In elite literature, examples of individuation may be found in innumerable works, including Charles Dickens's Oliver Twist (1837–1839) and David Copperfield (1849–1850), and Mark Twain's The Adventures of Tom Sawyer (1876). In the latter, Twain describes the experiences of two runaway boys: Tom and Huck. The novel is brought to a close (Chapter XXXV) with the triumphal return of the runaways with plenty of cash (cf. treasure). In the Conclusion, Twain states that the boy who ran away from home and about whom he wrote is not the same one that returned. He writes: "So endeth this chronicle. It being strictly a history of a boy, it must stop here; the story could not go much further without becoming the history of a man." The story ends where folktales with corresponding subject matter normally end: the presumed completion of the process of individuation.

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See also: Choice of Roads and Crossroads; Sister and Brother.

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Contest Won by Deception

Motifs K0–K99

Athletic contests, especially those promoting skills useful in hunting and warfare, figure prominently in popular and folk cultures from earliest history and around the world. Monuments to this interest still exist, not only in the remains of ancient sports arenas, but in tales and legends of such contests. And, if the folkloric record even remotely reflects actual events, victory did not always go to the best runners, jumpers, and hurlers. Countless folktales contradict the moralizing proverb, “Cheaters never win, and winners never cheat.”

The most basic of all athletic contests is the footrace, which has given rise to the largest number of folktales about sports deception. These are told both as animal fables and as jests featuring human actors. In animal fables, the contestants are grossly mismatched, such as a tortoise or hedgehog against a hare. The human jests typically feature an ordinary person pitted against a troll, giant, ogre, devil, or other ostensibly superhuman adversary.

In the famous Aesopic fable “The Tortoise and the Hare,” the victory goes not to a trickster, but rather to a steady plodder (AT 275A, Motif K11.3, both titled Hare and tortoise race: sleeping hare). However, most tales in this cycle depict winning by trickery, not by honest persistence. One ploy is simply to hitch a ride (K11.2, “Race won by deception: riding on the back. One contestant rides on the other’s back”). The Swiss tale “The Fox and the Snail” (Sutermeister 1873, no. 20; AT 275, The Race of the Fox and the Crayfish) is typical. The snail accepts the fox’s challenge to race from Schwäg Meadow to St. Gallen. (Authentic place names give the fable at least a degree of realism.) The snail hides himself in the fox’s bushy tail. Arriving at the finish line, the
fox turns around to see how far behind him the snail is, and the snail jumps
down from the tail and calls out, “I’m already here!” Thus, concludes the
storyteller, “the proud fox had to admit that he had lost.” Essentially the same
fable is told around the world, with only the animals changing to better repre-
sent the native creatures in the various settings. Thus, in Russia, the contest-
ants are a fox and a lobster; in northeast Africa, a lion and a turtle; among the
Kootenai Indians, an antelope and a frog; among the Seneca Indians, a beaver
and a turtle; in Japan, a cat and a crab; and in Tibet, a tiger and a frog.

An even more widespread variation of this tale cycle involves look-alike
helpers substituting for the weaker runner at various points along the course
(K11.1, “Race won by deception: relative helpers”). When the participants
are animals, the tale is categorized as type 275A^4. The Grimm brothers’ ver-
sion, “The Hare and the Hedgehog” (KHM 187) is exemplary. A hedgehog,
tired of a neighboring hare’s incessant belittling remarks, challenges the hare
to a footrace. The hedgehog prepares for the contest by having his wife hide
at the finish line. The two runners take off, but to the hare’s great surprise,
when he arrives at the goal a hedgehog (whom he takes for his opponent) is
already there. The hare insists that they race back, only to find a hedgehog
taunting him at the other end of the course. Unwilling to admit defeat, the
hare runs back and forth between the two markers until he drops dead from
exhaustion. In these tales facelessness and anonymity, normally marks of the
weak and the poor, become weapons, not merely for survival, but also for
victory, power, and revenge against indignities suffered in the past. Under-
standably, type 275A^4 tales are especially well represented in the folklore of
minority cultures; in the United States, they are found abundantly in African-
American folklore.

Similar stories are also told with human actors, in which case they are
categorized as type 1074 (with the same title as Motif K11.1.1, above). With
human contestants, the opponent is normally cast as an ogre, who by all ex-
pectations should be the more powerful player. This ogre is often identified as
the devil. The Swedish tale “Old Nick and the Girl” (Djurklou 1901, 87–95)
is typical. A girl who loves to dance accepts a pair of leather shoes from Old
Nick (a euphemism for the devil), under the agreement that after using them
for one year she will surrender herself to him. When he comes to get her, she
complains that the shoes were inferior, so she should not have to pay for
them. To prove their inferiority, she challenges the devil to a race. He is to
wear the leather shoes in question, and she a pair of shoes made from bark.
They will run from Fryksund to Frykstad and back again. (Authentic place
names again give the tale an aura of credibility.) What the devil does not
know is that the girl has a twin sister, whom she positions at one of the goals.
Although he runs “much faster than one can ride on the railway,” the girl he

thinks is his legitimate opponent is waiting at the turning point and the finish
line. He runs the full course three times, but in the end has to acknowledge
himself beaten, thus losing his claim on the heroine.

