

interpretation. Belief often ascribes magical power to blood, and many past and present remedies prescribe blood as a curative agent. Before a division between folk and scientific medicine existed, Hartmann von Aue's "Poor Heinrich" suggested using the blood of a virgin to cure lepers.

Folk medicine may not go so far as to claim that dew from the gallows can restore a blind man's sight (as happens in KHM 107, "The Two Traveling Companions"), but we do find a basis for this idea in folk belief: Everything associated with the gallows and people hanged there somehow has magical power.<sup>91</sup>

In KHM 16 the hero observes how a snake brings its friend back to life with three special green leaves. According to folk belief, a snake in distress signals all the other snakes in the area to come and help.<sup>92</sup> Likewise, a folk belief collected in the upper Palatinate which says that at a certain time of year toads sit in fountains and draw in all the poison that falls from the sky, corresponds to the fountain-toad motif in KHM 29.<sup>93</sup> In KHM 165 a king's daughter wastes away because a toad took some of her hair to build a nest; she will recover only if she gets her hair back. We find a similar view in folk belief: In Bohemia it is said that if a toad builds its nest with someone's hair, that person will waste away and cannot be saved by anyone.<sup>94</sup>

We can mention only briefly other magical practices which appear in individual folktales. Folktales frequently contain all sorts of fertility magic. Women become pregnant after eating fish (KHM 85).<sup>95</sup> A gypsy folktale describes at great length the detailed recipe for fertility obtained by the barren queen.<sup>96</sup> A salesman in a Palestinian tale shouts: "Magic eggs for sale! Eat one and you don't need a man to become pregnant!" A woman feeds her stepdaughter pancakes made from the eggs, and she really becomes pregnant.<sup>97</sup> An Italian folktale prescribes a concoction made from three hairs from the devil's beard for the childless queen.<sup>98</sup>

Fertility magic in folktales among tribal peoples seems still to have a closer relationship to living folk belief. A girl in a Kordofan folktale eats the bone meal from a crushed skull to become pregnant.<sup>99</sup> In an Oceanian tale, blood from a man's finger produces a daughter.<sup>100</sup> The European folktale naively mixes pre-Christian and Christian motifs: Parents respond to successful fertility practices by saying, "God has answered our prayers."<sup>101</sup> Even Jesus and St. Peter impregnate a woman with an apple "full of hope."<sup>102</sup> Individual motifs about magical procreation may be fantastic, sometimes even absurd, but in principle they correspond to the folk belief in a magical world.

All of these motifs about magical practices are older than the word magic mentioned above. But in both cases the folktale depicts a real picture of belief in magic. We have cited only a few examples of this archaic reality in the folktale, but we already see that even modern "tales of magic" are not mere fantasy. These tales were living "reality" in an archaic world where magic was real and completely natural and did not yet have a numinous effect. In the folktale this archaic world meets the enlightened world-view

which no longer recognizes magical forces. This later view of reality freely employs these magical motifs and mixes them with pure fantasy to achieve a poetic effect. We must ask how the folktale, a product of fantasy, preserved archaic elements. How can we explain the folktale's unique mixture of primitive and artistic components?

The question itself contains the answer. The modern European folktale's status as conscious fiction enables it to maintain and preserve themes, traits, and motifs that have ceased to be part of belief. The folktale, unlike the legend, no longer has any reason to pay attention to belief. Even the oldest recorded Mediterranean folktales had already begun to outlive the belief they depict. However, because the content was no longer believed, the tales retain elements of the old magical world-view.<sup>103</sup> For the same reason, Christianity has had little significant influence on the European folktale.

We cannot, however, fail to recognize an entirely different factor in the folktale's development. Because primitive magic, the law of sympathy, contagious and homeopathic magic are not bound to a particular religious world-view, they have been able to survive up until the present by continually renewing themselves in folk tradition. The enlightened artistic world-view and belief in magic exist side by side in the folktale. For very different reasons, both of these elements of the folktale have helped preserve the magical world-view. The artistic guise preserves magical thinking as a product of fantasy; the magical world-view maintains it as reality.

#### MAN AND ANIMAL—TRANSFORMATION AND DISENCHANTMENT

We have already pointed out the symbiotic relationship between man and animal in terms of their sympathetic connection in certain folktales. An investigation into grateful and helpful animals in the folktale also seems to take us back to an archaic world. These animals behave independently in the folktale and often fulfill an important function in the plot by determining what will happen to the hero. For example, three animals repay the kind-hearted hero's favors by helping him complete three tasks (e.g., KHM 17, "The White Snake"; 62, "The Queen Bee"; 191, "The Mongoose"; and 126, "Faithful Ferdinand and Faithless Ferdinand"). Occasionally the grateful animals help the hero find and destroy the monster's hidden soul and thus obtain the king's daughter. In "The Faithful Animals" (KHM 104a) a man pities some animals and frees them. They return the favor by later freeing him from prison.<sup>1</sup> There are a number of reasons the animals may be grateful to the hero: The hero either rescues individual animals from some danger (e.g., KHM 17 and 62; Type 554), or he lets an animal he could have killed get away unharmed (e.g., as a hunter in KHM 57 or as a fisherman in KHM 19, Type 555). The tale type "The Girl Who Married Animals" (Type 552) also portrays helpful animals: A bankrupt man mar-

ries his three daughters to three animals, usually an eagle, a bear, and a whale. The girls' brother visits them and discovers that his brothers-in-law periodically take on human form. With the animals' help, the hero survives further adventures and finally gains the hand of a princess.

Horses frequently provides humans with advice (according to folk belief, horses can see spirits), as is the case in the Irish folktale about the king's son and the bird with the beautiful song.<sup>2</sup> The horse also plays this role in the Grimms' "The Goose Girl" (KHM 89). The fox is also commonly a helpful animal (e.g., in KHM 57).

The animals usually intervene to show their gratefulness, but this must be partly a result of later psychological developments in the folktale: For compositional reasons, an aetiology is added to demonstrate the hero's readiness to help and explain how it pays off. But there are numerous folktales that offer no specific cause for the animals' helpfulness. For example, doves help Cinderella (KHM 21), and the goat helps Two-eyes (KHM 130) for no particular reason.

The particular tasks with which the animals help are certainly often the product of pure fantasy. Nonetheless, the facts that they help at all and that they are the most common folktale helpers (outnumbering supernatural and human helpers) offer some basic insights into the nature of the folktale world. Despite all of the epic and fabular stylizing the folktale undergoes, the animals still usually use their natural, real abilities to help: Fish retrieve things that fall into the water (KHM 17 and 126); ants crawl through the keyhole or help the hero pick up millet seeds (KHM 17); birds help separate the bad lentils from the good (KHM 21). Moreover, since the helpful animals are as a rule wild, not domesticated, these motifs appear to be derived from hunting societies. The folktale treats exceptions, e.g., the donkey which emits gold (KHM 36), as objects, not subjects of the plot. Helpful animals appear as independent characters; they are the hero's partners.

