the reckless-wish theme is the Grimms’ caution-
ary tale “The Fisherman and His Wife.” A magic fish grants a fisherman a
series of wishes, each one demanded by his greedy wife. She asks for a better
house, then a mansion, then to be king (not queen!), then emperor, and then
pope. All wishes are fulfilled, until the dissatisfied woman violates a taboo by
finally asking to become “like God,” at which point a violent storm erupts,
and the fisherman and his wife find themselves back in the filthy shack where
they started (KHM 19; AT 555, The Fisher and His Wife; Motif C773.1, “Tabu:
making unreasonable requests. Given power of fulfilling all wishes, person
oversteps moderation and is punished”). In a Japanese version, “The Stone-
cutter,” the recipient of magic wishes does not violate a tabu, but goes full
circle following his own desire to become ever more powerful. The benefi-
ciary of a mountain spirit, the stonemcutter first asks to become a rich man,
then a prince, then the sun, then a cloud, then a cliff, and finally a stonemcutter
(Brauns 1885, 87–90). No single wish is deemed foolish or excessive. No
punishment is meted out. In the end, the stonemcutter wishes himself back where
he started, and all is well.

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