The devil of these tales is not the scheming, wickedly clever, and nearly
omnipotent Satan of traditional Judaism and Christianity, but rather an unso-
phisticated, selfish bully with very limited powers of both body and mind.
Official theology may offer dire warnings against dealing with the devil (as
evidenced, for example, in such cautionary tales as the Fauset chapbook of
1587), but in these tales simple country folk make pacts with the devil and
win! Perhaps the dupes of these jests are devils in name only, with their actual
genealogies leading back to the trolls, ogres, giants, and even gods of my-
thologies discredited—but not entirely supplanted—by Christianity.

One such lecher deity-turned-demon is Odin or Wodan, who—soon after
the conversion of northern Europe to Christianity—reappeared in folk belief
as the Wild Huntsman. Encounters between him and mortals, recorded in
innumerable local and regional legends, often include an athletic challenge.
“Wod, the Wild Huntsman” (Colshorn and Colshorn 1834, 192–193) from
northern Germany presents such an episode. A drunken peasant, returning
home through the woods late one night, is accosted by a tall man on a white
horse who suddenly bolts down from the clouds and demands, “How strong
are you? Let’s have a contest.” He then gives the peasant one end of a chain
and challenges him to a tug-of-war. The peasant secretly wraps his end around
a tree, and the demonic rider loses (K22, “Deceptive tug-of-war. Small ani-
mal challenges two large animals to a tug-of-war. Arrange it so that they
unwittingly pull against each other [or one end of rope is tied to a tree]”).
The peasant’s prize is the blood (which he must carry in his boot) and hindquarter
of a recently killed stag. Safely at home, the peasant discovers that the meat
has turned into a bag of silver and that his boot is filled with gold.

An even better-known deceptive athletic contest from Germanic mythol-
ogy is the three-stage meet to which Brunhild subjects all suitors. She herself
is both the challenger and the promised prize for victory, but death awaits all
who fail. Gunther accepts her challenge and appears to defeat her in all three
events: shot put, long jump, and javelin throw. However, unknown to the strong
heroine, Gunther was aided in all three tasks by the great champion Siegfried,
made invisible with a magic cape. Brunhild honors her pledge and marries
Gunther, but she refuses to submit to his intimate advances, so Siegfried and
his magic cape must come to Gunther’s aid once again, this time in a bedroom
wrestling match. Brunhild is forced into submission, and, as the anonymous
poet who recorded this adventure in the thirteenth century so delicately put it,
“at love’s coming her vast strength fled so that she was now no stronger than
any woman” (Der Nibelungen Not 1947, ch. 7, 10).
Multiple athletic contests are also described in jests, typically with a rather slow-witted giant repeatedly allowing himself to be tricked by an ordinary, but clever and opportunistic human. "The Brave Little Tailor" (AT 1640, of the same title), as told by the Grimm brothers (KHM 20) and many others, knits together one such episode after another. The tailor squeezes whey from cheese, claiming it is water from a stone (AT 1060, Squeezing the [Supposed] Stone). He throws a stone (actually a bird) so high that it never returns to earth (AT 1062, Throwing the Stone). The giant bends down a tree for the hero to pick some fruit. He lets go, and the tailor flies into the air, but then claims to have jumped over the tree on purpose (AT 1051, Bending a Tree). The giant cannot match any of these feats. Another contest often featured in this cycle of multi-event tales is a climbing match between the ogre and the hero's "little daughter," or so the dupe is given to believe, but the daughter turns out to be a squirrel (AT 1073, Climbing Contest). Or the ogre agrees to wrestle with the hero's "old grandfather" and is matched against a bear, who mauls him terribly (AT 1071, Wrestling Contest [with Old Grandfather]).

Some contests between man and ogre involve practical workaday skills, in contrast to the athletic matches featured above. A very widespread example is the contest in mowing hay or grain (AT 1090, Mowing Contest), typically with an ordinary peasant pitted against the devil. The hero uses one of two strategies to win. In some tales, he and the devil mow side by side around a large field, with the hero taking the inside (and thus shorter) swath. Other tales describe an even more devious tactic. The peasant prepares the devil's patch beforehand by driving iron rods into the ground among the grain stalks. These dull the devil's scythe so severely that he cannot possibly keep pace with the peasant.

Another race involving practical skills is the sewing contest between man and devil (AT 1096, The Tailor and the Ogre in a Sewing Contest), and here too the devil is unbelievably stupid. The mortal tailor threads both needles: his with a modest length of thread and the devil's with a piece a hundred yards long. It takes the devil so long to pull each stitch tight that the hero wins handily.