Only tales introduced after farming displaced hunting incorporate domestic animals as well. The donkey commonly appears in these folktales (e.g., KHM 5, 36, 130). KHM 169 ("The House in the Forest") emphasizes the farming ethic of giving top priority to the livestock (and not because they are people under a spell). In the course of the folktale's evolution, wild animals become less dangerous. For example, the bear eventually becomes the shaggy, good-natured Meister Petz, a teddy-bear character who appears in farcical tales. Intelligent domesticated animals begin to prove themselves superior to the wild animals: The dog, cat, and rooster collectively overcome the wolf, fox, and bear;<sup>3</sup> the goat (KHM 5) and even the birthing sow<sup>4</sup> outwit the wolf. But our folk narratives which still contain ideas from hunting societies portray animals very differently: Here hunters often obtain magic from its original possessor, the animal. Both European and non-European folktales have preserved this ancient concept.<sup>5</sup> Helpful animals in the folktale know where to get the water of life, the water of

beauty, or the root of life which cures the decapitated hero (e.g., KHM 60). In another folktale the swans know that moistening the heroine's eye sockets with morning dew will restore her sight.<sup>6</sup>

Sigmund Freud goes too far when he calls the motif of the helpful animals primeval man's "family story,"<sup>7</sup> but the motif does lead us back to an archaic level of reality. To interpret this reality, we must again turn to tribal tales. Recent ethnological research, e.g., by Hermann Baumann, brings the folktales about helpful animals into connection with totemic origin myths, i.e., aetiological tales which establish a close relationship between an individual or a clan and a type of animal: Helpful animals become the totemic animals of the tribes they rescue. For example, the Ibibio tell of a battle between cities on opposite sides of a river. One side successfully crosses during an ebb, but high water keeps them from returning. A large python answers their distress by bridging the river; they walk to safety on its back. When the enemy tries to cross the bridge, the snake dives under and they all drown (in another version a crocodile bridges the river). As an expression of their gratitude, the victors no longer kill or eat the python (or crocodile). In other tales an animal saves people or brings them good fortune after making them promise never to kill or eat the helper's species.<sup>8</sup>

In these examples the seemingly fantastic motif of the helpful animals is still part of a believed clan tradition or tribal legend. African, particularly Sudanese, tales about acquiring magic also present this motif as believed reality: A hunter trails a wild animal, but the animal asks him to spare its life. To show its thanks, the animal gives the hunter knowledge of all magic, particularly hunting magic.<sup>9</sup> This motif of the animal who repays the hero for letting it live also appears in European folktales, but in Africa it is completely embedded in believed "legends" about all sorts of hunting magic.

It is always an individual who procures the hunting skills in this way. The relationship of the individual to an individual animal is perhaps even older than social organization into totemic groups. The motif complex of the helpful animal seems quite similar to the idea of a personal guardian animal that we find in the most basic tribal narratives. A protective animal spirit gives an imperfect human the animal's superior skills. An Eskimo tale, for example, tells of a young woman who cares for a young, two- or three-day-old polar bear. Because she has no children of her own, she feeds and treats the bear like her own child. When the bear grows up, it goes hunting and provides her with plenty of food. Other members of her tribe grow envious and want to kill the bear. The woman discusses the situation with the bear, and they must part in tears. But the woman frequently goes to meet him, and he continues to provide her with food.<sup>10</sup>

These tales depict a very ancient relationship to animals: The animal is not a second-class creature but rather the human's equal or even superior. Animals are seen and treated as humans. The bond to the animal kingdom

can put humans and animals on the same level or even lead to the experience of an animalistic alter ego.

The folktale "The Bear's Son" probably belongs among the European folktales which depict this archaic relationship to the animal world. The tales of this type<sup>11</sup> usually begin with the abduction of a woman by a bear. The bear holds her captive in his cave, and she bears him a son. Tales in which an animal (bear, mare, she-wolf, or dog) suckles the hero also contain remnants of this world-view.<sup>12</sup> At first glance, descent from an animal seems to be only an aetiological fabulat invented solely to explain the hero's superhuman powers, but it is entirely conceivable that this too was originally a believed line of descent. The tale probably first began to focus on the bear's son after sensitivity to the story's perversity pushed human-animal marriage into the background.<sup>13</sup>

An Irish folktale also seems quite archaic: A hunter spots a rabbit, but he spares the animal's life. In gratitude the rabbit promises him a child. Nine months later the hunter's wife does indeed bear a child, even though she is over fifty years old and hasn't delivered a child in their twenty years of marriage. When the father dies, the rabbit's family adopts the child.<sup>14</sup>

Of course, these motifs are rare relics in Europe. In contrast, tribal tales describe human descent from animals far more frequently, sometimes in mythic reports of cosmogenesis and anthropogenesis. According to an Australian tale, "in the beginning" the earth opened up, and the totemic animals came out one by one: raven, parrot, ostrich, etc. Since they were not yet complete beings, lacking limbs and sensory organs, they lay down on the dunes. As they lay in the sun, their power and strength increased; they finally attained human form, and they got up and went off in all directions.<sup>15</sup>

According to a North American Indian tale, the ancestor of all forms of life was a swan. A magpie, a wolf, and a coot emerged from the swan. One day the magpie suggested to the wolf that he get some earth so that the coot could have solid ground under its feet. The wolf found the earth and then sang and played a rattle while the magpie dumped the earth over the water. This is how the land and sea attained their present state. The magpie, the smartest of all animals, changed into an Indian, establishing the human race.<sup>16</sup>

It remains a mystery how humans descended from the totemic animal, but we should point out the interesting observation that African, Native American, and Australian folk narratives apparently developed the idea that humans and animals originally belonged to the same family independently. Even in Europe we still occasionally encounter this sort of anthropogenesis: A Finnish folktale, for example, tells how bear, frog, and man descended from three brothers.<sup>17</sup> Today this tale is obviously only aetiological fiction, but the comparative ethnological data suggest the possibility that our culture also experienced a totemic phase.

We do not want to enter into the problem of totemism and the extensive

ethnological discussion of it here.<sup>18</sup> We also cannot possibly discuss whether all people, including Europeans, necessarily go through a totemic stage. Here we intend only to examine folktales to see whether the relationship between humans and animals in the texts reveals some sign of an ancient reality. In doing so, we cannot ignore the materials from tribal peoples which undoubtedly contain important clues: The relationship between humans and animals is one of the tribal folktale's main themes, particularly among hunters. Animals also play a large role in the European folktale relative to their place in our civilized world, which has entirely ousted nature, or at least suppressed its natural character. In contrast, folklore describes the original humans living in immediate contact with the other creatures. Animals had not yet become subhuman; they existed within the same cosmos as man. Humans had not yet recognized the order of life as specifically human and therefore followed the natural order which put them on equal terms with animals. The simple human thinks only in human terms and assigns human characteristics to animals. Thus tribal folktales humanize an animal's adventures and transform a human's adventures into an animal's.<sup>19</sup> This interchangeability clearly shows the belief that humans can also tend to their affairs in the body of an animal.

