

uncompromising ethic of success, the protagonist's unscrupulous behavior is to some extent balanced by his social responsibility. In modern European cultures, Sindbad's name has become the quintessential expression of foreign travel.

Ulrich Marzolph

See also *Arabian Nights* Films; Film and Video

Further Reading

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Singer, Isaac Bashevis (1904–1991)

Isaac Bashevis Singer was a Nobel Prize–winning (1978) Polish-born writer of Yiddish in America who wrote about the folktales as well as the small town life of his childhood. Born near Warsaw, the son of a Hasidic rabbi, Singer originally studied at a rabbinical seminary. His first writing was published in 1935, the year he followed his older brother Israel Joshua Singer, also a notable writer, to America. From the United States, he explored the world of religion, superstition, and the intrusion of the modern world, originally publishing most of his work in the Yiddish-language newspaper the *Forward* (published since 1897 in New York City). His works, including novels, collections of short stories, and memoirs, have been criticized for their openness about the motivation of lust, foolishness, and human weakness in the small towns of his homeland. He first came to the attention of the English-reading public with the publication of Saul Bellow's translation of his story "Gimpel, the Fool" in *Partisan Review* in 1953.

Although he readily dealt with adult themes, he produced almost as many books for children as for adults, including *Zlateh the Goat and Other Stories* (1966, illustrated by Maurice Sendak, a Newberry Honor Book), *Stories for Children* (1984), *Alone in the Wild Forest* (1971, illustrated by Margot Zemach), and *The Fools of Chelm and Their History* (1973, illustrated by Uri Shulevitz). Populated by angels and

demons, **peasants** and merchants, sinners and the devout, his stories use folktale narrative to evoke a lost world.

George Bodmer

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Sisters

The female siblings in a **family**, sisters are important figures in folktales and fairy tales. They may help or hinder their siblings, while their virtues or vices often propel the narrative. Their **birth** order and role in the family (as stepsisters, half-sisters, or biological sisters) highlight both conflict and unity within the family unit. Sisters' interactions—reflecting both functional and dysfunctional family relations—often throw into stark relief struggles for succession, inheritance, and status. Of interest is what sister tales say about **women's** roles in the patriarchy, about female interactions, and how editorial practices impact the socialization of girls through folktales and fairy tales.

Tales often have constellations of three sisters in opposition to one another, signaled by stark contrasts between them, such as beautiful/ugly, kind/unkind, youngest/oldest, self-effacing/vain, and industrious/lazy. Other stories highlight the different treatment of biological children and stepchildren, where stepmothers advantage their own children and neglect or mistreat their stepdaughters as in ATU 431, *The House in the Forest*, or ATU 511, *One-Eye, Two-Eyes, Three-Eyes*.

Tales with preadolescent girls typically amplify the rewards and punishments for female virtue and vice in an all-female world. One typical tale type represented internationally in this category is ATU 480, **The Kind and the Unkind Girls**. There the browbeaten (step)sister enters an underground realm and endures trials to test her readiness for "female" duties—**food** production (symbolically in the form of apple tree needing harvesting and bread needing

baking) and animal husbandry (a cow needing milking). After uncomplainingly serving an otherworldly spirit, keeping house, and performing difficult tasks, she returns to the upper world and is richly rewarded for her service. When her sister follows in her footsteps, hoping to reap the same rewards, her waywardness and bad behavior are punished in equal measure. The tale foregrounds the nurturing, self-sacrificing domesticity of the worthy (step)daughter against the selfishness and slothfulness of the unworthy biological daughter.

In the case of adolescent or nubile girls, the stark contrasts between them signal their marriageability. These sisters are in competition for a mate, as in ATU 510A, **Cinderella**, or are simply jealous of their sister's good fortune, as in ATU 432, *The Prince as Bird*, wherein the envious sisters contrive to drive away their youngest sister's lover. Animal bridegroom stories, such as ATU 425C, **Beauty and the Beast**, and ATU 441, *Hans My Hedgehog*, find the youngest sister rewarded for her kindness to a suitor previously rejected by her sisters: her charity eventually leads to her disenchanting the beast into a fabulous mate.

As adults, envious sisters may try to foil their sister's happiness. Jealousy rules these tales because of one sister's good fortune, mate, or virtue. In ATU 707, *The Three Golden Children*, for example, the sisters boast about their ability to produce marvelous children. When the youngest sister becomes the **queen** and bears three such children, the jealous sisters steal the heirs and replace them with **changeling** animals and otherwise plot to ruin her standing with her husband by accusing their sister of **cannibalism** or sorcery.

Sometimes sisters redress injustices done to other family members—male or female. A good example is ATU 311, *Rescue by the Sister*. In this tale type, two sisters fall under the power of a demonic suitor, are killed when they open a **forbidden room**, and later are resuscitated by their youngest sister, who tricks the demon. In her inimitable goodness, a kind sister may refuse to punish her siblings, even when they have mistreated or betrayed her. She often shares with them her newfound wealth and good fortune and even finds them suitable spouses.