With a few exceptions, the athletic and occupational contests discussed above prove embarrassing to the heroes' victims, but they are not fatal, thus allowing a storyteller to tie together any number of episodes in a single tale. But even the most prolific storytellers must somewhere draw their yarns to a close. A much-used episode to achieve this end is the eating contest, typically with a troll or a giant (AT 1088, Eating Contest). Before the match commences, the hero hides a bag beneath his shirt; then, instead of stuffing his stomach, he stuffs the bag. The troll is amazed at the hero's capacity. To show the troll how one could eat still more, the hero pretends to cut open his belly by slitting the bag. The troll follows his example and kills himself.

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Crime and detection have been staples in folklore and fiction throughout history, and in many instances the storyteller's sense of justice sides with the lawbreaker, especially when the latter is from an oppressed class and the victim is from a privileged group. The resulting tales delight in exploits of thievery (see, for example, AT 1525–1530, 1535, 1539–1544, 1548, 1551, 1556) and also in the tricks played by the perpetrators to avoid detection.

Possibly the world's oldest detective story is the account of King Rhampshinitus's treasure chamber (Rhampshinitus, AT 950). Herodotus (1909) recorded this tale about 425 BCE in his untitled history of the Greco-Persian wars (book 2, ch. 21). As Herodotus retells the story (he himself heard it from temple priests in the Egyptian city of Memphis), two brothers gain access to the royal treasury by means of a secret passage. Seeing his wealth diminish but unable to discover how the thieves are getting inside, the king sets a trap. On their next incursion into the treasury, one of the brothers is caught in the trap. Unable to free himself and knowing that his own life is lost, he asks his brother to cut off his head and take it with him, for only by so doing can the thieves' identity be kept hidden (K407.1, "Thief has companion cut off his head so that he may escape detection"). The free brother honors this wish.

After finding the headless thief in the trap and surmising what has happened, the king hangs the corpse outside the palace, instructing the guards to take notice of anyone who is seen lamenting nearby. But this plan fails, for the surviving brother gets the guards drunk and steals the body. The king then sets up his own daughter as bait, sending her to a brothel with instructions to give herself to any man who will confess to her the most outrageous thing he has ever done. The thief accepts the challenge, but, sensing a trap, he prepares himself by putting the arm from a dead man in his own sleeve. He boasts of his crime to the princess, who seizes him by the arm to capture him, but he leaves her holding the corpse's arm and makes his escape. When the king learns of this latest audacious trick, he is so impressed with the thief's cleverness and verve that he not only pardons him for his past crimes but gives him the princess in marriage as well.

A similar episode is contained in "Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves" from the Thousand and One Nights (Burton 1887, 13:219–246). The same tale, often with surprising adherence to details of plot, has made its way into international folklore and has been collected in a broad swath of countries from Iceland to the Philippines.

Most folkloric accounts of unpunished theft are more mundane than the burglary of a king's treasury. Many folktales describe a servant (or wife) stealing food from a master's kitchen, a commonplace act that many storytellers and their listeners could identify with. The Priest's Guest and the Eaten Chicken (AT 1741; Motif K2137, same title) circulated widely in European jest-books from the thirteenth century onward. It is also found in the Thousand and One Nights (Burton 1888, 15:255–258) and as a folktale from India westward through the Arabic world, virtually all of Europe, the Caribbean Islands, and North America.

A version collected by Richard Erdoes and Alfonso Ortiz (1984, 339–341) on the Rosebud Sioux Reservation in South Dakota retains all the earthy humor of its old-world antecedents. Spider Man invites Coyote for dinner at his lodge. After instructing his wife to prepare two buffalo livers, Spider Man goes out. Spider Man's wife is angry that she will get only leftovers from the feast, but she proceeds with her task. The frying livers smell so good that she cannot resist tasting a little piece, then another, finally eating all of both livers. Coyote arrives, and Spider Man's wife warns him that "we always have the balls of our guests for dinner." Coyote runs off in a frenzy, just as Spider Man returns. His wife explains the guest's unexpected behavior: "He didn't want to share the two livers with you, so he ran off with both of them." Spider Man pursues his fleecing friend while shouting, "Leave me at least one!" but to no avail.

Most recent European versions are more genteel in that the thieving cook sets up her alibi by telling the guest that his ears are at risk, not his manhood. As in this Native American version, most—but not all—renditions of this material side with the cook (sometimes a wife, sometimes a hired servant), showing obvious delight at her ingenuity in shifting onto a guest the blame for her theft. Some stories' titles demonstrate this positive bias, for example "Clever Gretel" (Grimm 1980, KHM 77) and "Clever Mollie" (Young and Young 1989, no. 71). Or the storytellers may turn essentially the same plot
into a cautionary tale, warning about the wiles of women, as in the Indian version "The Good Husband and the Bad Wife" (Kingscote and Sastri 1890, no. 11).

The theft of food by an underling, who then evades punishment with a clever deception, was also a favorite subject for ancient fabulists. Fables, of course, have traditionally been a relatively safe medium for the exposure of human foibles, especially those likely to be displayed in a culture strictly differentiated by class. Servants have been eating their masters' food surreptitiously, then making wild excuses if caught, as long as there have been servants and masters. Traditional fables, by hiding the human actors behind masks of animals, provide a layer of safety for the expression of sentiments that could not be stated openly in an authoritarian environment.