Only with the progressive intellectual development of human self-consciousness did an increased awareness of the differences between humans and animals form. But some aspects of the close relationship between the two have sustained themselves for a long time and do not seem to be limited to the past culture of a single society. The medieval trial and punishment of animals, which in some cases lasted into the modern era,<sup>20</sup> reveals how animals were treated as human and legally responsible. Albert Wesselski has compiled extensive medieval evidence to show that we can still recognize the original totemic animal-human connection in the modern abhorrence for such perverse relationships.<sup>21</sup>

As late as the twentieth century, country folk reported the death of the man of the house and important dates, e.g., Candlemas (Feb. 2), to the bees, cows, and horses. Pets have their own names, animals receive special holiday meals on Christmas, and, according to folk belief in many places, animals have their own special section in heaven.<sup>22</sup> These customs reveal an ancient, close relationship between humans and animals. The spirit of Enlightenment killed many such ideas—Descartes equated animals with machines—but perhaps we can still detect a trace of the time when animals were humans' equals in our relationship to a few domestic animals, particularly dogs and horses.<sup>23</sup>

Tales in which the ability to understand animal languages plays a role give us a taste of the many different historical layers of humans' attitudes toward animals that can exist in the folktale. In some folktales this ability has not yet become a "motif"; in other words, it is accepted as obvious and needs no further explanation. In other folktales only a chosen hero has this ability, with which he or she attains folktale happiness.

We must clearly distinguish two aspects of this phenomenon: Either the hero understands animal languages, or an animal speaks a human language. The first group of folktales, in which a person learns and understands animal languages, branches out a great deal: For example, Faithful Johannes hears what three ravens say to each other while flying by "because he knew their language" (KHM 6); i.e., his individual ability to understand the animals has a decisive influence on the rest of the story. The hero of KHM 17 ("The White Snake") achieves happiness by using his ability to understand animal languages. In a well-known Russian folktale, the numskull is the only one in the family capable of understanding animal languages.<sup>24</sup> The tale type about the man who understands animal languages and his curious wife also belongs to this group of tales, in which the knowledge of animal languages is an exceptional gift or a peculiar acquired ability.<sup>25</sup>

The second group of folktales consists of those in which an animal miraculously speaks a human language. For example, the ability of the princess's horse (Falada) to speak in KHM 89 is unusual enough that Conrad, the girl's geese-tending companion, reports the girl's conversations with the dead horse's head to the king. Even in tribal folktales, an animal that speaks a human language may be seen as something unusual and miraculous. For example, the Swahili farmer in an east African folktale is surprised to find out that the gazelle he bought can talk.<sup>26</sup>

In addition, there are folktales in which the animal endowed with human speech, like some of the humans who understand animal languages, is taken for granted. Here humans need not magically learn the animal's language in order to converse; the two address each other in the same language and exist on the same plane. The flounder asks the fisherman to throw him back (KHM 19). The goat in "The Magic Table, the Gold Donkey, and the Cudgel in the Sack" (KHM 36), the raven, the fish, and the fox in "The Mongoose" (KHM 191), not to mention the humans who retain their language after being transformed into animals (e.g., KHM 1, 11, 106, 108), all speak without surprising anyone. None of these tales explain how humans and animals understand each other.

Here we quite clearly have a very ancient conception of reality in which it still goes without saying that humans understand animal languages. We find this view in other tales, for example, the ancient Egyptian "Tale of the Two Brothers," where a talking cow can warn the younger brother, Bitiu, about his older brother without any commentary about a special ability to understand animals being necessary. Achilles' horses warn their master about his imminent death.<sup>27</sup> A later rationalistic age seems to have first viewed the talking animals as somewhat unusual and therefore developed them into new motifs. But many folktales still recognize that humans and animals must once have spoken mutually intelligible tongues. Formulas such as "in the days when the animals could still speak" express this notion.<sup>28</sup> Tribal folktales and myths frequently emphasize this idea: A

Kabyle folktale tells us that "in the beginning all the rocks, wood, water, and earth spoke."<sup>29</sup> An Eskimo tale says, "There was a time when man and animal were not very different: Their languages differed only as much as dialects do, and if the animals wanted to speak with people, they changed into people."<sup>30</sup>

We can distinguish a variety of views of animals which seem to correspond to historical differences in conceptions of reality. First, real animals contrast with animals possessing marvelous abilities. There are animals endowed with human speech and those that humans can understand only once they have learned the animal language. There are also demonic animals that always retain their animal form, and humans magically transformed into an animal's body. This last group breaks down into humans changed into an animal by some evil adversary and those who transform themselves. Some folktales contain several of these possibilities, even if they belong to very different historical stages. Both "real," but "tame," doves which help sort the lentils and the "supernatural" white bird in the tree on the mother's grave that throws down everything the heroine wishes for appear in "Cinderella" (KHM 21). In KHM 108, real animals (pigs that are butchered), supernatural animals (a rooster that is shod like a horse), and humans transformed into animals (a child in the body of a hedgehog) strikingly occur alongside each other.<sup>31</sup>

Broadly generalizing, we find positive and negative attitudes toward animals in folktales. One view sees animals as related, equal, or even superior to humans; the other sees them leading a miserable, subhuman existence purely to serve man. In either case animals are always perceived in human terms: Humans measure animal physiognomy, anatomy, poise, and way of life by their own standards. It is only a small step from this conception to the idea that animals are transformed humans.

In our folktales, transformation into an animal is usually a tragic fate which degrades the victim into a nonhuman. The human innocently suffers this fate brought about by an evil witch or a curse, e.g., when the parents unwittingly wish for it to happen. In these cases the victim is not actually guilty, but violating a taboo produces a sort of magical guilt: For example, in "Little Brother and Little Sister" (KHM 11) the boy drinks from the bewitched spring and changes into a deer. Transformation into an animal caused by someone's wish which immediately and unexpectedly comes true (e.g., KHM 25 and 93) results from violation of the implicit taboo against cursing. This taboo exists because the effects of cursing are taken very seriously. In "King Lindworm" (Type 433B)<sup>32</sup> the mother disregards instructions and gives birth to a monster. Violating taboos also causes transformation into an animal in the saint's legend-folktale where transgression of Mosaic or Christian codes results in the change. In one tale, Jesus and St. Peter transform a miserly woman as a punishment (Type 751). We can construct a psychological bridge from these religious examples to the well-known motif of transformation into an animal which is the

basis for the Grimms' "Hans My Hedgehog" (KHM 108, Type 441): The parents have been childless for so long that they wish for a child even if it is a hedgehog, a donkey (cf. KHM 144), a snake, or a pig. Punishment of the impatient, impetuous wish for a child and the wish that unexpectedly comes true have become traditional folktale clichés, but they also have a basis in living folk belief. In general, according to belief, an expectant mother must heed various rules if she wants to have a healthy, normal child: For example, if someone sins during delivery, it is said that the child will become a werewolf.<sup>33</sup> This one example embodies the folktale motif from "Hans My Hedgehog" modified into a legendary form which corresponds to Christian morals, and transferred to a figure (the werewolf) current in modern folk belief.

