

INTRODUCTION

The Vibrant Body of the Grimms' Folk and Fairy Tales, Which Do Not Belong to the Grimms

The example of the Brothers Grimm had its imitators even in Russia, including the person of the first editor of Russian Folk Tales, A. N. Afanasyev. From the viewpoint of contemporary folkloristics, even a cautious reworking and stylization of the texts, written down from their performers, is considered absolutely inadmissible in scientific editions. But in the era of the Brothers Grimm, in the world of romantic ideas and principles, this was altogether permissible. To the credit of the Brothers Grimm, it must be added that they were almost the first to establish the principle of publication of the authentic, popular oral poetic productions.

—Y. M. Sokolov, *Russian Folklore* (1966)¹

*It is the brothers Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm who illustrate the connection between folklore and textual criticism most powerfully, just as they demonstrate the continuing influence of Herder on thought. Nationalist politics and folkloric endeavours intertwine throughout all the Grimm brothers' projects, but the Europe-wide significance of the *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* (first edition 1812) was the inspiration it provided to proto-folklorists to go out and collect "vom Volksmund," that is from the mouth of the people (whether or not this was the Grimms' own practice).*

—Timothy Baycroft and David Hopkin, *Folklore and Nationalism in Europe During the Long Nineteenth Century* (2012)²

Just what is a legacy, and what was the corpus of folk and fairy tales that the Brothers Grimm passed on to the German people—a corpus that grew, expanded, and eventually spread itself throughout the world? What do we mean when we talk about cultural legacy and memory? Why have the Grimms' so-called German

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tales spread throughout the world and become so universally international? Have the Grimms' original intentions been betrayed? Did they betray them? If we fail to address these questions, the cultural legacy of the Grimms' tales and their relevance cannot be grasped. This does not mean that there are right and wrong answers. Rather, the questions set a framework for inquiry that will lead to greater insight into the Grimms' legacies, for there is more than just one that they bequeathed to the German people.

There are several definitions of legacy in the *Oxford Universal Dictionary*, and the most pertinent one for my purposes concerns legacy as a bequest: "what one bequeaths . . . anything handed down by an ancestor or a predecessor."³ But legacy also carries with it a notion of binding or connecting something to someone as in the Italian verb *legare*—to bind, to connect, to attach. And I want to suggest that the Grimms bound themselves to a German popular tradition of storytelling through the collecting of tales that belonged to the German people. Whether these tales actually belonged to the German people is irrelevant here because the Grimms assumed that these tales, largely gathered on Hessian and Westphalian soil, emanated from the lips of German people, primarily from the lower classes but also from the upper classes. What counts is their assumption, and what counts is their firm belief in the ancient origins of storytelling. What counts is that they wanted to discover and forge a German heritage that had greater cultural value than they realized. The Grimms wanted to save the folk and fairy tales from extinction and to bequeath this *Naturpoesie* as a gift to the German people of all social classes. Here is what they state in the first volume of the first edition of 1812:

We have tried to grasp and interpret these tales as purely as possible. In many of them one will find that the narrative is interrupted by rhymes and verses that even possess clear alliteration at times but are never sung during the telling of a tale, and these are precisely the oldest and best tales. No incident has been added or embellished and changed, for we would have shied away from expanding tales already so rich in and of themselves with their own analogies and similarities. They cannot be invented. In this regard no collection like this one has yet to appear in Germany. The tales have almost always been used as stuff to create longer stories which have been arbitrarily expanded and changed depending on their value. They have always been ripped from the hands of children even though they belonged to them, and nothing was given back to them in return. Even those people who thought about the children could not restrain themselves from mixing in mannerisms

of contemporary writing. Diligence in collecting has almost always been lacking. Just a few, noted by chance, were immediately published. Had we been so fortunate to be able to tell the tales in a very particular dialect they would have undoubtedly gained a great deal. Here we have a case where all the accomplishments of education, refinement, and artistic command of language ruin everything, and where one feels that a purified literary language as elegant as it may be for everything else, brighter and more transparent, has here, however, become more tasteless and cannot get to the heart of the matter.

We offer this book to well-meaning hands and thereby think chiefly of the blessed power that lies in these hands. We wish they will not allow these tiny morsels of poetry to be kept entirely hidden from poor and modest readers.⁴

And in the preface to the second volume of the first edition published in 1815, they state:

Our collection was not merely intended to serve the history of poetry but also to bring out the poetry itself that lives in it and make it effective: enabling it to bring pleasure wherever it can and also therefore, enabling it to become an actual educational primer. Objections have been raised against this last point because this or that might be embarrassing and would be unsuitable for children or offensive (when the tales might touch on certain situations and relations—even the mentioning of the bad things that the devil does) and that parents might not want to put the book into the hands of children. That concern might be legitimate in certain cases, and then one can easily make selections. On the whole it is certainly not necessary. Nature itself provides our best evidence, for it has allowed these and those flowers and leaves to grow in their own colors and shapes. If they are not beneficial for any person or personal needs, something that the flowers and leaves are unaware of, then that person can walk right by them, but the individual cannot demand that they be colored and cut according to his or her needs. Or, in other words, rain and dew provide a benefit for everything on earth. Whoever is afraid to put plants outside because they might be too delicate and could be harmed and would rather water them inside cannot demand to put an end to the rain and the dew. Everything that is natural can also become

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beneficial. And that is what our aim should be. Incidentally, we are not aware of a single salutary and powerful book that has edified the people, in which such dubious matters don't appear to a great extent, even if we place the Bible at the top of the list. Making the right use of a book doesn't result in finding evil, rather, as an appealing saying puts it: evidence of our hearts. Children read the stars without fear, while others, according to folk belief, insult angels by doing this.⁵

I have quoted extensively from the two prefaces of the first edition because they significantly embody the early intentions of the Grimms' legacy of tales that they bequeathed to the German people. What is striking, I believe, about their language is their inclination to use metaphors of nature, religion, and education. This is also the language of German romanticism—idealistic and somewhat mystical. For the Grimms the folk and fairy tales were divinely inspired and pure. They evolved organically, encapsulating human experience and behavior, and it was through the common people if not people of all social classes that their “essential” messages were remembered and articulated. These messages contained information and truths about human experience, but they were not didactic commandments or lessons. As I have stated in the introduction to my translation of the first edition of *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* (*Children's and Household Tales*):⁶ Though mindful of the educational value of their collection, the Grimms shied away from making the tales in their collection moralistic or overly didactic. They viewed the morality in the tales as naïve and organic, and readers, young and old, could intuit lessons from them spontaneously because of their “pure” poetry.

In his book, *Einfache Formen* (*Simple Forms*, 1930) André Jolles claims that the Grimms saw a paradoxical morality in the miraculous events of folk and fairy tales alike. Jolles writes that the basic foundation of these tales derives from the paradox that the miraculous is not miraculous in the fairy tale; rather it is natural, self-evident, a matter of course. “The miraculous is here the only possible guarantee that the immorality of reality has stopped.”⁷ The readers' interpretations of folk and fairy tales are natural because of the profound if not divine nature of the tales, and in this sense, the Grimms envisioned themselves as moral cultivators of a particular cultural heritage and their collection as an educational primer of ethics, values, and customs that would grow on readers who would grow by reading these living relics of the past and also by retelling them. In collecting and publishing the tales and all their other philological works, the Grimms were actually returning “gifts” of the people through writing and print that would safeguard folk culture. In addition, their work on the German language and medieval literature contributed to nation building, not

through politics but through a profound interdisciplinary and cultural approach to words that tied different Germanic peoples together. Not only did the tales become a great source of cultural memory, but their unusual romantic approach to philology and literature played a great role in forging a new discipline at German universities. As Jeffrey Peck has remarked:

Any critical history of *Germanistik* that wants to unearth its origins, especially in struggles for national identity, seems always to begin with the Grimm Brothers. The Grimms represent in their work what [Hans Ulrich] Gumbrecht typifies for Romanticism: “National identity—as a representation of collective identity—seems to depend—at least for the early 19th century—on the existence of socially distant folktales and historically distant medieval cultural forms, which can be identified as the objectifications of one’s own people.” Merely the titles of the Grimms’ publications reflect their preoccupation with “the German” and the German past: *German Legends* (2 vols., 1816–18) and their periodical *Old German Woods* (1813–16); Jacob’s own projects, *Old German Song* (1811), *German Grammar* (1819–37), *German Monuments of Law* (1828), *German Mythology* (1835), *History of the German language* (2 vols., 1848); and, of course, their well-known *Fairy Tales* and the *German Dictionary*.⁸

The Corpus of the Tales

Here it should be pointed out that the Grimms’ tales are not strictly speaking “fairy tales,” and they never used that term, which, in German, would be *Feenmärchen*. Their collection is much more diverse and includes animal tales, legends, tall tales, nonsense stories, fables, anecdotes, religious legends, and, of course, magic tales (*Zauber märchen*), which are clearly related to the great European tradition of fairy tales that can be traced back to ancient Greece and Rome and beyond. It is because their collection had such deep roots and a broad European heritage that the Grimms asserted that reading these tales would serve as an education for young and old alike. In some ways their collection was intended to be part of the European civilizing process, not just a national legacy. It was never intended for children even if it became children’s reading matter, something I shall address in chapter one.