"The Stag without a Heart" (AT 52, The Ass Without a Heart, Motif K402.3.), one of the Aesopic Fables of Babrius (Perry 1984, 117–123), provides an excellent example. A sick lion, unable to hunt, asks his companion, the fox, to lure a stag to the lion's den. This the fox does by convincing the gullible stag that he has been chosen as the dying lion's successor as king of beasts. The stag enters the den, and the overeager lion sets upon him, clawing his ears, but otherwise leaving him unwounded. The stag dashes into the woods.

The lion bullies the fox into trying the ruse a second time. The fox approaches the stag again, claiming that the stag misinterpreted the lion's eagerness. "He only wanted to give you advice for your upcoming kingship," clarifies the duplicitous fox. The stag accepts this explanation and returns to the den, where he is struck dead by the lion. The lion gorges himself on the fresh kill with the hungry fox looking on. When the opportunity presents itself, the stealthy fox steals the heart and devours it. Not finding the prized piece, the lion confronts the fox. "He had no heart," answers the crafty thief. "What kind of heart could he or any creature have who came a second time into a lion's den?" The lion finds no argument against this logic, and the fox's theft remains undetected.

Modern versions of this fable usually substitute "brains" for "heart," reflecting current views that the brain, not the heart—as believed in antiquity—is the seat of intelligence.

Essentially the same fable is told in The Punchatastra (1964, 395–399), with a lion, a jackal, and a donkey as actors. The story also works well with human actors, as shown by Flavius Avianus, a fourth-century Latin writer, in his "The Pig without a Heart" (Perry 1984, 533–534). Here a pig tramples his master's grain field and is punished by having an ear cut off. Learning nothing from the pain, the pig enters the field again, and the landowner cuts off another ear. Unrepentant, the beast tramples the crop a third time, so it is slaughtered and served at a banquet. The cook preparing the feast eats the pig's heart. The master looks for the missing delicacy and accosts the cook, who claims, "The pig had no heart. It showed this when it kept returning to the grain field, only to lose parts of its body." The master accepts this explanation, and the cook goes unpunished.

In another account of stolen food, "The Fowl with One Leg" (AT 785A, The Goose with One Leg; Motif K402.1, "The goose without a leg"), a thieving cook has an even more audacious explanation for the missing piece. Told in Boccaccio's The Decameron (day 6, tale 4), the story also appears as a folktale throughout Europe as well as in the Western Hemisphere.

A South Carolina story contains all the essential elements of its European forebears (Levine 1977, 128). A slave cuts one leg of the chicken he is preparing for his master. When confronted, the slave explains, "I must be a one-legged chicken, sir. I have seen plenty of one-legged chickens." Later, master and slave come across some chickens standing on one leg and huddled together to keep warm. The slave draws his master's attention to these one-legged birds. The master responds by shouting "Sish!" and the chickens put down their raised legs and flutter off. "They all have two legs," admonishes the master, to which the slave replies, "Sir, if you had said 'Sish!' to the chicken on the table, it would have stuck out its other leg, too." Here the thief fails to escape detection, but upon being exposed, he saves himself from punishment with a clever response.

Cleverness and stupidity are often featured in the same tale, each quality being delineated through contrast with the other. One such tale, an exemplary account of a thief escaping detection by trickery, is "The Simpleton and the Sharper" from the Thousand and One Nights (Burton 1885, 5:3–83; AT 1529, Thief Claims to Have Been Transformed into a Horse; Motif K403, "Thief claims to have been transformed into an ass"). A man steals a donkey from a simpleton, gives it to an accomplice, then places himself in the missing animal's halter. When the victim sees a human in his donkey's halter, the trickster claims that Allah had transformed him into a donkey for drunkenness and for abusing his mother, but that miraculously the enchantment just now has been lifted. The dupe congratulates the trickster for the reversal of his punishment and lets him walk away. The jest has a second punch line: A short time later, the simpleton sees his former donkey for sale at a market, and, thinking that the man has again been placed under his former curse, he approaches the beast and says, "For shame, getting drunk and beating your mother again! I'll not buy you a second time."

Stories abound in folklore and in popular culture about confidence games based on the victims' own greed and dishonesty. Most often these trickster tales focus on the theft itself, but in some instances the emphasis is on the evasion of punishment.
One example, often attributed to the Turkish trickster Nasreddin Hodja (also written Nasrettin Hoca, as well as other spellings), is the tale of “The Cauldron That Died” (Nesin 1988, 59; AT 1592B, The Pot Has a Child and Dies; Motif J1531.3, same title). Nasreddin borrows a large cauldron from his neighbor and returns it with a small pot inside. “Your cauldron had a baby,” says the trickster. The neighbor, happy to take advantage of Nasreddin’s simplemindedness, accepts the explanation and both pots. Later, Nasreddin borrows the cauldron again, but never returns it. When questioned by the owner, Nasreddin claims that the cauldron died. “How could a cauldron die?” challenges the neighbor. Nasreddin responds, “You had no doubt that it gave birth, yet you doubt if it died!” And thus the trickster deprives his victim of any recourse.

