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# The Donkey Skin Folktale Cycle (AT 510B)

*The designation Aarne-Thompson 510B includes three different tale types. One is the Donkey Skin (Catskin, Cap o' Rushes) tale with beautiful dresses, parties, and a recognition token. In another, known in Italy, Sudan, India, New Guinea, and Japan, the heroine wears a human skin and is discovered as she bathes. In the third, she hides inside a piece of furniture.*

THE STORY OF CINDERELLA is extremely popular among oral folktale narrators and writers of different sorts, including adapters and scholars. Folklorists have long grouped it together with other similar tales. In a fat volume published in 1893, Marion Rolfe Cox presented variants of Cinderella proper along with variants of similar-seeming tales. She defined two categories according to the initial episode of the tale (those that begin with the Love Like Salt episode are called Cap o' Rushes; those that begin with the Unnatural Father are called Catskin). A fourth group consists of unclassifiable tales, and a fifth of male hero tales. In Antti Aarne's 1910 tale type list—in addition to Cinderella, which he numbered 510A—there are 510B, The Dress of Gold, of Silver, and of Stars (Cap o' Rushes and Catskin together); 511, One-Eye, Two-Eyes, Three-Eyes; and 923, Love Like Salt. Rooth's analysis (1951) depended on five types that are somewhat different from Cox's five.[1] Following Rooth, Thompson added a subtype to AT 511 in the 1961 tale type index. Other scholars have drawn distinctions along slightly different lines (Taylor 1982).

The reason why there is some confusion is that the material is very complicated: depending on whether the focus is on the tale's theme, on its introductions, on its core motif complexes, or on its elaborate decorations, different groupings suggest themselves. However the types are defined, there will inevitably be some variants that have characteristics of two or more types. Moreover, each tale type looks different in different regions. Ideally, a tale type should be an independent entity: the divisions between tale types define separate tales. All the variants listed under each tale type are supposed to be "genetically" related to each other, descended from some common original. (In practice, of course, folklorists have long realized that they often have to deal with combinations of

Overlapping of tales.

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tale types; more recently, the necessity of an original form has been questioned.) It is expected that tale types with more than just a few variants will form subtypes. But there should not be more than one tale type (meaning two or more completely different tales) under a single type number. Yet this is what we find when we look at tales included under AT 510B, Aarne's The Dress of Gold, of Silver, and of Stars.

During the last hundred years, the lion's share of scholarship on the Cinderella cycle has gone to the Cinderella tale proper, with the hostile stepmother or sisters, the animal or plant benefactor (representing the dead mother), the visits to the parties, and the lost shoe. In contrast, AT 510B has received comparatively little attention. The three full texts from old sources in the *Cinderella Casebook* (Dundes 1982a), which introduces the scholarly viewpoints thought to be important in the 1970s and 1980s, are all variants of AT 510A, even though each of these sources (Basile, Perrault, and the Grimms) also provides a good example of AT 510B. Most of the rest of the articles in that volume and in its bibliography also focus on AT 510A. Dundes' own article on the Love Like Salt motif in relation to King Lear would seem to be an exception; however, it deals only with the frame of AT 510B, not the main part of the tale concerning the heroine's disguise. Likewise, the *Enzyklopädie des Märchens* treats AT 510B in less than a full column under "Cinderella" (Wehse 1981). AT 510B is itself a Cinderella, a poor, neglected stepchild.

Yet AT 510B is an interesting tale with an admirable, resourceful heroine. Its examples are usually named for the heroine's ugly disguise: Cap o' Rushes, All Kinds of Rough (fur), Donkey Skin, or Maria Woodencloak. Because "The Dress of Gold, of Silver, and of Stars" is an unwieldy title and is, furthermore, misleading for the purpose at hand, I will generically refer to this tale of the disguised heroine as Donkey Skin. In contrast to AT 510A, here there is no stepmother. Instead, the heroine leaves her home and goes into the world. Wearing an ugly disguise, she finds a place as a servant in a great household. The resident son sees her briefly without her disguise (usually at a party to which she has worn a beautiful dress; this part is often trebled) and falls in love with her. In contrast to the character Cinderella, who has been criticized for her passivity, this young woman is active. She takes charge of her life and bides her time until she is in a position to marry a wealthy, devoted husband. According to one introduction, she is honest but misunderstood: her sisters claim to love their father extravagantly, while she loves him only "as meat loves salt." Sometimes, as she leaves her original home, she plans ahead by providing herself with extra clothing. Once out on her own, she gets a job and learns to cook. In some variants, she is shown to be clever. She teases the lovesick prince: when he asks the beautiful woman where she comes from, she makes riddling references, which he does not understand, to some ill-treatment that she, in her servant guise, had received at his hands. She is careful not to reveal herself until she is sure she will be able to marry the rich son. Then, her success comes from her culinary skill: in the food she prepares for the prince, she leaves a ring or other token to show him that his beloved is at hand.