In this regard, the corpus of their collected tales was formed to change constantly and to remain alive forever as vital talking points in oral and literary traditions. Collecting was an act of resuscitation. Editing and translating were

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artistic methods that guaranteed the conservation and communication of the indelible nature of the tales. Incredibly, the pulse of their tales can still be felt today. The magic spell of their tales binds us. Here it is important to note that the legacy of the tales is not the only legacy that the Grimms bequeathed to the German people. One could also study their other legacies with regard to legends (*Deutsche Sagen*, 1816–18), myths (*Deutsche Mythologie*, 1835), linguistics (*Deutsche Grammatik*, 1819–37, and *Deutsches Wörterbuch*, 1854–63), and jurisprudence (*Deutsche Rechtsaltertümer*, 1828). For some scholars, the Grimms' greatest achievement was the creation of the first great *German Dictionary*, but it would be foolish to try to single out the Grimms' most important contribution to the German cultural heritage. Overall their philological, aesthetic, legal, and ethical concerns coalesced in the *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* that absorbed them from 1806 until their deaths in 1859 and 1863.

In Jens Sennewald's highly significant study, *Das Buch das wir sind* ("The Book That We Are"), he explores and explains the intentions and concepts developed by the Grimms as romantic writers and philologists just as Jacob had sought over two hundred years ago to clarify their beliefs and methods to the writer Achim von Arnim,⁹ their friend, who provided the contact to Georg August Reimer, the publisher of the first edition of *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* in 1812. Sennewald emphasizes that we must bear in mind that there was not just one edition of their large collection of tales, but seven, and that the narratives, consisting of fairy tales, animal tales, legends, religious stories, fables, tall tales, and anecdotes, were constantly edited and changed over the course of forty-seven years. These seven large editions were part of the Grimms' other linguistic and philological works. Given the Grimms' great erudition and aesthetic concerns, Sennewald maintains that the tales in all the editions need to be considered as a collective whole because these stories, according to the Grimms, originated in antiquity and continued to be formed and reformed in a flowing process of retelling and remaking that enabled words to come alive and remain alive as part of the popular cultural memory. Indeed, the Grimms wanted to resuscitate relics and muted words of the past so that they could speak for themselves. As part of the process, the Grimms saw themselves as excavators and cultivators, who sought to make the past livable for German people of all social classes and enable them to become at one with the words of the tales. This task that the Grimms set for themselves demanded great artistry and philological knowledge. Sennewald remarks:

The *poetry* of the *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* is the result of their authorship of a "romantic book." Their poetics is stamped by philological poetry: at each turn of speech the "prevailing mark" of the philologists is at work who produced highly poetical texts and

permanently concealed this singular achievement. . . . The *Kinder- und Hausmärchen*, collected by the Brothers Grimm became a “book that we are” through their poetics. The “we” of this book is one of brotherhood, of the “collaterals,” as Jacob Grimm wrote. The figures of the *Kinder- und Hausmärchen*, the *female informant* and the *collector* represent a “folk widely speaking,” and it seems as if the closed collection, read as ethnographical record, reaches way beyond the borders of the book. Whoever turns to the tales of the “folk” after reading the *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* will find what let him turn to the tales: the structures and regularity of a “romantic book.” A research of folk tales that connects itself to the *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* and dedicates itself to finding “original” folk tales that correspond to the “instinctual doings of nature” follows the *prescribed* tracks of the *Kinder- und Hausmärchen*.¹⁰

The binding element and memetic appeal of the Grimms' legacy is, in my opinion, as strong and as necessary as Sennewald states, and research must account for the widespread reception of their collected tales throughout the world. Legacies are not just bequeathed but require an active chain reaction from generation to generation. They demand accountability of reception. They require that one knows and appreciates the value of the offering or gift, who gave it, and why. Consequently, research into the corpus of the Grimms' legacy must include some basic acknowledgment of the tales' history and how they contributed to the tradition of European folklore and to the study of world folklore. In my opinion, some of the following fundamental aspects of their work and lives are helpful in appreciating their legacy of tales and how this legacy spread beyond German borders:

1. Although the Grimms collected folk songs, poems, and tales before 1807, they became more focused on prose tales at this time and expanded this focus up through 1810 to assist Clemens Brentano, a talented romantic writer and poet, who wanted to adapt oral tales for a book of literary fairy tales that he was planning to publish. The Grimms dutifully sent him fifty-four tales. However, Brentano did not like the Grimms' stories and left behind their manuscript in the Ölenberg Monastery in Alsace. By chance the tales, now called the Ölenberg manuscript, were discovered in 1920. Ever since this discovery researchers have been able to study the manner in which the Grimms began editing and honing the tales.¹¹ Moreover, as Vanessa Joosen has demonstrated,¹² the Ölenberg manuscript provides the basis not only for understanding the Grimms' process of retelling tales but also serves as a case study of intertextuality and how contemporary writers have followed

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in the Grimms' footsteps, so to speak, and developed a dynamic process of retelling fairy tales that enriches the Grimms' legacy.

2. In 1812 Achim von Arnim—another significant romantic writer and friend of Brentano—advised the Grimms to publish the tales they had sent to Brentano along with many new ones that they had collected. Although Arnim had differences with the Grimms when it came to judging modern literature, he had great faith in their project and was a strong proponent of collecting folk material. As a result, the Grimms not only produced one edition of their tales but also published seven different editions of their large collection (called the *große Ausgabe*) from 1812 to 1857, including different prefaces, essays, and scholarly notes, which were first published together with the tales of the first edition and later in separate volumes of 1822 and 1856. There were many unusual variants of the tales in the notes that reveal the Grimms' extraordinary knowledge of different genres of orality and literature throughout the world. Some of the tales in the notes were replaced by other versions in the final edition or published elsewhere. By the final publication of the 1856 edition of the notes, there were many new tales as well as numerous variants and rough drafts in their posthumous papers.
3. In addition to the Large Edition there were ten different printings of their Small Edition (called the *kleine Ausgabe*) published from 1825 to 1858. The tales in the Small Edition were carefully selected by Wilhelm Grimm to appeal to bourgeois children and their families and included six illustrations by their brother Ludwig Grimm, a painter. There were no prefaces, notes, or long essays in the ten printings of the Small Edition. The intention here was to popularize their tales and to appeal to a growing reading public of children and their families.
4. The posthumous papers of the Grimms contain a large quantity of tales that the Brothers received from friends and colleagues or collected themselves. For some reason or other, they did not want to use these tales in the published corpus of their collections. Heinz Rölleke has reproduced many of these interesting tales in *Märchen aus dem Nachlaß der Brüder Grimm*,¹³ and there have been several other books of omitted or deleted tales published from the Grimms' posthumous papers that are worth examining as part of the Grimms' legacy, including an English translation and tales that appeared in journals and magazines but are not the same as those published in the large editions of the collection.¹⁴
5. Although the Grimms maintained that they did not alter the words of the tales that they collected from the lips of their informants, and that all their

tales stemmed from the oral tradition, none of this is true. A simple comparison of the tales in the Ölenberg manuscript of 1810 with the tales in the first edition of 1812/15 reveals that the Grimms made or had to make substantial changes because it was difficult for them and their contributors to copy down on paper the exact words of the tales that they heard. Moreover, the Grimms also began adapting tales from books published from the fifteenth through the eighteenth century. In short, none of their tales could ever be designated as “pure,” “authentic,” or “original.” The Grimms actually knew this, and yet they used those terms because they believed their tales bore the traces of a profound oral tradition. They felt justified to proclaim that their tales were “genuine” and “pure” because the changes that they made were based on their understanding of the “natural” poetics of oral storytelling, and the more they did research about the oral tradition, the more they felt confident in their skills as writers to re-present the unique elements of traditional stories. Incidentally, most collectors worked this way in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

6. During the first phase of their collecting tales from 1806 up to approximately 1817, Jacob Grimm was the dominant figure and more or less established the principles of their collecting and recording of tales. For instance, more than 60 percent of the tales in the Ölenberg manuscript are in his handwriting, and it is apparent from letters, prefaces, and essays that his ideological thinking set the tone for their project that he developed collectively with his brother, other interested scholars, and friends. Both Brentano and Arnim were enthusiastic about the Grimms' desire to collect oral folk tales and publish them either in a journal or book dedicated to old German literature. In a long letter to Brentano, written on January 22, 1811, Jacob composed an appeal, “Aufforderung an die gesammten Freunde altdeutscher Poesie und Geschichte erlassen” (“Appeal to All Friends of Old German Poetry and History”),¹⁵ which spelled out the initial premises of the Brothers' project and their intense engagement to foster a greater understanding of popular German culture. Here are some of the emphatic romantic ideas from this letter that were to underlie all their work on folk and fairy tales:

We are going to start by collecting all the oral tales from the entire German fatherland and only wish that we do not misconstrue the general and extensive sense of the matter by the manner in which we are approaching it. We are thus going to collect each and every tradition and tale of the common man whether the contents be sad or humorous, didactic or amusing, no matter what the time

period is, whether they have been composed in the simplest prose or set in rhyme. . . .