The person transformed into an animal is usually damned to lead an idle existence while patiently waiting to be disenchanting. But in some very different cases the animal body increases, rather than reduces, the human's abilities. This latter, far more ancient view of reality appears in tales in which transformation is not a punishment but rather an ability the hero acquires through friendly coexistence with animals. The grateful animals frequently lend the hero the ability to change into animal form, and the hero actively uses this gift to gain happiness: "I want to thank you," the grateful crow in a folktale from Holstein tells the hero. "Whenever you want to be a crow, just say 'I want to be a crow!' Just like that you'll be a crow."<sup>34</sup> In contrast to the legend, which no longer contains grateful or helpful animals and where transformation occurs only as a punishment, this folktale motif complex embodies the much older notion that humans can take on and cast off the appearance of an animal at will. People also change from human to animal bodies as a matter of course in tribal folktales. For example, the hero in an Alaskan folktale visits the walrus people, i.e., "walruses in human form."<sup>35</sup> An African Hausa tale describes the inhabitants of a certain city who regularly change into hyenas, leopards, buffalo, and lions.<sup>36</sup> Such narratives seem to lie at the start of a development that also eventually encompassed our European folktales.

We now see that transformation into an animal was not originally a punishment or the result of black magic. There is nothing strange or unnatural about these transformations because divisions between the animal and human worlds have not yet been drawn; humans and animals coexist on equal terms. An Alaskan Eskimo tale depicts this original state: "Animals could change into people, and people into animals. And the people walked on their hands, they crawled around on all fours."<sup>37</sup> A different Eskimo tale takes place "in the days when one could easily be man or animal."<sup>38</sup>

Societies with totemic structures have already developed a clear awareness of the difference between man and animal, but the way of thinking depicted in these tales reveals, to use the ethnographic term, a "proto-totemic mentality" which recognizes only one group of living crea-

tures. In Africa only the apparently ancient animal mythology of the bushmen still contains a believed proto-totemic mentality, but relics of this mode of thinking abound in the many African folktales about transformation of animals. For example, a tale from the Gold Coast tells of a man who goes with his wife to her fish relatives and lives among them as a fish himself.<sup>39</sup> The first wife of a man who remarried changes herself into an elephant and joins her herd. She is brought back only because her child finds her and tells the father.<sup>40</sup>

The point is that in these narratives the humans are not transformed, but rather they *transform themselves*. Moreover, this has not yet become an act of magic; the self-transformation occurs slowly as the humans constantly associate with the animals. For example, an Indian folktale from the American Northwest coast describes how a man who visits the seals gradually becomes a seal himself: "His relatives set out in boats to look for him. There they saw him in the distance lying among the seals. The second time they found him, again with the seals, he had whiskers and hair on his back. The third time they noticed that he had a seal's markings on his stomach." They try luring him into coming back several times:

One day the seal-man came back to the village on his own along with his seal-wife and their child. He slept in his house, but the next morning he was gone. This happened several times. His brother and others implored him to stay, but he said, "Don't worry about me; I lead a happy life among the seals under water because it is more beautiful there than up here on earth." So they let him go and no longer paid any attention when they spotted him on the rocks or in the water.<sup>41</sup>

European folktales contain few willful transformations like those in tribal folktales, and certainly none that are still believed. "The Magic Flight" (Type 313) is one of the few: In some versions (e.g., KHM 51 and 56) the fleeing lovers change *themselves* into a rosebush with a rose, then into a priest and a church, and finally into a duck and a lake.<sup>42</sup> We also still find these antique motifs of self-transformation in "The Magician and His Pupil" (Type 325): A magician's apprentice changes himself into various animals. His father sells the animals, which then run away from the buyers, who do not have the magic reins. Finally the magician buys back the boy, but the apprentice has become a master magician himself, and in a contest of transformations which usually last several rounds, he defeats his teacher. The Grimms' "The Thief and His Master" (KHM 68) includes this series of motifs.<sup>43</sup>

This motif complex about the ability to repeatedly transform oneself, an ability not granted in other folktales, seems to be pure fantasy which dispenses with all reality. But like the self-transformation motif in "The Magic Flight," we can trace the motifs in this tale to older motifs not otherwise found in tales of magic with their limitation of transformations to

the result of black magic.<sup>44</sup> In Greek and Germanic mythology, only gods and demons possess the ability to transform themselves. When self-transformation still occurs in our European tales, only witches and wizards have this ability (e.g., KHM 69), or the rational explanation has already set in that the hero was apprentice to a magician (KHM 68) or that his lover is a witch's stepdaughter and uses her magic wand (KHM 56). In contrast, tribal folktales do not require supernatural forces for transformation. In these tales no gap exists between experience and belief; nothing is more natural than transformation. Karl von den Steinen reports an incident he experienced: The Bacairi were pursuing a fugitive black slave. They couldn't catch him, but they noticed a tortoise in the bushes nearby and were appeased because they were absolutely convinced that the boy had turned himself into the tortoise.<sup>45</sup>

This incident describes a self-transformation which occurs without any magic, as is still frequently the case in tribal folktales. The ability to transform oneself is accepted as an obvious reality. A Sudanese tale simply states that "one day Gulu [the vulture] changed himself into a man. Ewoako [the boa] changed himself into a man. . . ." <sup>46</sup> Leo Frobenius attests that Ethiopian folktales contain no motifs of magical transformation, only factual reports of plain, natural transformations.<sup>47</sup>

The concept that humans have a single identity which could manifest itself in two or more forms may have existed before the notion of transformation. This world-view is not "premagical"; on the contrary, it teems with magical practices, but something as commonplace as transformation requires no magic. Transformation without magic is much older than that which requires magic: Magical transformations first appear at a stage in the folktale's development where supernatural occurrences require an explanation. The voluntary ability to change one's external form predates magic spells. Perhaps even the Frog King could originally change his form at will: The *Panchatantra* contains a frog who is grateful for being saved from a snake. He retrieves the king's ring from the fountain and then changes himself into a human and marries the king's daughter.<sup>48</sup>

We can schematize the various levels of the idea of transformation into groups characterized by these statements:

1. "So and so is an animal," or can be an animal as well;
2. "He transformed himself into an animal";
3. "Someone changed him into an animal."

These groupings simply describe the types of transformation and are not intended to suggest a sequence of rationalistic development. Rather than separating into historical phases, all three types coexist in modern folk narrative; they build a magical-mythical whole dominated by different members at different times.