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Seduction or Deceptive Marriage

Motifs K1300–K1399

In Stith Thompson’s taxonomy, seduction or deceptive marriage is a subcategory of the larger theme of Deception (ch. K), and he remarks that “there has always been a greater interest in deceptions connected with sex conduct than any other” (Thompson 1977, 202). Motifs in the seduction category include the seduction of mortals by gods (K1301), seduction through disguise or substitution (K1310), tricking the object of the seduction into entering a room (K1330), entering a girl’s (or man’s) room (or bed) by trick (K1340), and persuading (or wooing) a woman by trick (K1350).

Current usage would categorize many of the tales that appear under the heading “seduction” as rape. William Little observes that “the semantic and social distinctions that separate seduction and rape were less significant in the Middle Ages than they are in the twentieth century” (Little 1988, 1162). In literature and popular culture, seduction also has meanings that are not explicitly sexual. Little states, “[t]hese uses refer to leading a person astray in conduct or belief, temptation, enticement, and beguiling in order to do something immoral,” but among Little’s first examples is an instance of literary seduction calculated not to produce immorality but to prevent it. In Alf Layla wa-Layla (The Arabian Nights) (eighth to seventeenth centuries), Scheherazade must convince her husband, the sultan, to discontinue his custom of serial murder and replacement of each new wife. While Little asserts that in literature seduction generally has involved “inducing a woman to surrender her chastity,” and he numbers among its subthemes “abduction, rape, libertinism, lechery, the rake, and the philanderer” (Little 1988, 1159), literary seduction is hardly limited to men, and the case of Scheherazade suggests an even more
general sense of the term—the employment of trickery and temptation to cause people to commit whatever acts they would normally resist, including acts of love and mercy.

MYTHOLOGY

Some form of seduction is a motive factor in many folktales and literary works, including the foundational narratives of a number of cultures, such as Satan’s seduction of Eve (and by extension Adam) in the Old Testament. Wendy O’Flaherty states that one of the explanatory narratives for the linga cults of India holds that in the guise of a beggar Shiva seduced the wives of religious men who had not acknowledged his divinity. As punishment, they castrated the “beggar,” but when his linga fell to the ground darkness fell over the earth, and they pleaded with Shiva to restore things as they were. His condition was that they worship the linga for all eternity (O’Flaherty 1992, 27).

At the top of the Greek pantheon, the case of Zeus offers multiple examples of seduction of mortal women by gods (K1301) and seduction by disguise or substitution (K1310), along with the related motifs of god as shape-shifter (A120.1), gods in relation to mortals (A180), and philandering god (A188.1). In the encounters with Semele, a Theban princess who later gives birth to Dionysus, and with Niobe, mother of Argos, Zeus appears in his own guise. Appearing to Alcmene in the form of her husband (K1311, “Seduction by masking as woman’s husband”), Zeus fathers Heracles. In the form of a shower of gold, Zeus comes to Danaë, princess of Argos and mother of Perseus. As a white bull, he seduces Europa, mother of Minos, Rhadamanths, and Serpedon. To Leda, queen of Sparta, Zeus appears as a swan in a union that produces two eggs, which hatch to reveal Polydeuces (Pollux) and Helen of Troy (in other variants, two sets of twins are born: Castor and Polydeuces and Clytemnestra and Helen of Troy) (Elkhadem 1981, 193–194; Leadbetter 1995–2003).

The motifs of shape-shifting gods and seduction through disguise combine to different effect in some cautionary Latin American variants of the Iloronra (weeping woman) tale. A young man walking home after a night of carousing meets a beautiful woman who invites him to embrace her. When the man reaches for her, she reverts to her real appearance and her face becomes hideous, or she lures him into a lake, where she pulls him under the water (Pérez 1951, 24; Barakat 1969, 271). Another Iloronra variant warns poor women against seduction by upper-class men who will soon abandon them. Here the woman is mourning the loss of her children, whom she killed in despair when her wealthy suitor left her for another woman, or out of jealousy when he remained interested in the children but not in her (Kirtley 1960, 156–157; Casias 1998). Cautionary tales regarding seduction also take the form of urban legends, in which those who succumb risk waking up to discover consequences that include intentional infection with HIV (the lover has left, and “Welcome to the world of AIDS” is scrawled in lipstick on the bathroom mirror) or loss of bodily organs (the seducee wakes up groggy and with a surgical scar; doctors later confirm that a kidney has been stolen for sale) (Mikkelsen and Mikkelson 2000, 2002). Here the seduction itself is only an instrument in some other nefarious plot.

Somchintana Thongthew-Ratarasarn discusses a Thai folk practice of magical seduction. In a 1979 article, she explains that

[1]ove magic is a current belief-in-practice in central Thailand. It is a complex system of magic that is designed to induce its victims to fall helplessly in love with a designated suitor. Love magic is used within a general Buddhist context, but the magic itself consists primarily of elements derived from animistic folk beliefs and the Brahmanistic tradition. (Thongthew-Ratarasarn 1979, 3–4)

She describes a variety of material objects that play a role in seduction, including sacred diagrams, sacralized cigarette smoke, and male and female dolls placed in a small bottle of perfume and carried in the man’s pocket or else buried in the backyard of the desired woman.