Isn't folk poetry (*Volkspoesie*) the vital lifeblood that is drawn from all the deeds [of the German people] and continues to exist for itself? And mustn't it do so because otherwise no history would reach the folk and no other kind of history would be used by the folk? . . .

We especially mean here the fairy tales, the evening conversations, and the stories from the spinning rooms, and we know two kinds of things very well. Names held in contempt and things that have been ignored until now continue to stick in each and every human mind from childhood to death. Consequently, we think that even in the locked-up energy of the special social classes, like beneath the cool shadow of the tree, that the source of tales cannot vanish, while whatever lies in the middle, where the general heat of the sun flows, has long since been dried out. Certainly, among old craftsmen, silently working miners, and the green free foresters and soldiers many peculiarities and particular ways of conversing and telling stories, customs and manners have continued to be maintained, and it is high time that they are collected before they are completely extinguished or new forms of those traditions have their meaning torn away from them. . . .

Now we want to record all this as faithfully and literally as possible, with all the so-called nonsense that is easy to find but always even easier to cast off than the artificial reproduction which one would want to try instead of keeping the nonsense.¹⁶

The ideas in this private letter to Brentano, read and approved by Wilhelm, were more fully developed later in the *Circular wegen der Aufsammlung der Volkspoesie* (*Circular-Letter Concerned with Collecting of Folk Poetry*) printed and distributed in 1815. It is worth citing this circular-letter, once again conceived by Jacob, because it outlines the basic principles and intentions of the Grimms:

Most Honored Sir!

A society has been founded that is intended to spread throughout all of Germany and has as its goal to save and collect all the existing songs and tales that can be found among the common German peasantry (*Landvolk*). Our fatherland is still filled with this wealth of material all over the country that our honest

ancestors planted for us, and that, despite the mockery and derision heaped upon it, continues to live, unaware of its own hidden beauty and carries within it its own unquenchable source. Our literature, history, and language cannot seriously be understood in their old and true origins without doing more exact research on this material. Consequently, it is our intention to track down as diligently as possible all the following items and to write them down as faithfully as possible:

1. Folk songs and rhymes, that are performed at different occasions throughout the year, at celebrations, in spinning parlors, on the dance floors, and during work in the fields; first of all, those songs and rhymes that have epic contents, that is, in which there is an event; wherever possible with their very words, ways, and tones.
2. Tales in prose that are told and known, in particular the numerous nursery and children's fairy tales about giants, dwarfs, monsters, enchanted and rescued royal children, devils, treasures, and magic instruments as well as local legends that help explain certain places (like mountains, rivers, lakes, swamps, ruined castles, towers, stones, and monuments of ancient times). It is important to pay special attention to animal fables, in which fox and wolf, chicken, dog, cat, frog, mouse, crow, sparrow, etc. appear for the most part.
3. Funny tales about tricks played by rogues and anecdotes; puppet plays from old times with Hanswurst and the devil.
4. Folk festivals, mores, customs, and games; celebrations at births, weddings, and funerals; old legal customs, special taxes, duties, jobs, border regulations, etc.
5. Superstitions about spirits, ghosts, witches, good and bad omens; phenomena and dreams.
6. Proverbs, unusual dialects, parables, word composition.

It is extremely important that these items are to be recorded faithfully and truly, without embellishment and additions, whenever possible from the mouths of the tellers in and with their very own words in the most exact and detailed way. It would be of double value if everything could be obtained in the local live dialect. On the other hand, even fragments with gaps are not to be rejected. Indeed, all the derivations, repetitions, and copies of the same tale can be individually important. Here we advise that

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you not be misled by the deceptive opinion that something has already been collected and recorded, and therefore that you discard a story. Many things that appear to be modern have often only been modernized and have their undamaged source beneath it. As soon as one has a great familiarity with the contents of this folk literature (*Volkspoesie*), one will gradually be able to evaluate the alleged simplistic, crude and even repulsive aspects more discreetly. In general the following should still be noted: although actually every area should be completely searched and explored, there are preferential places more deserving than the large cities and the towns, than the villages, and these are the places in the quiet and untouched woods and mountains that are fruitful and blessed. The same is the case with certain classes of people such as the shepherds, fishermen, miners—they have a stronger attachment to these tales, and these people are to be preferred and asked as are in general old people, women, and children, who keep the tales fresh in their memories.

You have been selected to become a member of this society, my honored Sir, and to lend a helping hand in the firm conviction that you will be moved by the usefulness and emergency of our purpose, that today cannot be postponed without great harm in view of the increasing and damaging decline and closure of folk customs. We hope that you will be in a position to explore the region of _____ according to our intention.¹⁷

From the very beginning of their project, the Grimms worked collectively. They had already collaborated with Brentano and Arnim on their important collection of folk songs, *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* (1805–8), and they had formed a pact never to separate and share their ideas. They spent their entire lives in constant contact with colleagues who were developing the field of folklore and literature at universities, schools, and other institutions. Their correspondence is immense. As the corpus of the *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* expanded and grew in stature, they were very much dependent on friends and colleagues who often had more intimate contacts with lower-class people, considered by the Grimms to be the primary source of folk and fairy tales. This dependence raises some questions: Were the Grimms bestowing a legacy on the German people that was not theirs to give? Did they pay due homage to the people who told them or sent them tales? Did they appropriate the tales to transform them into entertaining stories for a middle-class reading audience that would include children?

Collecting is never a neutral endeavor, and over a period of approximately fifty years, the Grimms were socially and personally “involved” in the tales that they selected for editing and publishing in their different editions. In other words, what Pierre Bourdieu has termed a *habitus* played a major role in the orientation of the Grimms’ tales that they made their own but were originally not their own and that they returned to the German people to share as a common heritage. Bourdieu has explained that a person’s comportment depends on his or her habitus, which is a set of acquired dispositions determined at first by the social class, ethnicity, nationality, and religion of the family into which one is born. A child will internalize the dispositions at the same time that he or she is structuring the dispositions (gestures; tastes of dress, music, literature; speech and accents; and so on) to form his/her identity under the conditions of a particular civilizing process.¹⁸ In the case of the Grimms it is important to know that they were born into a solid middle-class family in the small town of Hanau in Hessa. They could speak and read the Hessian dialect, which colored their own high German accents and use of language, and were raised with the expectation that they would attend a university and become lawyers like their father. They were honest and diligent Calvinists, extremely loyal to their family, especially after their father’s early death in 1796. His death caused a traumatic fall in social class, and the Grimms became dependent on friends and relatives. The Brothers realized that only through hard work would they be able to reclaim their social position, so to speak. The region of Kassel played a role in the formation of their habitus. Like most principalities, Kassel was a monarchy and remained patriarchal and hierarchical during their youth. The Napoleonic Wars affected the people of Kassel, and at one time the city was occupied by the French. The Brothers attended the University of Marburg from 1802 and 1806, and the family lived under severe pecuniary conditions. Despite hardships, they became known as assiduous and ambitious scholars and formed important friendships, especially with one of their professors, Friedrich Carl von Savigny. After their mother’s death in 1808, Jacob became the virtual head of the family at twenty-three, and for both Wilhelm and Jacob, it became extremely important to support all their siblings and to provide a cooperative home atmosphere. Fidelity, piety, cooperation, faithfulness, industry, purity, naturalness, dedication, patriarchy marked their characters. I do not want to create an image of them as good boy scouts. On the other hand, it is important to emphasize that the Brothers were honorable men with an idealistic bent and a clear compassion for common German people struggling to find their places when Germany was divided into numerous principalities, wars were fought, and promises of freedom by the ruling aristocracies, not kept. I mention all these factors that contributed to the formation of the Grimms’ habitus because they chose the tales and began sorting the tales that

they wanted to publish from an orientation strongly influenced by the Protestant ethic and patriarchal viewpoint that shaped their sense of social justice. They infused their chosen tales with their own beliefs, styles, and ideological preferences. At the same time, it was through their selected tales that voices of “other” people managed to speak.