One aspect of transformation makes the difference between the tribal folktale and the European folktale particularly evident. Transformations that occur in tribal folktales need not be undone at the story's end. The

European folktale experienced a decisive change in its perception of reality: The tale of magic developed from the proto-totemic story and no longer contains the premagical ability to switch from human to animal form; a magical act must trigger the transformation into an animal. Moreover, not everyone has the magical power to change her- or himself into an animal; only certain notable people can perform this magic.<sup>49</sup> In a final stage, the Christian world-view attributes demonic evil characteristics to this magical person (e.g., the witch), and transformation into an animal becomes the prime example of these characters' ability to perform harmful magic. The legend even goes a step further than the folktale: The legend doesn't seem to trust the witch with such far-reaching magical abilities anymore; thus only God transforms people as a punishment. The legend also eliminates the concept of "bewitchment." As the folktale finally becomes a "genre" formed according to artistic rules, it loses its original realistic character and becomes a mere play form. Transformation into an animal becomes a humiliating dehumanization, but it has no lasting effect on the victim; it only helps increase the story's tension. The folktale has become "happy fiction" (*Glücksdichtung*), which by artistic necessity requires that the concluding motif be the main task in the hero's series of adventures; namely, return to human form. To summarize: Transformation was originally a reality in the folktale, but later it became a mere "motif"; i.e., it sets up the disenchantment and the happy ending.

The folktale about marriage to an animal offers an abundance of important enchantment and disenchantment motifs. Although the motif complexes are distributed among various tale types (Types 400-459), the scheme itself ("Transformation into an Animal and Disenchantment through Marriage") is quite general, and more versions of this tale have been recorded around the world than any other.<sup>50</sup> The animal in this tale can be a dragon, a lion, a wolf, a raven, a hedgehog, or even a glowworm. In the Danish, Swedish, Icelandic, and Finnish versions, a white dog, a bear, a horse, a deer, a rat, or a snake plays the role of animal bridegroom.<sup>51</sup>

It is no coincidence that in the very first tale in the Grimms' collection, the frog transforms into a king's son once he gets into the princess's bed. In KHM 108 the hedgehog-child Hans weds the king's daughter, and a king's son born as a donkey in KHM 144 finds a princess's love and thus finally regains his human form. In exchange for the "lilting, leaping lark"<sup>52</sup> the father must marry his youngest, most beloved daughter to a wild lion (KHM 88). Snow White marries the king's son who had been changed into a bear (KHM 161).

Even with all these cases of marriage to a human transformed into an animal in the Grimms' folktales, the tales never depict sodomy; no marriages between a human and an animal are consummated. It always turns out "really" to be a marriage between a man and a woman, and transformation back into human form occurs *before* they actually consummate the marriage. The lion in "The Lilting, Leaping Lark" is a lion only during the

day; at night, when he is with his wife, he has a human body (KHM 88). The king's daughter in KHM 1 does promise to let the frog sleep in her bed, but the Grimm tale mentions marriage only after he changes back into human form. In "Snow White and Rose Red" (KHM 161) Snow White marries the bear only after the dwarf has been killed and the bear's skin falls off, exposing a handsome prince. "Hans My Hedgehog" (KHM 108) takes off his hedgehog skin before getting into bed with his chosen princess. The princess in KHM 144 is only "engaged" to the donkey; the marriage is between two humans.

Because of the influence of the Grimm collection and its limitation on human-animal interaction, German scholars speak of the "animal bridegroom" (*Tierbräutigam*) in contrast to the English term "beast marriage." Indeed, the "animal bridegroom" seems to have replaced the older "animal husband"; numerous folkloric texts still openly use the later term to describe the relationship. But regardless whether it is an animal bridegroom or an animal husband, can we say that these tales have any relationship to reality? They cannot, of course, reflect actual sexual relationships, because marriage to an animal has never been a reality. Despite the abundant materials, we cannot adequately answer this question on the basis of European tale types, and we must once again turn to tribal folktales. We find the same development in the attitude toward the reality of marriage to animals in these tales that we did for transformation. In tribal folktales, marriage to an animal does not yet have negative connotations of perversity and does not yet require special magic to transform or disenchant the animal. The tales often depict marriage to an animal as something quite natural: Humans who live close to nature consider the animal their most important partner for survival; human and animal worlds merge. For example, in Siberian folktales marriage to an animal is quite ordinary: One day two very pretty polar bear-women came onto the river bank. A man sitting on the beach saw them, married one of them, took her home, anointed her, as is customary at weddings, and together they had children.<sup>53</sup> Primitive hunters in Greenland also still believe in marriage to foxes.<sup>54</sup>

In African folktales, humans often marry animals without thinking twice. For example, rooster and elephant may contend for a woman.<sup>55</sup> A Yoruba tale begins: "A woman had a daughter. Ikoko [hyena] came and said: 'I want your daughter to be my wife.' The woman said: 'You shall have her!'"<sup>56</sup> In West African folktales, tortoise quite naturally woos a human girl.<sup>57</sup>

The frequent connection between these tales and cosmological myths shows just how seriously the tales treat the motif of marriage to an animal. For example, Akun, the tortoise in Yoruba folktales, appears as both an animal bridegroom and the figure who unites the sexes and introduces intercourse to the world. In another Yoruba tale, a girl who declines all other suitors marries Alamu, the lizard, but then runs away from him:

"Ever since, the lizard always raises its head when sitting on walls and trees. Alamu is on the lookout for his wife, but he doesn't find her."<sup>58</sup> A western Sudanese tale explains the origin of a common matrimonial custom with a story about an animal husband.<sup>59</sup> A believed Malay clan legend that explains the central Javanese Lalang people's special status tells of a princess impregnated by a dog; the son thus produced becomes the father of the clan.<sup>60</sup>

Among primitive hunters, the animal marriage occasionally has a close connection to hunting magic. In a Pawnee Indian tale from North America, a boy brings the buffalo under the control of humans by marrying one: He becomes a buffalo himself and lives among the animals for a while. He then returns to his human tribe and teaches them how to find and kill buffalo. Even this tale itself has a practical function as part of hunting magic, because the Pawnee believe that telling the story lures the buffalo.<sup>61</sup>

In the European folktale, human company, love, and marriage restore the animal to its human form. In tribal folktales, on the other hand, animals often transform themselves into humans, marry, and then change back into animals later. European and tribal folktales treat this theme in fundamentally different ways: In the European folktale, talking animals who play a role in the story are not really animals but rather humans under a spell. The hero marries an exceptional animal, i.e., a transformed person. In tribal folktales, real animals often marry humans; of course, they can often freely choose between their animal and human forms. Only by understanding this important aspect of the animal-marriage narratives can we possibly comprehend the fact that characters in tribal narratives sometimes express their desire to marry an animal: For example, a Yoruba girl rejects all suitors until Akuko, the rooster, comes around. She says: "I want Akuko to be my husband!" The rooster hears her, says he'd like to marry her as well, and they become a couple.<sup>62</sup> The girl in a Moluccan tale wants to marry a fish-man at all costs; her father opposes the idea and kills the fish-man. The daughter commits suicide. The father then revives them both with some medicine and allows them to marry.<sup>63</sup>

Tribal tales about marriage to animals do not yet have a need for disenchantment because the type of transformation they depict is completely different from that in European tales. Tribal tales also completely lack humiliation of the person transformed into an animal and of the person who marries one. Even the very concept "disenchantment" is not present in these simple folktales because this concept is linked to enchantment and curses, to powerful black magic, punishment, and guilt. Transformation into animals as a curse or a punishment first appears in later cultural stages when humans have emancipated themselves from the animal world. In the European folktale, what starts out as marriage to an animal results in disenchantment as soon as the human says "yes" or at the moment they are married.