A male can cause a female to fall in love with him by sacralizing a cigarette, smoking it in her presence, and puffing the smoke so that it touches her. The smoke is more sacred and effective if it is from the traditional Thai cigarettes made of dried banana leaves or dried nipa palm leaves (Nipa fruticans), stuffed with prepared tobacco. (Thongthew-Ratarasarn 1979, 12)

In literature, the Don Juan figure has been a long-lived and remarkably versatile archetype of seduction, beginning with Tirso de Molina’s Burlador de Sevilla (1620) and continuing with such works as Molière’s Don Juan (1665), Byron’s Don Juan (1819–1824), Grabbe’s Don Juan und Feist (1829), Pushkin’s Kanzenyi gost’ (1830), Dumas’s Don Juan de Marais (1836), Zorrilla’s Don Juan Tenorio (1844), Cesbron’s Don Juan en automne (1975), and Leven’s Don Juan de Marco (1995) (Little 1988, 1165, 1167). In the earliest literary version of Don Juan, El Burlador de Sevilla, the consummate unregenerate sinner constitutes an extreme case even among the sharply drawn characters that were customary in seventeenth-century Spanish drama. As Charles Presberg confirms, an “eschatological drama in which a main character is consigned to hell” is “an extreme rarity in the literature of the period” (Presberg 1995, 223). Tirso’s Don Juan succeeds with women through a
combination of deception, mistaken identity, aristocratic social standing, and promises of marriage, but the libertine behavior that becomes the character's hallmark in the popular culture is in this play somewhat overshadowed. This first Don Juan's fatal error lies not in being a baríador of women, but in counting on the time to repent for it later, and thus presuming against the theological virtue of hope, one of the "unpardonable sins against the Holy Spirit" (Presberg 1995, 223). To various reminders of the inevitability of death and judgment, Don Juan inevitably replies that there is plenty of time, thus perverting the virtue of hope of salvation to the sin of presuming it, and leading to the chilling scene of a graveyard banquet at which Don Juan mockingly takes the cold hand of a statue of a man he has murdered, the father of one of the women he has betrayed, and is dragged down into the pits of hell. This dramatic moment is, however, only the penultimate word, as at the end of the play the temporal order that Don Juan temporarily disrupted is reestablished with a series of suitable marriages.

In Zorrilla's Don Juan Tenorio (1844), Don Juan is saved from damnation at the last moment, redeemed by the love of the virtuous Doña Inés. Zorrilla's Don Juan actually falls in love with one of his conquests and this love leads him to virtue, although not until after that woman has died. In this play, it is Doña Inés who makes the fateful (and probably heretical) wager, linking her eternal soul with his and thus convincing him to believe in the possibility of mercy. At the last moment, it is she who takes Don Juan's hand in the graveyard, snatching him away from the pit. As Joaquín Casalduero points out, the theological core of Tirso's play has been reduced to little more than a plot device serving to intensify the romanticism of Zorrilla's version (Casalduero 1975, 146–147).

Although Byron's Don Juan (1818–1825) remained unfinished, there is evidence that Byron had foreseen for his character his own version of Hell—perhaps in the form of an unhappy marriage (Marchand 1973, 8:77). Byron's ironic treatment strips the supernatural dimensions from the Don Juan myth, leaving a preternaturally attractive boy with unusual erotic opportunities, among them his twenty-three-year-old religion tutor, Doña Julia; Haidée, his true love, who revives him after he is shipwrecked on her isolated island; Gulbeyaz, the sultan's wife, who purchases Juan for her daytime pleasure, dressing him in drag and hiding him at night in the sultan's 1,500-woman harem; and a predatory Catherine the Great. Here it is always the women who have the initial designs on Juan, as well as the social power to realize them. This Don Juan is more obligeing than seducing.

The rehabilitative tendency reaches its apotheosis with Jeremy Leven's late twentieth-century cinematic version of Don Juan de Marco (1995), a Don Juan who no longer has anything for which to atone. Quite the contrary, he himself becomes the instrument of salvation for others. When the woman in the first scene of the film asks "You seduce women?" Don Juan replies "No, I never take advantage of a woman, I give women pleasure, if they desire it." At the outset of the film, this contemporary Don Juan is on his way to commit suicide because of despair at the loss of the woman with whom he had hoped to spend "all eternity." The police arrive and send for a psychiatrist, who takes him to the hospital. As the story unfolds, developments in the institution confirm Don Juan's mystical attraction—not only are all of the women obviously smitten, but one of the male attendants learns to dance and moves to Spain. Don Juan has a similar effect on the marriage of the psychiatrist and his wife, as doctor and patient trade therapeutic roles. Not only is Don Juan de Marco devoid of any of the Satanic imagery that characterized Tirso's and Zorrilla's plays, but an abundance of conventional religious signals points in the other direction. He draws the jaded psychiatrist into a virtual
cathexism of rhetorical questions: "What is sacred? Of what is the spirit made? What is worth living for? What is worth dying for?" Whereas earlier Don Juan had embodied the sins of presumption and decadence, this one personifies the virtues of sensual and spiritual loving. Like Scheherazade, this contemporary Don Juan employs seduction, much of it verbal, to persuade his objects to reject a rigid, destructive status quo.