Interactions between sisters and **brothers** are quite different than with those between sisters. When

interacting with brothers, sisters often must play heroic parts or engage in numerous adventures together, as in ATU 327A, **Hansel and Gretel**, where it is the resourceful sister who vanquishes the **witch** and saves her brother. In ATU 450, *Little Brother and Little Sister*, the hapless brother endangers them by transgressing a prohibition, is consequently turned into an animal, and must be saved through his sister's cleverness. Another is the sister's quest to save or rescue her brothers, as in ATU 451, *The Maiden Who Seeks Her Brothers*; after they are turned into animals by a parent's hasty wish, the sister searches for them. When she finds them, she establishes an orderly household, tends and sews for them, and then ultimately disenchanting them through long suffering and extended periods of silence, which she bears ungrudgingly—even when standing on the pyre.

Affection between a sister and her brother may take a positive or negative turn. In some tales, such as ATU 403, *The Black and the White Bride*, the brother may serve as a matchmaker between his sister and a majestic spouse. In other tales, such as ATU 313E, *The Sister's Flight*, a sister may become the object of the brother's incestuous desire. Although sisters restore the family unit in most tales, some stories focus on the sister's duplicity and her attempts to kill her brother or harm her family. In ATU 315, *The Faithless Sister*, a very common tale internationally, the brother and sister flee some peril together. After she takes a demon lover (typically a robber, **dragon**, or **wolf**), she tries to rid herself of her brother. In this same cycle, ATU 315A, *The Cannibal Sister*, the voracious sister devours her family, their livestock, and their entire village before the dogs of her one surviving brother devour her.

The editorial stance of authors and illustrators affects the representation of sisters in print sources. Many scholars have suggested that **collectors** and **editors** revised their stories to socialize to girls into obedient, subservient, dutiful wives and sisters; others have studied how the **illustrations** of women in nineteenth-century collections grew increasingly negative. Collections edited by women often present a different vision of sister and sibling interactions.

Shawn C. Jarvis

See also Incest; Punishment and Reward

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Slavic Tales

The Slavic peoples of eastern and southeastern Europe are subdivided according to geographical and linguistic criteria into three groups: the Eastern, Western, and Southern Slavs; their settlement areas correspond to narrative regions. Slavic folktales in general tally with common European narratives. They differ in the popularity of particular **tale types** and figures, in their localizations, adaptations to the environment in which they are told, as well as in style and language. An important fact with regard to the manifold functions of **folklore** is that in modern times, only Russia and Poland (until 1795) had been sovereign states. The establishment or reestablishment of Slavic national states took place in the nineteenth, twentieth, and twenty-first centuries, most being successor states of the Ottoman and the Habsburg empires, and, from 1990 on, of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia.

Interest in folklore developed at the end of the eighteenth century, first with regard to songs. In this, Johann Gottfried Herder with his special esteem for Slavic people, whom he understood to be one entity, was highly influential. Folklore—considered as a national heritage—played an important part during the so-called rebirth of Slavic people, in the process of constructing national identities and establishing modern written languages, activities that were closely linked to **Romanticism** (see also **Identity**; **Nationalism**). Systematic **collecting** and **editing** of folktales started in about the mid-nineteenth century and continued well into the twentieth century. In 1865, the Czech archivist, writer, and folklorist Karel Jaromír Erben, who sympathized with the ideas of Illyrism and Panslavism, published a representative anthology

of Slavic folktales in the original languages. In the second half of the twentieth century, folklore contests and festivals were organized, partly in cooperation with academic folklorists. Nowadays, fairy tales are scarcely alive in their original functions in adult **story-telling** communities. They have become almost exclusively part of **children's literature** and remain alive as book tales in the form they were given by classical collectors and editors more than 100 years ago, but also in literary versions. Orally, they live on in popularized forms created for radio and stage recitations and in screen **adaptations** for **film** and **television**.

Eastern Slavs

Ukrainian and Belarusian narrative traditions and research about them have been marked by political history. After the decline of the Kievan Rus (thirteenth century) the main parts of the Ukrainian- and Belarusian-speaking territories were affiliated with the Lithuanian and the Polish states, and with the Russian Empire since the seventeenth century, whereas Ukrainian Eastern Galicia and Bukovina belonged to the Austrian Empire. Ukraine and Belarus are intermediate zones. Their eastern parts had links to Russian folklore, the western to Polish or Slovakian traditions. The majority of Eastern Slavs are traditionally Orthodox Christians. Canonical religious writings and apocrypha came from the Byzantines and also secular literature like the Alexander Romance. Around 1600, part of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church united with the Catholic Church, introducing western European **exempla** collections. Polemics against this union by Orthodox authors were interwoven with **legends** about miraculous **punishments** of the followers of Rome and desecrators of Orthodox churches or icons. From the sixteenth century to the beginning of the twentieth century, heroic **epic** poetry (*dumy*) recited to instrumental accompaniment was a significant genre of Ukrainian folklore. The repertoire of the wandering professional minstrels included reports about military exploits of the Cossacks against Turks and Poles. Later, historical, religious, sociocritical, and humorous songs were performed by blind minstrels. Since the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, poor students from seminaries or unemployed graduate cantors,