In a very insightful essay about the significance of the rise of the Grimms from an impoverished middle-class family and from a status as genial amateur antiquarians to eminent professors of philology, Joep Leerrssen makes the point that

The amateur antiquary of the eighteenth century now begins to fulfil a public role in connecting the nation with its cultural roots; thus the professionalization of the historical and philological sciences goes tightly in hand with the national instrumentalization of ancient vernacular culture. The career of Jacob Grimm is exemplary in this process. [And the same could be said for Wilhelm.] He owes his special status to the fact that his name became linked to the regular sets of consonantal shifts now known as “Grimm’s laws.” As such he is the standard-bearer of the new climate of scientific philology. His influence spread far and wide from the fairytale- and folksong-collecting of Lönnrot, La Villemarqué, Karadžić, Afanas’ev, and Croker to the troubadour studies of Diez, and from the Slavic philology of Dobrovský and Kopitar to the great national dictionary projects of the *Oxford English Dictionary* and the *Woordenboek der Nederlandsche Taal*. If any individual man of letters was responsible for the idea, general all over Europe from the late nineteenth century onwards, that language, culture, and identity amounted to the same thing, it was he.¹⁹

The majority of the other people who contributed tales to the Grimms’ early collection was relatively small and located either in or nearby Kassel or in Böken-dorf near Münster in Westphalia. Two of the exceptional storytellers from the lower classes were Johann Friedrich Krause, a poor retired soldier, who lived in the nearby village of Hoof, and Dorothea Viehmann, married to a village tailor in Zwehren outside Kassel. Krause contributed seven texts, of which only four were published, that frequently focused on discharged and badly treated soldiers and animals in need.²⁰ The Grimms deleted some of his tales or combined them with others because they were a bit raw and radical in tone. Dorothea Viehmann differed from most of the informants, who were young women from educated middle-class or aristocratic families.²¹ She was considered the exemplary peasant storyteller, and her image, based on a drawing by Ludwig Grimm, was published



Figure 1. Dorothea Viehmann, the ideal peasant storyteller. Drawing by Ludwig Grimm.

as the frontispiece to the second volume of the second edition of 1819 (figure 1). She was called the “Märchenfrau” (representative of the typical fairy-tale storyteller similar to mother goose), and the Brothers Grimm sought to validate the genuine nature of their folk tales with her picture as a “mythic” peasant woman.²² Indeed, she was from the lower classes and poor, but she was not typical of the

storytellers who contributed tales to the first edition. On the other hand, she was perhaps the most gifted storyteller the Grimms had ever met, and they described her in full in the preface to the second volume of the *Kinder- und Hausmärchen*:

One of our lucky coincidences involved making the acquaintance with a peasant woman from the village of Zwehrn near Kassel. It was through her that we received a considerable number of the tales published here that can be called genuinely Hessian and are also supplements to the first volume. This woman, still active and not much over fifty years old, is called Viehmann, and she has a firmly set and pleasant face with bright, clear eyes and had probably been beautiful in her youth. She has retained these old stories firmly in her memory, a gift which she says is not granted to everyone. Indeed, many people can't even retain any tales, while she narrates in a manner that is thoughtful, steady, and unusually lively. Moreover, she takes great pleasure in it.²³

Viehmann, who contributed forty tales from her repertoire to the Grimms' collection, was raised in an inn, and some of her ancestors stemmed from French Huguenot and Dutch families. Born in 1755, she worked in her father's inn, where she undoubtedly heard many of her tales, and she lived with her family until she married in 1795. She had six children with her husband, Nikolaus Viehmann, and when the Grimms met her, she was very poor and sold vegetables at a market in Kassel to help her family. Her tales can be considered a blend of stories marked by oral traditions in France, the Netherlands, and Hesse. What is striking about her tales such as "The Lazy Spinner," "The Goose Maid," and "The Clever Farmer's Daughter" is her depiction of courageous, if not feisty, young women. In addition, many of her tales such as "Clever Else," "The Young Giant," "Doctor-Know-It-All," and "The Devil's Sooty Brother" are parodies and humorous portrayals of peasant life.

In contrast to Viehmann, the middle-class young ladies in Kassel told tales that stemmed either from a French literary tradition, from tales they heard from their nannies, or from stories they had read on some occasion. Among the storytellers in Rudolf Wild's family—he was a well-to-do pharmacist—were Lisette, Johanna, Gretchen, Mimi, and Dortchen, mainly in their teens or early twenties; they lived in Kassel, and Wilhelm eventually married Dortchen, the most prolific of the storytellers. Interestingly, they generally spoke in the local Hessian dialect, and together they produced about forty tales for the Grimms, who did not publish all of them. As for preferences, Dortchen often favored tales that reflected sibling rivalry between sisters such as "The Three Little Men in the Forest" and "Mother Holle," and the Wild family as a whole had a strong sense of social justice.

The group of young women in the Hassenpflug family, whose father, Johannes Hassenpflug, was the governmental president of Kassel, consisted of Marie, Jeanette, and Amalie. They spoke French at home and were clearly influenced by reading or hearing French fairy tales. They contributed over thirty stories and may have heard some from an elderly housekeeper by the name of Marie Müller. They generally spoke in a Hessian dialect and mixed German with French stories. The most gifted of the Hassenpflug sisters was Marie,²⁴ who was responsible for tales that reflected a preference for happy ends in which a female protagonist weds a prince after many difficulties such as “Little Brother and Little Sister,” “Snow White,” “Briar Rose,” and “The Maiden without Hands.” In most of her tales such as “The Robber Bridegroom” and “The Carnation,” the female protagonist survives ordeals thanks to her courage.

The von Haxthausen family lived on an estate in Westphalia called Böken-dorf. Wilhelm met Werner von Haxthausen in 1808 during a cure in Halle, where they developed a warm friendship despite major class differences. Later Wilhelm was invited to Bökendorf, and it was there that the Grimms collected over eighty tales either verbally or through letters. The contributors were Mari-anne, Ludowine, Anna, and August and their cousin Jenny von Droste-Hülshoff. Many of the tales were told to the young ladies and August by servants, farmers, and craftsmen, and they recorded them for the Grimms, several in a low German dialect (*plattdeutsch*). The entire family was very interested in folk literature and culture and helped Jacob in his compilation of German legends. Aside from the social circles in Kassel and Bökendorf, there were other significant informants such as Friederike Mannel, a minister's daughter in nearby Allendorf, who sent eight beautifully written tales to Wilhelm, and Friedrich Siebert, a teacher, rector of a school in Treysa, and friend of the Grimms, who provided ten tales.

As Heinz Rölleke has amply demonstrated in two books that deal with the informants and sources of the Grimms' tales,²⁵ it is extremely difficult to determine the provenance of a Grimms' tale because most of the informants obtained them from some other source through either oral or written transmission. What appears to be clear is that there is a strong “underdog” perspective in the first edition of the tales, in which most of the protagonists are peasant women and men, shoemakers, tailors, soldiers, shepherds, carpenters, smiths, spinners, servants, millers, country bumpkins, hunchbacks, and so on. Even the animals are mostly “underdogs” or threatened with extinction. In addition, there is an abundant number of tales with kings, queens, princes, princesses, wicked stepmothers, giants, dwarfs, and nixies in which princes and princesses are unjustly treated or oppressed. A good many of the tales deal with persecuted young women such as “Maiden without Hands” or third sons called simpletons who prove that they are clever and can overcome obstacles to survive and become happy. In short, we have a situation in which the Grimms “appropriate” tales that do not really

belong to the people who tell them but who share the “underdog” perspective. The Grimms, too, shared this viewpoint, but they did make changes connected to their habitus so that their perspective could be added to the hypothetical social class view of the narrator. This constant change of perspective is typical of storytelling in general and is even the case with the two major lower-class storytellers, Dorothea Viehmann and Johann Friedrich Krause, as well with the painter Philipp Otto Runge, who provided the Grimms with two tales in a Hamburg and Pomeranian dialect, “The Juniper Tree” and “The Fisherman’s Wife.” It is well-known that Runge stylized the tales that he sent to the Grimms, and the Grimms also touched up the tales. Interestingly, both tales concern the plight of lower-class families in which a woman seeks to become as powerful as God, and a boy is transformed into a bird after his murder and then takes revenge on his wicked stepmother. The fisherman’s wife must return to a pisspot at the end of her tale because she is too arrogant, while the boy is miraculously reunited with his father who had unknowingly eaten him.