Most of our folktales have a happy ending. In contrast, animal marriage

tales among tribal societies often end tragically; after temporarily taking on human form, the animal spouse again becomes an animal. An animal marriage tale from Ceram, which otherwise has much in common with the European form, clearly shows this difference: Some siblings lay their hands on a tree that belongs to a snake. The snake demands the sister become his wife as a penalty and in exchange for releasing the brothers. During the day the snake takes human form; at night it becomes a snake again. The brothers trick the snake-man and kill him. The dead man changes back into a snake, but the brothers throw it into the river.<sup>64</sup> In this case the girl marries an animal in human form, not a man transformed into an animal, and the tale ends with the snake-man's death.

There is clearly a connection between animal bridegroom motifs in tribal and European folktales. Some sporadic relics reveal that disgust over marriage to an animal is not universal, even in the European tales. For example, the king's daughter in a modern Greek folktale expresses her desire to marry an animal. She tells her father that she will marry only a man who can become a wild animal.<sup>65</sup> A girl in a Norwegian folktale who has no husband would even settle for an animal, and she finally marries a fox.<sup>66</sup> We occasionally find the transformation of animals into humans in Russian folktales. For example, a fish transforms itself into a beautiful maiden who marries the numskull.<sup>67</sup> The marriage is not judged negatively; on the contrary, God tells them to marry.

There are also short legendary tales in German that describe bonds between hunters and animals without mentioning disenchantment. A Silesian tale briefly reports the events as facts without any narrative adornment: "A man and a girl were picking blueberries. Suddenly the girl was gone. The man poked a stick under a rock he saw moving. And when he stuck the stick in the hole, a mole came out and sang:

This home is very fine,  
here I keep my beautiful love.<sup>68</sup>

As a last example, consider the image of the werewolf, still alive in folk belief in Germany during the nineteenth century. This image preserved until very recently the idea that the beast switches from animal to human form.<sup>69</sup>

These European exceptions only confirm the rule. In general, a strong ethical stance against sodomy superimposes itself on the European animal marriage tale, while tribal versions still depict the older view of such relationships. In European tales, associating with animals is below human dignity. It is certainly not coincidental that at the start of many of these tales, the animal tricks or extorts the father into giving up his daughter. These tales can accept marriage to an animal only by making the father decide between giving up his own life or marrying his daughter to the animal. The motif of the girl's devotion and love to the animal, which

disenchants him, can develop only from this initial situation. But above all, these tales depict the daughter's love for her father, which leads her to go to the animal, not her love for the animal itself.

Picturing the animal as a temporarily transformed human tones down the feeling that the marriage is perverse: "Once there was a king's son who was a bear for six days, and on the seventh day a man."<sup>70</sup> These periods during which the enchanted person is free from the animal's body are not merely fantastic inventions designed to give the animal marriage tales some variation, nor are they rationalistic devices added to make the biological possibilities of the marriage more believable; these narratives correspond to certain beliefs in tribal societies. The Eskimo, for example, believe the seal is a transformed man who takes off his fish skin every nine days and regains his human form.<sup>71</sup> A North American Indian folktale describes an entire village of eagle-people with eagle skins hanging all over the place. The young people have young eagle skins, the elders, skins of older eagles. At home the "animals" go about in the form of humans.<sup>72</sup> In a tale from Oceania, when the chief's daughter turns fifteen she falls in love with a frog who can remove his skin, and who sleeps with her and marries her in human form.<sup>73</sup>

This common motif about the ability to remove temporarily the animal "skin" seems to be a survival from the ability to freely switch between human and animal form. We also find a few Grimms' tales in which the animal-person throws off his animal pelt rather than actually being disenchanted (e.g., KHM 144, 161, 108). The prince in KHM 144 remains human only after the king burns the donkey skin. Notably, the word *disenchantment* does not appear in this tale. Moreover, the princess does not protest her marriage to the animal.

The ability to remove the animal "skin" is not a rationalized form of transformation into an animal; i.e., the transformation is not explained away merely by describing the animal as a person masquerading with an animal pelt draped over his or her body. On the contrary, this motif reflects an ancient concept which maintains that animals literally have a human core, and when they take off their animal skin they *are* human.

Accordingly, we do not find transformation back into human form by taking off the animal pelt only in folktales. This process occasionally plays a role in believed magical practices in some cultures. An Eskimo woman, it is reported, let an old woman come into her hut even though her husband had told her not to. On her way out, the old woman turned into a fox. During the night the young woman woke up with a terrible headache. She felt her head and noticed that antlers had sprouted. By the time she left the hut, she already had the head of a reindeer. Her husband followed her, found her in a herd, and freed her by pulling off the pelt as he was told to do. He had to throw her on her back and be careful not to kill her while removing the pelt.<sup>74</sup>

From here we easily take the next step to a number of methods of



releasing people from animal bodies. These practices are not, as Hans Naumann and Friedrich Ranke assert, derived from a primitive view of death;<sup>75</sup> rather, they are quite ordinary reality from a time when humans believed in the ability to remove the animal skin to reveal the human within. This purely material method of disenchantment seems surprising only when viewed from the perspective of later developments in the folktale which stipulate disenchantment through human company, love, and bodily and spiritual interaction. The folktale hero himself is often afraid to perform this process; he cannot bring himself to chop off his beloved animal's head when she asks him to. "Shoot me dead and chop off my head and paws!" says the helpful fox in "The Golden Bird" (KHM 57). The hero is afraid to do it (because he no longer understands the original nature of transformation) and says: "Fine gratitude that would be! I couldn't possibly do that." The formula "disenchantment through death" is completely out of place in this tale. It belongs to nothing other than the belief reflected as reality in the Eskimo tale mentioned above, i.e., the ability to return to human form by removing the animal body.