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See also: Entrance into Girl's (Man's) Room (Bed) by Trick.

REFERENCES


Entrance into Girl's (Man's) Room (Bed) by Trick

Motif K1340

Trickster tales often display substantial ingenuity, describing confidence games that involve multiple complex steps. However, the tricks designed to gain entry into the bed or bedroom of a member of the opposite sex are usually quite straightforward, suggesting perhaps that the "victims" in such pranks are, in truth, willing participants or that, as Wendy Doniger remarks in The Bedtrick, "the victims lie to themselves as much as the tricksters lie to them..." The lying of the trickster is the obviously false element in a bedtrick, but the lying of the victim, though less obvious, is often what sustains the myth-ology [2000, 8]. The motif of the bedtrick is ancient and widespread, occurring in the Old Testament, the Rig Veda and ancient Indian storytelling tradition. Greek myth, the Arabian Nights, several of Shakespeare's plays, various operas, and even movies (Doniger provides an extensive filmography of bedtricks and related plots [567–576]).

In an appendix, Doniger lists motifs from the Motif-Index corresponding to plots of the bedtrick, noting that these motifs encompass "four possible permutations of gender and seeking/avoiding: women, avoiding or seeking; and men, avoiding or seeking" (Doniger 2000, 493).

MYTHOLOGY AND LEGEND

In myth and legend there are many stories of gods and heroes shape-shifting in order to bed women they desire. Greek mythology abounds in stories of
FOLKTALES

There is a widespread group of tales called generically *The Princess Always Answers 'No' (AT 853A; K1331)*. Although the setup varies, each story features a young woman instructed by her protective father (or in some instances her husband) always to say no to any proposal made to her by another man. Sensing the situation, the trickster asks a series of questions designed to elicit a desired response with a negative answer, such as: “Do you mind if I visit you tonight?” “Do you want me to stay outside in the cold?” “Do you want to sleep by yourself?” “Will you be angry if I . . . ?” The princess always answers no. The trickster gets what he wants, and—one suspects—his bed partner gets what she wants as well. Two examples of Type 853A tales, from opposite sides of Europe, are “No!” from Russia (Afanasiev 1966, 42–43) and “The Shepherd at Court” from Italy (Calvino 1980, no. 60).

Sometimes, as noted above, the sex-seeking trickster is a woman. A wick-edly ironic tale featuring such a heroine is “A Wife Takes the Place of Her Husband’s Lover” (AT 1379; K1843), popular in Renaissance jest-books. The basic plot is simple, but ingenious. A man repeatedly proposes an intimate rendezvous with a maid, who reports this indiscretion to his wife. Acting on the wife’s orders, the maid accepts his proposal, but at the appointed time the wife herself goes to the dark meeting place, and thus the husband unwittingly has an affair with his own wife. Some versions include a second stinger. After satisfying himself, the husband decides to share the unseen woman with a friend, whom he sends into the dark room and whom the wife receives without objection.

Renaissance European examples of this tale include “An English Dyer Who Had an Adventure with His Wife” (Poggio Bracciolini 1928, no. 116) and “A Man, Having Lain with His Wife, Believing That He Was in Bed with His Servant, Sends His Friend to Do the Same Thing” (Margaret of Navarre 1922, 1:8). An American Indian tale with the same plot is “Iktome Sleeps with His Wife by Mistake” (Eredo and Ortiz 1984, 372–374). One can only speculate how this European jest made its way into the repertory of a Sioux storyteller.

The Type 853A and K1379 tales discussed above are, as a rule, playful and lighthearted. No one gets hurt. Private space is violated, but—if one accepts the fiction of the stories—the ensuing encounters are mutually pleasurable.

The seductions featured in Type 900 tales are quite different, intended not for the sexual satisfaction of either party, but rather as a means of humiliating and subjugating a once-independent female. These tales, which belong to the taming of a slavewish wife cycle, have been reported throughout the world. An early literary version is “Pride Punished,” from Basile’s *Pentamerone* (1799, 1:10).
Type 900 tales open with a spirited (most storytellers use a negative adjective such as haughty) princess rejecting a suitor, who then disguises himself and returns to punish the offending woman. In most versions (although not in the Grimms’ tale that gives the type its name, King Thrushbeard) the hero’s revenge and subjugation process is set into motion with a seduction, enabling him—in the words of the proverb—to keep her barefoot and pregnant. This seduction usually begins when he tricks his way into her bedroom (K1341.1, “Entrance to woman’s room in golden ram. Princess’s curiosity aroused and the golden ram carried into the room. The youth is concealed inside”).