These tales that were not the Grimms’ tales—that is, all the tales in their corpus were not theirs and were not even the property of the informants—fascinated the Brothers, and they felt that the unique qualities of the tales ultimately came from some divine source. They also believed that the common people were the carriers of these narratives. This is the reason why they insisted on their purity while rewriting or even censoring them so that the stories would illuminate and enlighten readers. Moreover, to their credit, the Grimms brought diverse tales in dialogue with one another and let them “speak” different views within the corpus of their editions. That the Grimms’ habitus had to play a role in their preferences and embellishments is to be expected. What could not have been anticipated was the growing popularity of their collection. After the second Small Edition was published in 1836 and the third Large Edition was published in 1837, the *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* gradually became a bestseller in German-speaking principalities and remains a bestseller today.

Ironically, if it were not for the remarkable artistic talent of Wilhelm Grimm, it is conceivable that the *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* might never have become a household favorite in Germany. Just compare the three different beginnings of “The Frog King” in the Ölenberg manuscript of 1810, in the first edition of 1815, and in the seventh edition of 1857:

The Frog King (1810)

The king’s youngest daughter went outside into the forest and sat down on the edge of a cool well. Then she took a golden ball and played with it. Suddenly it rolled down into the well. She watched as it sank into the deep water and stood at the well and was very

sad. All at once a frog stuck its head out of the water and said, "Why are you moaning so much?"²⁶

The Frog King (1812)

Once upon a time there was a princess who went out into the forest and sat down at the edge of a cool well. She had a golden ball that was her most favorite plaything. She threw it up high and caught it in the air and was delighted by all this. One time the ball flew quite high, and as she stretched out her hand and bent her fingers to catch it again, the ball hit the ground near her and rolled and rolled until it fell right into the water.

The princess was horrified as she watched it, but the well was so deep that she couldn't see the bottom. Then she began to weep miserably and to moan: "Oh, if only I had my ball again! I'd give anything—my clothes, my jewels, my pearls and anything else in the world—to get my ball back!"

As she sat there grieving, a frog stuck its head out of the water and said: "Why are you weeping so miserably?"²⁷

The Frog King (1857)

In olden times, when wishing still helped, there lived a king whose daughters were all beautiful, but the youngest was so beautiful that the sun itself, which had seen so many things, was always filled with amazement each time it cast its rays upon her face. Now, there was a great dark forest near the king's castle, and in this forest, beneath an old linden tree, was a well. Whenever the days were very hot, the king's daughter would go into this forest and sit down by the edge of the cool well. If she became bored, she would take her golden ball, throw it into the air, and catch it. More than anything else she loved playing with this ball.

One day it so happened that the ball did not fall back into the princess's little hand as she reached out to catch it. Instead, it bounced right by her and rolled straight into the water. The princess followed it with her eyes, but the ball disappeared, and the well was deep, so very deep that she couldn't see the bottom. She began to cry, and she cried louder and louder, for there was nothing that could comfort her. As she sat there grieving over her loss, a voice called out to her, "What's the matter, Princess? Your tears could move even a stone to pity."²⁸

The ornate descriptive changes made by Wilhelm transform the tale, originally told by one of the Wild sisters, into an elegant, somewhat sentimental tale that celebrates the reincarnation of a cursed prince, the strange reward of a princess, who does not totally obey her father, and the faithfulness of a servant. The driving force of the narrative consists of the frog, desperate to be released from a magic spell, and the authoritarian king/father, who insists that the princess behave correctly and keep her word. The basic plot of the tale follows a pattern deeply ingrained in the European storytelling tradition of the beast/bridegroom type, generally categorized by folklorists as ATU 425 or 440.²⁹ It is not clear how old this tale type is, but it is clearly related to ancient beast/bridegroom stories and initiation rituals that involve a young maiden overcoming her fear of sexual intercourse. One of the first written versions in Latin appeared in Berthold von Regensburg's thirteenth-century *Rusticanus de sanctis*. The Grimms thought that this tale type was one of the oldest and most beautiful in the world, and it was therefore placed as number one in their collection from the first edition of 1812 to the seventh and final edition of 1857. Their interest in the tale was so great that they published a second variant in 1815 in the second volume of their first edition.

The original draft for the Grimms' versions of the "Frog King" tales was probably provided by a member of the Wild family in 1810. By 1810 the Grimms were well aware of other late medieval versions, especially the Scottish one published in John Bellenden's *The Complaynt of Scotlande* (1548), as well as tales contributed by Marie Hassenpflug and the family von Haxthausen. The editing changes made by Wilhelm Grimm from 1819 to 1857 indicate that he was anxious to de-eroticize the tale and to emphasize the moral of listening to the father and keeping one's promises.

From approximately 1815 to 1857 Wilhelm took charge of the changing corpus of the tales that the Brothers collected. Remarking on how Wilhelm edited "The Frog King," Siegfried Neumann states: "The Grimm fairy-tale style is fully developed here. But what also clearly emerges is Wilhelm's manner and art of narration, which seek—in this case to the extreme—to plumb the fairy-tale events down to their very details. One can respond to the result in two ways—by lamenting the loss of the folktale's simplicity, or by welcoming the poetic enrichment. In any case, these examples clearly demonstrate the growth of an aesthetically oriented attitude."³⁰

It is well-known that Wilhelm went so far as to include his version of a literary tale, "Snow White and Rose Red," taken from a book by Karoline Stahl,³¹ in the *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* in 1837. He had first published it in Wilhelm Hauff's journal, *Märchen-Almanach*, in 1827, and it, too, represents the charming Biedermeier style and perspective that Wilhelm brought to both oral and

literary stories that the Grimms gathered. The Biedermeier period (1815–48) in the German principalities was marked by a petty bourgeois taste for coziness and hominess, and in literature the Biedermeier style manifested itself by a charming, sometimes elegant simplicity that aroused and pacified heartfelt emotions. Biedemeier writing was comforting and comfortable. It would be perhaps an exaggeration to associate Wilhelm's style completely with Biedermeier characteristics that one can find throughout Ludwig Bechstein's saccharine fairy tales in *Deutsches Märchenbuch* (1845), *Ludwig Bechsteins Märchenbuch* (1853), and *Neues Deutsches Märchenbuch* (1856). Once more popular than the Grimms, Bechstein is practically forgotten today. Wilhelm differs from Bechstein in that he endeavored to capture the quaint folk “undertones” of the tales and to respect the orality of the tales. But he certainly shied away from provocative subjects and vulgarity in editing the tales and added a good deal of Christian sentiment to them along with more than 400 pleasant proverbs and sayings from the German language. The result in the final edition of 1857 is a corpus of mixed tales with voices from unknown people, voices and styles of specific friends and colleagues, and the voices of Wilhelm and Jacob, who initially sought to re-create oral tales with sincere fidelity and model them on the dialect tales, “The Juniper Tree” and “The Fisherman's Wife.” Neumann concludes his essay on their collecting by stating:

With a remarkable feel for the nature of folk literature, the Brothers Grimm collected as much of the oral narrative tradition and documented it as “faithfully” and as comprehensively as was possible for them under the existing conditions. The *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* became a worldwide success “because here for the first time significant national and international traditions of the intellectual culture from the broadest spectrum of the folk appeared elevated to the level and clothed in the language of ‘belle lettres,’ without their content or message having been altered” (*Geschichte der deutschen Volksdichtung*, 90).³²

Tradition, Nationalism, and Legacy

The Brothers were aware from the very beginning that they were bequeathing their collected tales to a growing literate Germanic public; they endeavored to make these people more aware of popular culture in the German principalities. By doing this—bequeathing a legacy that was not really theirs to bequeath—they helped to create a new tradition of folklore that had a nationalist tinge to it. They

often used the term “Vaterland” when talking about the German principalities as a whole, supported the movement to unite German principalities, and wanted to create more respect for human rights in all the German principalities. They were loyal to their monarch in Kassel, but left their jobs as librarians in 1828 when they felt they were not appreciated by the king and his councilors. Fortunately, they were offered excellent positions at the University of Göttingen, but after teaching nine years as professors, they defended their constitutional rights by refusing to sign an arbitrary oath to the King of Hannover and were consequently banished in 1837 from the University of Göttingen. Later, when they were in Berlin in the 1840s, they expressed their sympathies for the 1848 revolutionaries, and Jacob had a place of honor in Frankfurt am Main at a meeting of the revolutionary delegates. But the Grimms were never radical. They believed more in a constitutional monarchy than in a republican government. They believed more in words and in an ideal concept of the German *Volk*, which, in reality, did not exist. What did exist in reality, however, were Germans living in different regions of central Europe, people who lived and worked under oppressive regimes, and to a certain extent, the Grimms’ work in folklore was an endeavor to bring these different Germans together by enabling them to recognize the cultural value of their tales and customs. In this respect, the collecting of tales embodied a romantic wish-fulfillment dream that would unite the German people and bind them to a culture that they could honor. Their collecting had nothing to do with children or children’s literature or simply “entertaining” adult readers. It had everything to do with “artistically” creating a German popular culture rooted in the belief systems and customs of the German people.