Like the Eskimo tale, European folktales often depict disenchantment through a concrete, bodily, often even violent process; in short, the disenchantment is material rather than spiritual. In the folktale, disenchantment affects only the body. Originally disenchantment merely consisted of changing back, taking off the animal shell, and hiding or burning it (e.g., KHM 108 and 144).<sup>76</sup> Disenchantment through decapitation, stabbing, or other methods of killing, such as the more recent adaptation of shooting, work only because the transformation is conceived as an external phenomenon. Disenchantment through these methods is the most violent way of doing magic. The king in KHM 135 decapitates his true bride, who had been turned into a duck, at the very moment she swims through the gutter into the kitchen. In some versions of "Little Brother and Little Sister" (KHM 11), the queen who turns into an animal (usually a duck) each night is also changed back into human form in this manner. Decapitation also occasionally removes the spell from the animal bridegroom. The lion who plays this role in a Hungarian-German folktale is decapitated and disenchanted with three swings of a sword.<sup>77</sup> According to the animal's request, the hero cuts off the head or paws of the enchanted person, stabs him, or beats him to a pulp with a switch.<sup>78</sup> These are not different types of death but rather a variety of ways of removing the animal "covering." More recent motifs of killing someone, such as the living dead in the legend, so that person will be free to rest in peace have nothing to do with the destruction of the enchanted animal in the folktale.

The worldwide tale "The Swan Maiden" also still reflects the old belief in the ability to voluntarily remove the animal garb; i.e., it does not yet contain the later folktale development of an actual transformation. In this tale the hero steals the swan skin from a bathing swan-maiden. She must then retain her human form, and she marries the hero.<sup>79</sup> Interestingly,

"The Swan Maiden" is also one of the few tale types that appear over the entire globe, in European, Asian, and primitive traditions, without any apparent connections. Tribal peoples often tell this tale as a believed cult legend as well as a folktale. For example, a story in volume 12 of the Atlantis series tells of a hunter who secretly watches the buffalo take off their hides and bathe as humans. The hunter damages one of the hides, and when the buffalo put their hides back on, one of them falls off a buffalo-man, who flees with the others in his "naked" human form. The smith repairs the hide and makes it into the mask of the buffalo cult.<sup>80</sup>

We also find the swan-maiden motif in reverse: Stealing human clothing means the victim remains an animal. For example, "The Dove Woman" from western Sudan "changes herself into a pretty woman, moves to the city, and sets up house. A man sees her and marries her. She lives very well with the man, but every morning she changes back into a dove." When the man takes her clothes, she remains in the form of a dove.<sup>81</sup>

The Grimms' "The Six Swans" also clearly retains something of the original concept of transformation: The witch-queen throws shirts over her stepchildren, and they fly away as swans. The children can take off their swan skins and have human form only for a quarter of an hour each evening. The spell is broken by (human) shirts that their sister throws over the transformed swan-brothers (KHM 49). This tale clearly shows the old conception of transformation as a covering. The change back in this case exactly reverses the original transformation.

Transformations other than into or from an animal follow the same rules in the folktale. "The Cast-iron Stove" only covers the transformed prince; the prince himself is not changed. In order to release him, the princess must "scrape" a hole in the oven until the enchanted prince can squeeze out (KHM 127).

Folktales in which love and marriage bring about disenchantment belong to a different developmental stage of reality.<sup>82</sup> The Grimms' tales make it seem as though disenchanted people always marry their rescuers. Tales such as "The Six Swans" (KHM 49), "The Seven Ravens" (KHM 25), or "The Twelve Brothers" (KHM 9), where sibling love, not love between a man and a woman, breaks the spell, are exceptions.

Folktales contain disenchantment *leading* to marriage and disenchantment *through* marriage. Individual cases do not always rigorously differentiate between disenchantment dependent on, i.e., preceded by, marriage, and disenchantment as the precondition for tying the knot. In any case, disenchantment and the disenchantment-marriage belong together and presuppose each other. In the folktale, anyone ready for disenchantment has, by definition, reached a marriageable age.

In a Silesian folktale, for example, the princess with a horse's head who must eat a man in the church every eight days says to her disenchanter: "You have freed me, now I will marry you."<sup>83</sup> A disenchanted princess from Pomerania makes herself equally clear when she tells her hero: "You

are my savior, you kissed me, now you also have to marry me."<sup>84</sup> It would be completely contrary to folktale style if the princess did not want to marry her savior and if he had set out only to free the princess and not to find a wife (but see pp. 192 and 196).

Heroes and heroines disenchant their beloved, but males and females go about the task differently. Women disenchant with pity and service, men by freeing captives. Males often effect disenchantment with markedly erotic motifs, most commonly a kiss and the consummation of marriage.<sup>85</sup> Of course, our trusty Grimms' "tales for children" avoid all erotic motifs. For example in the original text of "The Frog King" (KHM 1) the nasty frog unambiguously tells the king's daughter: "Bring me into your bed, I want to sleep with you!" And when she throws him against the wall, "he fell down into the bed and lay there as a handsome young prince; then the king's daughter lay down with him."<sup>86</sup> Other versions of "The Frog King" are even clearer: The frog is allowed to sleep in the princess's bed for three weeks. When he joins her in bed, she places a sheet, a diaper, or a skirt between herself and the frog; or the foreman lies between the two, but the frog jumps over him and finally gets the princess to kiss him.<sup>87</sup> "Wilhelminke, I want to jump on your lap," sings the toad in an east Prussian version.<sup>88</sup>

Recent collections which record folktales in their adult form are particularly unabashed: In "The Venus-Bird" from Holstein, the numskull awakens the princess from her magical hundred-year sleep by sleeping with her.<sup>89</sup> The soldier who disenchants the queen from a spell gets into bed and sleeps with her for three nights.<sup>90</sup> Other folktales are more subtle but are nonetheless unmistakably erotic. The motif of the three tormenting nights seems to have sexual connotations (cf. KHM 92). Similarly, a kiss disenchants spooky legend figures in the form of a snake or toad. The disenchanter must let the snake-girl crawl on him or wind herself around him; he must embrace her, hold her tight, wrestle with her, stay with her for a night, etc.<sup>91</sup>

The fact that this disenchantment motif also appears in legend (although it lacks the happy marriage afterward) indicates that it developed more recently, when transformation was believed to be the result of black magic, and the generic expectation of a happy folktale ending, i.e., marriage, already existed. The idea of disenchanting love has indeed become a favorite motif fairly recently, and the erotic disenchantment motif has spread only as a result of the folktale's development into an artistic love story. Disenchantment at the moment the lovers' lips touch or as soon as they embrace increases the dramatic effect of this method of breaking the spell. Transformed people regain their human form as quickly as they magically lost it. This aspect of the European folktale contrasts with the earlier conception of transformation as we occasionally find it in tribal narratives. In particular, the idea that human company in general, not only through marriage, can return someone to human form seems very ancient.

Not a single act but rather gradual assimilation to the surrounding human society restores the human form. Disenchantment through love is simply the novelistic stylization of this believed notion of disenchantment through human company. The Pygmalion story also corresponds to this notion: Daily human contact humanizes the subject. Like Pygmalion in the Greek legend, a wooden statue of a girl comes to life in a Turkish folktale.<sup>92</sup>

The recent expansion of the idea of disenchantment has proliferated motivations for undertaking the task, particularly in ethical and psychological respects. Pity, love, the willingness to help, the desire to undertake an adventure, or even the selfish pursuit of profit may inspire disenchantment.<sup>93</sup> In addition to deliberate efforts at disenchantment, we also find unintended disenchantment (e.g., KHM 1).