The Norwegian folktales “Haaken Grizzlebeard” (Asbjørnsen and Moe 1983, 2:273–281) is typical. Disguised as a beggar, the rejected suitor offers the princess a golden spinning wheel in exchange for allowing him to sleep outside her bedroom door. She agrees, but during the night, claiming to be cold, he begins to chatter so loudly that she fears he will awaken her father, so to keep him quiet she lets him enter her room and sleep on the floor (K1361.3, “Seduction by begging into woman’s room to get warm”). Another day he offers her another trinket, and he is allowed to sleep on her floor. On a third day he offers yet another item, in exchange for being permitted to sleep next to the princess’s bed. Now trusting him, she agrees, but before the night is over, again to keep himself from freezing, he ends up in her bed. No further details are given, but some time later the princess has a baby, so she has no choice but to surrender herself to the man who made her pregnant.

An even simpler ruse is used in the Austrian folktales “The French Princess and the Turkish Emperor” (Reifenstein 1979, no. 44). The rejected suitor disguises himself as a woman and thus gains access to the proud princess’s bedroom, where he takes advantage of her innocence (K1321.1, “Man disguised as woman admitted to women’s quarters: seduction”): “She did not know what he was doing with her, for she was still too naive, too young.” Other tales describe additional tricks, none terribly ingenious. These episodes imply that no man should find it unduly difficult to gain access to a woman’s bedroom, even if she is an independent-minded princess.

Many Type 900 tales also have a prejudicial national or ethnic subtext. These are not stories of magic. The narrators give no signals that they are set in a fantasy world, a realm of a different time and place than ours. In fact, in many instances the locale and sometimes even the principal characters are precisely identified. For example, in a Low German variant (“Fritz and the Princess,” Wisser 1982, no. 44), the scorned suitor is King Fritz (Frederick the Great) of Prussia, who first seduces and then reforms a haughty Austrian princess. Similar tales from Germany (“The Three Bulls,” Kuhn 1859, 2:251–255), France (“The King of France,” Karlinger and Gréciano 1974, no. 50), and Denmark (“Greyfoot,” Buy 1899, 35) tell how German, French, and Danish kings seduce and tame sharp-tongued princesses from England. National pride and aggressive masculine values combine in these stories to identify the domineering king with the storyteller’s own homeland, whereas the shrewish princess is said to come from a neighboring and competing country.

Another widespread family of tales depicting a mean-spirited man tricking his way into a woman’s bedroom is Type 882, The Wager on the Wife’s Chastity. Immortalized by its incorporation into Boccaccio’s Decameron (2:9) and Shakespeare’s Cymbeline, this tale also has made its way around the world in popular literature and oral folklore. In summary, it describes a wager between a trusting husband (call him Posthumus) and a rascally acquaintance (Iachimo), who bets that he can seduce Posthumus’s wife Imogen. (The names are from Shakespeare.) Knowing that Imogen will never accept his advances, Iachimo has himself smuggled into her bedroom, hidden inside a chest, which Imogen naively has agreed to accept for temporary safekeeping. After Imogen is asleep, Iago slips out of the chest, observes details of the bedroom, takes note of a mole beneath the sleeping woman’s breast, steals a ring from her night table, then returns to his hiding place. Soon afterward he claims victory by presenting an evidence of an illicit rendezvous to Posthumus. The distraught husband orders his supposedly unfaithful wife killed, but she escapes. With time the truth comes out, husband and wife are reunited, and the trickster is exposed and punished.

A final tale type that often features a crafty entry into another person’s bedroom is The Search for the Lost Husband (AT 425), a family of folktales with worldwide distribution. The Norwegian “East of the Sun and West of the Moon” (Asbjørnsen and Moe 1982, 1:230–242) is exemplary.

In the first part of this complicated story, the heroine marries a man who is a bear by day but a human by night. One night (acting on her mother’s bad advice), she lights a candle to sneak a look at her sleeping husband. Drops of melted tallow awaken him (C916.1), and he angrily tells her that because of a spell cast on him by his stepmother, he will now have to go to a castle east of the sun and west of the moon and marry a woman with a nose three ells long. He then disappears.

Undaunted, his true wife sets out to find him. After much travail she arrives at his castle, but he does not recognize her. He is about to marry the long-nosed princess, who—as events make clear—already has access to and control over his bedroom. The heroine bribes the unworthy bride-to-be with three items that she has obtained on her way—a golden apple, a golden carding comb, and a golden spinning wheel, thus gaining access to her husband’s bedroom for three successive nights (D2006.1.4, “Forgotten fiancée buys place in husband’s bed and reawakens his memory”). There she hopes to bring him to a recognition of his former marriage, but the false bride gives him a sleeping
potion each evening, so for the first two nights he sleeps through the heroine’s entreaties. The third night, sensing that something is amiss, the prince only pretends to consume the drink offered to him by his fiancée, hears the heroine’s pleas, comes to accept her as his only legitimate wife, and the two of them live happily ever after.

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