The Grimms made it clear in public statements such as the *Circular Letter* and in correspondence with friends, especially Achim von Arnim, and colleagues that their collection was *not* intended for children. The word *Kinder* (children) in the title of *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* did not mean that their tales were for or about children or domestic, rather it signified that the stories were innocent, naïve, and pure, to be appreciated and cared for like children. In their opinion, these tales were produced by common people and needed to be preserved to give the German people a sense of moral German values. These tales were designated to provide narratives of self-education largely for adult readers. If the tales were read by children, all the better. But they were not the Grimms’ intended readership. In the second volume of the second edition of 1819, they wrote a very long academic essay about children’s beliefs and customs that no child would have ever wanted to read but that serious scholars would have wanted to study. In general the format of the first two editions of *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* was exclusively shaped for adult readers, who might pass on the tales through oral storytelling. It was not until 1825, when they decided to select fifty tales with seven illustrations

to form the Small Edition that they specifically included children as part of their audience. In short, their initial purpose was to contribute to a broad German tradition of *Naturpoesie* (ancient folk and oral literature) as against *Kunstpoesie* (artificial literature that emanated from creative writers). As their meticulous philological work on German and Nordic ancient literature reveals, they never abandoned this project. However, they made compromises by mixing oral and literary tales and by editing all the tales they received so that the oral tradition would gain the respect of the educated classes in Germany. At the same time, they began dividing their legacy with the creation of their Small Edition in 1825 that was directed at young readers and their families. More than the Large Edition, the small one was intended to attract a larger reading audience. It did not include prefaces or notes, rather illustrations, and the tales were “doctored” to fit the tastes of bourgeois children and their parents, with the result that the Small Edition gradually led readers to believe that the collected tales were part of the growing field of children’s literature. Given these two different editions of their tales, we can and should speak about the double legacy of the Grimms’ tales—and we should also remember that the Grimms left behind other legacies in fields that pertain to etymology, anthropology, linguistics, and philology.

Here I want to focus on how the Grimms’ bequeathed a legacy of the tales to adults, primarily folklorists and educated people, and how they became pioneers of German folklore and influenced numerous folklorists in the nineteenth century, not only in Germany but also in Europe. In the next chapter I shall deal more fully with their legacy to children’s literature, which they never intended, and yet, they were gratified that children became fond of their tales.

Two good examples of the breadth and depth of the Grimms’ influence on German folklorists in the nineteenth century are found in the work of Johann Wilhelm Wolf (1817–55), founder of the *Zeitschrift für Deutsche Mythologie und Sittenkunde* (Journal for German Mythology and Customs),³³ and Heinrich Pröhle (1822–95),³⁴ a student of Jacob Grimm in Berlin, who went on to become a notable folklorist and teacher. When and how Wolf discovered the Grimms’ collections of folk tales and their philological writings on epics, folk tales, mythology, and legends is unclear. As a young boy in Cologne, he had gathered all kinds of ancient artifacts and tales. Sometime during his teenage years, he fled his family due to their rigid Catholicism and went to Belgium, where he dedicated himself to the causes of oppressed peoples and to salvaging Germanic myths and legends that stemmed from pagan rituals. His model for collecting and transcribing oral tales as a means to preserve community was the work of the Grimms, especially Jacob’s studies of mythology and legends, and it was obvious that by the time he became a folklorist and teacher in his early thirties, he had consumed almost every word and tale that they had written. In fact, he

came to embody what the Grimms had projected as the exemplary collector of tales: Wolf became the ideal fieldworker and collected tales, sayings, proverbs, superstitions, and artifacts directly from the mouths of the folk as well as writing erudite and theoretical commentaries.

Wolf's first major work, *Niederländische Sagen* (1843), was a collection of Dutch legends and tales that he had gathered while in Brussels and Ghent; it represented his endeavor to give voice to the minority Flemish people, who, he maintained, were suffering due to French domination. After his return to Germany he settled first in Cologne and then Darmstadt, where he systematically collected tales from soldiers, blacksmiths, carpenters, and farmers, and published the tales in *Deutsche Märchen und Sagen* (1845) and *Deutsche Hausmärchen* (1851). Endorsing the Grimms' philosophy and approach, he believed that his collections were "educational primers" and that the tales naturally carried within themselves moral lessons that were derived from the customs and belief systems of the common people. He was clearly a "republican" German, who supported the revolutions of 1848, and took great pleasure in meeting Jacob Grimm in Frankfurt during this period. One of his books, *Die deutsche Götterlehre. Ein Hand- und Lesebuch für Schule und Haus* (The German Teaching of the Gods: A Handbook and Reader for the School and Home, 1852) was intended to explain and elaborate Jacob Grimm's theories in *Deutsche Mythologie* (1835). But more important than this study was Wolf's founding of the journal, *Zeitschrift für Deutsche Mythologie und Sittenkunde* in 1853. Though it lasted only four years and Wolf died after the second issue was published, this journal served briefly as one of the most central contact points for the very best German-speaking scholars in Central Europe: Karl Weigand, Ignaz and Joseph Zingerle, Adalbert Kuhn, Ernst Meier, Heinrich Pröhle, Nikolaus Hocker, Wilhelm Creccelius, R. O. Waldburg, August Stöber, Karl Sinnrock, Franz Josef Vonbun, Reinhold Köhler, Wilhelm Mannhardt, Karl Ernst Hermann Krause, E. J. Reimann, Wilhelm von Ploennies, Friedrich Wöste, Heinrich Runge, and many other of the leading folklorists of this time. They contributed and commented on legends, puzzles, superstitions, nursery rhymes, children's games, folk tales, animal stories, proverbs, and myths that they had discovered in countries from France to Russia and in every region of Germany and the Hapsburg Empire including Switzerland. The majority of these men did original fieldwork. Most transcribed their tales from different dialects, although some published dialect versions. They were all familiar with and influenced by the Brothers Grimm. Wilhelm himself contributed commentary and tales to the *Zeitschrift für Mythologie und Sittenkunde* and corresponded with Wolf.

Among the more notable young folklorists who was in contact with Wolf was Heinrich Pröhle, born in 1822 in the town of Satuelle not far from Magdeburg in northern Germany. His father was a pastor in various churches in the Harz

region. When Pröhle turned thirteen, he was sent to study at the Dome School of Halberstadt and then completed his studies at a gymnasium in Merseburg. In 1843 he enrolled at the University of Halle, but because of his radical political activities, he was forced to leave the university. So in 1845 he transferred to the Humboldt University in Berlin, where he spent a year studying under the tutelage of Jacob Grimm and also made the acquaintance of Wilhelm Grimm. However, he interrupted his studies after a year to wander by foot in southern Germany, Hungary, and Austria. During the revolutionary year of 1848, he became a political correspondent for the *Augsburgische Allgemeine Zeitung* based in Vienna and sent reports to this newspaper about the turbulent times in Austria. When he returned to Germany, he continued working as a journalist and wrote a book about life in Vienna. At the same time he began hiking in the Harz Mountains and gathering tales and legends from the lips of peasants and artisans. He eventually made his home in Wenigerode in the Harz region from 1853 to 1857, where he continued gathering and translating the tales from the local dialects into high German and published several important collections: *Kinder- und Volksmärchen* (1853), *Märchen für die Jugend* (1854), *Harzsagen* (1853), *Harzbilder: Sitten und Gebräuche aus dem Harzgebirge* (1855), and *Unterharzische Sagen* (1856).