The more the folktale distances itself from magical reality, the more formulaic disenchantment becomes, until it finally becomes a merely stylistic element used to construct a model folktale. In other words, disenchantment provides the necessary stereotypical release from the spell and leads to the expected happy ending. A few folktales include "disenchantment" even though no spell or transformation occurred in the first place. "Disenchantment" finally comes to mean any sort of release, and it is now only a happy "resolution" without its former connection to magical reality.

Similarly, the European folktale completely subordinates to stylistic considerations the connection between enchantment and guilt. The modern artistic folktale often does retain magical guilt—little brother in KHM 11 is transformed because he drinks from the enchanted fountain—but we nonetheless almost always have the impression that spells affect the innocent. The happy folktale completely abandons reality in order to free the hero and his or her partner of burdens. In contrast, the legend continues to take guilt very seriously: It has brought the old conception of magical guilt into close connection with the Christian idea of sin and punishes both violations equally severely because it sees both concepts as completely real. Because transformation and disenchantment are so closely bound to the concept of guilt, the folktale takes great pains to protect its hero from accusation: The hero almost always disenchants and is never disenchanted. As a rule, it is the folktale hero's partner, rather than the hero, who is transformed.

The legend's disenchantment, which usually fails,<sup>94</sup> has a completely different relationship to reality. The folktale did not follow the legend's rationalizing direction because its disenchantments had already distanced themselves from reality. In the legend, disenchantment is a serious matter which has also found a close connection to Christian notions of salvation. Only the legend depicts disenchantment through Christian remedies such as saying mass, pilgrimages, piously giving thanks, and religious greetings. Even though the legend's motifs of reparation as a precondition for disenchantment reflect a primitive ethic of retribution, we cannot imagine them without the influence of Christianity.<sup>95</sup> Christian influences also

introduce the idea of release to eternal peace into the legend. In contrast, the folktale conceives of disenchantment in earthly terms. Folktale disenchantment does not transcend time in a Christian sense; rather, it frees characters so they can enjoy their worldly existence.

The differences between folktale and legend disenchantments correspond to the different historical stages of reality they embody. The original belief in transformation does not recognize the concept of disenchantment. Magic gradually replaces the universal ability to voluntarily change back into human form, and finally only disenchantment can undo transformations. The last stage coincides with the historical development of religious belief in salvation. Only the established high religions speak of "salvation"; early religion did not yet express this need.<sup>96</sup> Belief in disenchantment has developed through a series of stages: from breaking the spell by taking off the "covering," to killing and decapitation, and finally to a purely spiritual disenchantment through Christian remedies and acts of love.

Primitive elements in our European folk narratives are not always the oldest. The folktale can reproduce any of the historical stages of transformation and disenchantment, producing a different accent in each case. A given narrative, however, emphasizes one aspect over the others.

#### MANNERS AND CUSTOMS

Magic is only part of an entire world that once existed. We have inquired into the magical realm of this world, now we must also investigate other human activities that appear in the folktale and ask what they tell us about a past world-view and its conception of reality. Folk belief is not the only aspect of an archaic, once-believed reality that we recognize in the folktale. The folktale also provides historical information about actual ways of life. Of course, a narrative's cultural shading does not always indicate the actual age of the story: Cannons and cars can replace older requisitions in folk narrative. The magic rifle and bullet that never miss their target developed from the magic sword. Any clues that we do uncover apply only for the given text, not for the entire tale type, particularly when decorative motifs not essential to the plot contain this information.

Exemplifying this fallacy, Josef Prestel dates "Rumpelstiltskin" (KHM 55) to the baroque period, when (and because) spinning gold was in its heyday in order to supply the lace industry.<sup>1</sup> But clearly this is a false conclusion because it fails to recognize the folktale's central motif. It is also a mistake to ascribe "Rumpelstiltskin" to the sixteenth century and the discovery of the spinning wheel, because the spinning wheel is also not a vital element in this folktale's reality and therefore does not provide a criterion for dating, particularly because older versions of the tale about help with spinning mention the spindle.<sup>2</sup>

Humans and domestic animals live in small quarters in the folktale

(KHM 169). Hans Naumann draws conclusions about archaic ways of living on the basis of the giant who comes home and says, "I smell, smell human flesh" (cf. the devil in KHM 29). He sees this formula as proof that primeval man lived in homes or caves without windows or lighting. Only in such a house could the inhabitant smell if someone he could not see had crept into the dwelling while he was away.<sup>3</sup> Naumann's interpretation is not very convincing. The hero hides in the monster's house and therefore would not be visible even if it were well lit. Folktale demons obviously have an instinctual ability to detect the presence of a human in their home.

We cannot determine the age of KHM 87 on the basis of the potatoes that the poor man's wife puts on the fire even if we know that potatoes have been cultivated in Germany only since the middle of the eighteenth century. This tale type (Type 750) appears in Stricker's *Mären* from around 1250. Millet, which has tenaciously held its ground in the folktale (e.g., KHM 103), would provide a better historical index of folktale civilization: Its shallow roots make it workable with a hoe, and thus millet has long been one of the primary cultivated grains. Millet was the main source of nourishment among the lower classes from Germanic antiquity until the Middle Ages, by which time the upper classes had already switched to bread.<sup>4</sup>

The lace that the German Snow White (KHM 53) buys from her evil stepmother has been dated to the rococo period, but lace adornments date to at least the thirteenth century.<sup>5</sup> Besides, Icelandic versions of this tale contain rings, shoes, and belts, all of which are much older, instead of lace.<sup>6</sup> In short, we cannot date the tale type on the basis of the lace in the German text.

The folktale's depiction of occupations is also so varied that it does not allow us to draw a precise picture of some historical or social reality. Ancient Germanic wild men appear alongside medieval knights; discharged soldiers who apparently fought as mercenaries in the Thirty Years War meet craftsmen who could have lived in the late Middle Ages as well as the nineteenth century. All of these figures are largely interchangeable.

In this chapter we ask: To what extent does the folktale depict real manners and customs? In doing so we encounter familiar methodological problems. In a well-known effort, P. Saintyves attempts to trace Perrault's tales to ancient seasonal celebrations and initiation rituals. Sleeping Beauty is nature waking to the new year, Cinderella the bride oracle on Valentine's Day, Cap o' Rushes a Fasnacht costume, Little Red Riding-Hood the May Queen, Thumbling the consecration of youth, Bluebeard the ritual testing of a wife, Puss in Boots the indoctrination of the newly chosen king.<sup>7</sup>

False interpretations often take up customs that appear only in the folktale's decorative elements. For example, we can find evidence that the practice depicted in "The Three Feathers" (KHM 63) of blowing a feather into the air in order to decide which direction to follow has a basis in reality.<sup>8</sup> But even though the Grimm tale takes its title from this custom, its