Like Wolf and unlike the Grimms, Pröhle did an enormous amount of field-work and wrote down the tales from the dialect spoken by his informants. However, like Wilhelm Grimm, he felt free to stylize the tales in high German so that they became poetically effective. Rarely did he change substantive matters or the plots of the tales. However, he was very concerned about their moral impact on young readers. For instance, in *Märchen für die Jugend* ("Tales for Young People"), he wrote about the importance of folk and fairy tales for the creation of a national literature and stated: "More and more these tales are also being recognized as essential nourishment that are not to be kept from young minds in any way."³⁵ Indeed, he even included instructions for teachers and educators on how to bring out the ethical nature of the tales in their work with children. Pröhle, who dedicated two of his books to the Grimms and corresponded with them, was clearly a loyal disciple, who became a prominent writer and teacher at a high school in Berlin from 1857 to 1890 while publishing other collections such as *Rheinlands schönste Sagen und Geschichten* (1886) in the Grimms' spirit and searching for authentic tales from the oral tradition that contributed to a national literature. What is fascinating in Pröhle's relationship with the Grimms is that he was an important link in the chain reaction of their legacy. As Ines Köhler-Zülch has remarked,

We can point to the impact of Pröhle's Grimm reception on the Grimms themselves. Not only did Pröhle thoroughly know the

Kinder- und Hausmärchen and *Deutsche Sagen* and use them for comparative purposes—in the fifty-five notes to his *Kinder- und Volksmärchen*, for example, he refers to approximately thirty parallels in the Grimms' collection—but Wilhelm Grimm also knew Pröhle's collection very well and included in the final edition of his fairy tales forty references to both the *Kinder- und Volksmärchen* and *Märchen für die Jugend*. So, as in the closing of a circle or perhaps the turning point of a spiral, Pröhle's reception of the Grimms' methodological legacy is reciprocated and compounded in Wilhelm Grimm's reception of Pröhle's work.³⁶

What is also significant about Pröhle's and Wolf's reception of the Grimms' methodology, in particular, the cultivation of dialect tales in high German and their endeavor to be faithful to oral transmission, is their fieldwork in particular regions of Germany. For Pröhle it was Harz, and for Wolf it was Rhineland. Other German folklorists of their generation took great care in designating the regions in which they collected their tales. That is, their focus was on a particular region, not on a nation or nation-state. Most of them also produced books and collections of stories, often with subtitles, "gathered orally from the folk" or with dedications to the Grimms.

In general the typical collection of tales in mid-nineteenth-century Europe was usually published in the standard or "high" language of the country. Therefore, any story collected orally would be transcribed or translated into a "literary" language or the dominant vernacular, and though most of the folklorists tried not to add phrases or hone their tales, they all more or less touched up the "raw" language in which they had heard the tale. Many of the tales were recited or read in one language and then written down in another. For instance, this type of transcription/translation can be seen in the collecting practices throughout Europe during the nineteenth century. In *Sicilianische Märchen* (*Sicilian Folk Tales*, 1870), Laura Gonzenbach's tales were told in a Sicilian dialect by rural women and then written down in high German; Rachel Busk translated Roman dialect tales into English in *The Folk-Lore of Rome. Collected by Word of Mouth from the People* (1874); in *Russian Fairy Tales: From the Skazki of Polevoi* (1893), Robert Nisbet Bain translated Russian into English; as did W.R.S. Ralston in *Russian Folk-Tales* (1873). Two important scholars, Johann von Hahn and Bernhard Schmidt, translated Greek tales into German in *Griechische und albanesische Märchen* (*Greek and Albanese Folk Tales*, 1864) and *Griechische Märchen, Sagen und Volkslieder* (*Greek Folk Tales, Legends, and Folk Songs*, 1877). In *Basque Legends* (1877), Wentworth Webster, a British minister, was the first to translate Basque tales into English, while Albert Henry Wratislaw (*Sixty Folk-Tales from*

Exclusively Slavonic Sources, 1890) and Jeremiah Curtin (*Myths and Folk Tales of the Russians, Western Slavs, and Magyars*, 1890) published important anthologies of Slavic tales in English the same year. It was not until the latter part of the nineteenth century that folklorists began publishing dialect tales. Here the work of Giuseppe Pitrè, Vittorio Imbriani, François-Marie Luzel, Emmanuel Cosquin, Achille Millien, Angelo Gubernatis, and Carolina Coronedi-Berti is important.³⁷ And of course, the founding and remarkable growth of folklore journals enabled folklorists to provide all kinds of source materials and essays on customs and beliefs as well as historical articles that traced the origins of the tales and their motifs. Aside from Wolf's *Zeitschrift für Deutsche Mythologie und Sittenkunde*, some of the other important journals that were founded in the latter half of the nineteenth century are *Revue Celtique* (1870), *Alemannia* (1873), *Romania* (1872), *The Folk-Lore Record* (1878), *Mélusine* (1877), *Archivo per lo Studio delle Tradizioni popolari* (1882), *El Folklore Andaluz* (1882), *Revue des Traditions Populaires* (1886), *Ethnologische Mitteilungen aus Ungarn* (1887), *Journal of American Folklore* (1888), and *Schweizerisches Archiv für Volkskunde* (1897).

Thanks to the journals, private correspondence, and books, almost all the leading folklorists in nineteenth-century Europe and North America were in touch with each other's works and were all familiar with the Grimms' *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* and the Brothers' scholarly work in philology and linguistics. What is significant, however, is that most folklorists after 1850 became more precise and more thorough than the Grimms in collecting and publishing their tales; they paid more attention and respect to the tellers of the tales, the regional relevance of each tale, the linguistic peculiarities, and the significance of the tales within the sociocultural and historical context. It is here that the tales must be understood as part of the nationalist trends and the formation of new nation states in the latter half of the nineteenth and early part of twentieth centuries. The Grimms' legacies became part of a German cultural heritage.

Collecting folk tales was a social and political act of some kind. Not only did educated middle-class collectors give voice to the lower classes, but they also spoke out in defense of their native languages and in the interests of national and regional movements that sought more autonomy for groups with very particular interests.³⁸ For instance, Norway separated from Denmark in 1814 and became an independent state with its own language and dialects. There was a tendency, therefore, to shake off the Danish yoke. Moe and Asbjørnsen regarded themselves in the 1830s and 1840s as defenders of the Norwegian language and customs by collecting diverse types of folk songs, legends, and tales in dialect and transcribed them.³⁹ In contrast to the Grimms, Moe and Asbjørnsen traveled to different regions of Norway and stimulated other collectors to write down local tales. Indeed, the collecting throughout Scandinavia had strong nationalist

and regional aspects.⁴⁰ Denmark, too, manifested signs of romantic nationalism. As Reimund Kvideland points out: “The struggle against German influences in the southern boundary region created a nationalistic atmosphere in Denmark which promoted interest in folklore. Svend Grundtvig, who was working on a major publication of Danish ballads, made a public appeal for the collection of folktales.”⁴¹ His disciple, Evald Tang Christensen took his appeal very seriously and became one of the most prolific collectors of folklore in Europe. Altogether he collected Danish ballads, folk tales (2,700), humorous anecdotes, proverbs, rhymes, riddles, and approximately 25,000 legends.⁴² In Russia, the great scholar Alexander Afanaśev was also interested in the deep traditions of storytelling and realized that his large collections of tales in the 1850s and 1860s might assist the numerous ethnic groups in Russia to become more aware of the virtues of their different languages and customs.⁴³ He was also censored when he sought to publish anti-clerical tales. Many French collectors such as Luzel, Sébillot, Cosquin, and others took pride in the regional traditions that they sought to keep alive, and of course, after the defeat of the French by the Prussians in 1871, there was a strong element of regionalism and nationalism that animated their collecting, whether they were liberals or conservatives.⁴⁴

All this is not to say that European folklorists were political activists, but there was a certain mutual spirit of *romantic nationalism* that can be traced in almost every effort to collect tales from the common people in the nineteenth century. Perhaps “nationalism” is the wrong word, for the tales, the storytellers, and the collectors were more linked to regions of Europe and the peculiarities within localities. What is striking is that there are strong ties and similar goals in the work of all the European folklorists that continually hark back to the Brothers Grimm, who provided the inspiration for their collecting tales and efforts to interpret them as the foundational relics of different cultural traditions.

Although one might speak of a Grimm or romantic tradition within folklore and the work of folklorists, I prefer to use the term “legacy,” or to discuss the different Grimm legacies within diverse cultural traditions. In the past thirty years the term “tradition” or the concept of tradition has undergone numerous stimulating revisions. One of the best standard definitions of tradition from a folkloristic viewpoint has been provided by Randal Allison, who states that

Tradition [is] a repeated pattern of behaviors, beliefs, or enactment passed down from one generation to the next. Traditions are culturally recognized and sustained; in general, folklorists have maintained a particular interest in those that are orally transmitted. Within the discipline of folklore, the historicity of tradition has been subjected to a variety of interpretations—for example,

a set of cultural ideals regarded as a coherent unit in which past ideals influence the present patterns of behavior in the group, a recognized set of present practices with origins in the past, or a set of practices created in the past that are purposefully maintained by the group in the present.⁴⁵

One of the more significant divergent approaches to this concept of tradition has been taken by Eric Hobsbawm and Terrence Ranger, who coined the term “invented tradition.” In the introduction to their edited book, *The Invention of Tradition*, they assert: “‘Invented tradition’ is taken to mean a set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past. In fact, where possible, they normally attempt to establish continuity with a suitable historic past.”⁴⁶ In other words, many so-called authentic traditions have been artificially created and established to maintain control over or manipulate people in favor of ideas in the interests of elite groups within a nation-state. Written in 1983, Hobsbawm and Ranger’s book addressed historians and other scholars from other disciplines and insisted they must question whether there is such a thing as organic or authentic tradition. They focused on tradition as a process in flux that constantly undergoes innovation or transformation. Accordingly, they argued that there are three overlapping types of invented traditions since the industrial revolution: “a) those establishing or symbolizing social cohesion or the membership of groups, real or artificial communities, b) those establishing or legitimizing institutions, status or relations of authority, and c) those whose main purpose was socialization, the inculcation of beliefs, value systems and conventions of behaviour.”⁴⁷

Their notions of invented traditions have had a great impact on scholars in a variety of ways, and more recently Trevor Blank and Robert Glenn Howard have edited a relevant collection of essays, *Tradition in the Twenty-First Century: Locating the Role of the Past in the Present* (2013), that explores manifold approaches to understanding the function that tradition plays in folklore studies. For instance, in “Thinking through Tradition,” Elliott Oring makes the important point that “the process of tradition . . . is the process of *cultural reproduction*. Cultural reproduction refers to the means by which culture is reproduced in transmission and repetition. It depends on the assimilation of cultural ideas and the reenactment of cultural practices.”⁴⁸ In this regard, he argues that both genuine and invented traditions depend on whether they are “handed down” from generation to generation. Thus, more attention, he contends, must be paid to those forces that sustain and generate traditions and must be studied and problematized in greater depth by folklorists.

Along the same lines but with a different emphasis, Simon Bronner argues in his highly original essay “The ‘Handiness’ of Tradition”: “As a body of material, tradition is literally and figuratively associated with being hand-wrought—that is, personally rendered, manipulated or conveyed, whether a basket or a well-delivered story. As a process of transmission and generation, folklore may be referred to as being handed (passed) down, handed over, and more recently with digital culture, handed up to draw attention to social interaction, even with electronic mediation, out of which framed expression or practices emerge.”⁴⁹ Like Oring and some of the other contributors to *Tradition in the Twenty-First Century*, Bronner has a sophisticated interest in understanding the implicit and explicit forces and agencies that constitute the process of tradition. For my purposes, Bronner’s notion of “handiness” is most valuable for explaining the Grimms’ different legacies and how they handed tales, legends, words, sayings, proverbs, linguistic laws, philological principles, and much more to contribute to German traditions and thought of a nation that actually did not exist in their time.

Bronner remarks,

The hand is important to tradition because of its capacity to grasp objects physically and intellectually and attach meaning to them. Being “in hand” suggests that the tradition’s value of being possessed for human purposes. “Handing it over” as the basis of tradition implies a social connection, made with deliberateness, much like the transporting of a valued possession. Giver and recipient come together at that moment and become familiar as a consequence. The image of the hand gives the transaction a “personal touch,” the ability to “reach out and touch someone” rather than being thought about in solitude. Being “handed down” brings elders or predecessors into the scene but in a way that implies a familial tie from one generation to another. In other words, a social bond or identity goes “hand in hand” with tradition.⁵⁰

If we look at how the Grimms worked with pens in their hands, inscribing the words of friends and acquaintances, reproducing words that they believed emanated from ancient sources, reaching out with their finished books to celebrate a cultural memory in solidarity with the German people, I think we can gain a clearer idea of what their legacies are. In fact, the Grimms deliberately sought to reinforce and reinvigorate the cultural memory and heritage of the German people through collecting and editing their tales. When I speak of cultural memory, I am referring specifically to the work of Jan and Aleida Assmann.⁵¹ In *Cultural Memory and Early Civilization*, Jan Assmann explains the basic principles that constitute cultural memory:

This book deals with the connection between these three themes of memory (or reference to the past), identity (or political imagination), and cultural continuity (or the formation of tradition). Every culture formulates something that might be called a connective structure. It has a binding effect that works on two levels—social and temporal. It binds people together by providing a “symbolic universe” . . . —a common area of experience, expectation, and action whose connecting force provides them with trust and with orientation. Early texts refer to this aspect of culture as justice. However, it also links yesterday with today by giving form and presence to influential experiences and memories, incorporating images and tales from another time into the background of the onward moving present, and bring with it hope and continuity. This connective structure is the aspect of culture that underlies myths and histories. Both the normative and the narrative elements of these—mixing instruction with storytelling—create a basis of belonging, of identity, so that the individual can then talk of “we.” What binds him to this plural is the connective structure of common knowledge and characteristics—first through adherence to the same laws and values, and second through the memory of a shared past.⁵²

Assmann stresses that repetition is the basic principle behind all the connective structures, and in the case of folk and fairy tales, I would contend that there are also elements in the narratives that are transcultural that account for the wide dissemination of similar tale types throughout the world. In some of my previous books, I have argued that certain tales become memes or meme-like because of their relevance to common human struggles and issues related to adaptation to the environment. These tales are repeated, imitated, and transformed so frequently that they play a major role both within a particular culture and in other cultures as well. In today’s globalized world the connections are such that the Grimms’ “German” legacies have had a binding effect in other cultures. The bonds created by the Grimms’ tales that entail an understanding of the “we” in cultural memory, tales that did not belong to the Grimms, are highly unusual and account for their remarkable popularity because they touch us in profound ways that break down national barriers.

As Johannes Bolte (1858–1937), a German folklorist and philologist, and Georg Polívka (1858–1933), a Czech folklorist and professor of Slavic literature, demonstrated in the five volumes of their meticulous reference book to the Grimms’ tales, *Anmerkungen zu den Kinder- und Hausmärchen der Brüder Grimm* (1913–32), the Grimms’ “Germanic” tales were not to be defined,

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studied, and interpreted solely within a particular cultural heritage. Indeed, the tales that sprouted and were picked and cultivated on “German” soil could be found throughout Europe and may have come from other regions of the world. In fact, the Grimms recognized very early on in their collecting of stories that their tale types could be found in many other European countries and might not derive from Nordic myths, customs, and rituals, as much as they wanted to believe this. In fact, this awareness was one of the reasons that they never used the title “German” in the title of their book to describe their *Kinder- und Hausmärchen*, as did some other collectors and writers such as Wolf, Bechstein, and Meier. Undoubtedly, the tales revealed more about the particular conditions experienced by the storytellers and more about particular cultural traditions in specific regions of Europe than anything about their “national” identity. At the same time, they also reflected and continued to reflect that humans throughout the world invent and use stories in very similar ways to expose and articulate common problems and struggles as well as their wishes to overcome them. This human urge to tell and to share experiences so that listeners might find ways to adapt to the world and improve their situation accounts for the utopian tendency in folk and fairy tales that can be considered a longing for a better and happier world. We tell and retell tales that become relevant in our lives, and the tales themselves form types that we use in our telling or reading to address various issues such as child abandonment, the search for immortality, sibling rivalry, incest, rape, exploitation, and so on. No tale is ever told for the first time, but every tale has the potential to be memetically disseminated and retained in our memory to enable us to navigate our way through the tons of messages and tales that bombard our lives from the day we are born. The Grimms discovered how tale types evolve and change, and they put their imprint on the tales that came their way. They were not alone in their endeavors in the nineteenth century as other collectors and folklorists reached out to preserve told tales before they changed and might evaporate. Yet the strange thing is—as the Grimms noted—people always evaporate before tales do, and certain tales have assumed different shapes and hues in the course of history that can be considered a substantial part of our cultural legacies and memories.