The meetings between the heroine and the prince (or rich man) at a party (a feast, a ball, even at church) are what make this tale similar to AT 510A. But that section of the tale, a nice addition that adds length and interest, is not really necessary to Donkey Skin. For example, Basile's version of The She-Bear (*Pentamerone* day 2, tale 6, published in 1634; Cox 1893: no. 149) has no party at all. In order to avoid having to marry her father, the heroine leaves home. But before she does so, an old woman gives her a bit of wood to hold in her mouth that will transform her into a bear. A prince finds the bear in the forest and brings it home. He accidentally sees the heroine in her human form and falls in love with her. His mother, thinking that the bear is a bad influence, drives it away, but the prince brings it back. The bear cooks for and otherwise takes care of the lovesick prince. He kisses it, dislodging the wood from its mouth, and it turns back into the beautiful woman he had longed for. With the approval of his mother, they marry. This version is more magical than most: the heroine does not just put on a skin, she really changes into a bear.

The She-Bear has nothing particular in common with AT 510A. Rooth established a major separation of these types: she concluded that "Type B 1 [AT 510B] has borrowed the motif-complex of the heroine's visits to the prince's feast in the pretty dresses from Type B [AT 510A], with which B 1 is *otherwise unrelated*" (1951:236; emphasis added).[2] She thought that the Unnatural Father and the splendid dresses were medieval (1951:117–119). No one has since seized upon the idea that, if the dresses and the visits to the feast are indeed an addition to the Donkey Skin tale, there was presumably an earlier form of the tale to which they were added. It is this prototype that we will pursue. Whether or not it is possible to define such a prototype to the satisfaction of all readers, we will certainly discover some interesting points regarding Donkey Skin and its connections to other folktales.

In northern Europe, where the material on which Aarne based his type numbers originated, AT 510A is hardly distinguishable from AT 510B. But in the south, the two tales are more separate. So it is in Mediterranean Europe that we must look at AT 510B (Rooth's B 1). Following the consensus of all previous scholarship, we begin with the distinction that in AT 510B, there is no stepmother: the heroine, whether she runs away or is cast out, is on her own away from home. And she does not just make herself dirty, she actually wears a disguise so that no one can see how beautiful she really is. Thus disguised, she lives in the same household as her future husband. It is this motif-complex of an independent heroine wearing an ugly disguise and serving in the wealthy household that characterizes AT 510B.

At this point, we need a firm preliminary definition of the Donkey Skin tale. The outline in *The Types of the Folktale,* which was adapted from Bolte and Polívka (1913–1932: nos. 21, 65), also fits most of Cox's material. In its most complete form, the Donkey Skin tale begins with either the Unnatural Father (I b) or the Love Like Salt episode.[3] In the first case, the daughter flees because her father insists on her marrying; in the second, she is cast out because of a misunderstanding.[4] Either way, she leaves home. In disguise (I a2), she takes a

place as a servant in a wealthy household (II). The son of the house may throw some articles at her (IIIa); if so, when she confronts him in her beauty, she makes riddles out of these insults in order to tease him. Looking beautiful, she meets him and he falls in love with her, without realizing that she is the same ugly servant (IV). After a delay during which he longs for her but cannot find her, they marry (V). In variants with the Love Like Salt introduction, the tale at its conclusion proves that meat *does* love salt: the wedding feast is cooked without any salt, and the father, who attends, sees how bad the food tastes (VI).

This is a very full outline and many of its details are optional. The introductions are alternatives. In Cox's material, the Unnatural Father predominates. Aarne gave the Love Like Salt frame its own tale type designation because, as the examples in Bolte's and Polívka's notes (to 1913–1932: no. 179) showed (and this has been confirmed by subsequent scholarship), it often appears either as a frame around some other tale, or, with only a small amount of filler, as a tale in itself (see the references in note 4). The Unnatural Father (motif T411) is a character in AT 706, The Maiden without Hands, so he cannot be used to identify AT 510B. Thus, while each of these introductions is certainly common in particular tale types, neither is definitive for any tale type.

The essence of the Donkey Skin tale—its identifying qualities—are the heroine's disguise and her position as a servant. It is necessary that the rich son see her without her disguise, but this need not happen at a party, nor need he throw things at her and be taunted. It makes a better story if the couple does not marry immediately; that is, when the heroine retreats into her disguise and lets the prince suffer from lovesickness for some time before she reveals herself and satisfies his longing. However, such a delay is not essential.

Although the heroine's disguise is essential, its nature is extremely unstable, as can be seen from Cox's summaries. An ordinary "menial disguise" (as a servant or in rags) does not differentiate AT 510B from AT 510A. Such a disguise in AT 510B is not very common: of Cox's 96 Catskin and Cap o' Rushes variants (1893:53–86), this menial disguise appears in only 11. Typically, in AT 510B, the covering is made of a skin, or of many skins sewn together. Sometimes the heroine is given this covering by her father or by a helper such as a nurse, and sometimes she makes it herself. As in Perrault's version (Cox 1893: no. 185), a donkey skin is common (Cox 1893: nos. 145, 178, 180, 191, 196, 203, 208, 222; horse's skin in Cox 1893: nos. 135, 186, 278). This ugly donkey skin appeared in a French tale (not, according to my analysis, AT 510B) as early as the 16th century (Cox 1893: no. 234). The Grimms' heroine wears a covering of all kinds of rough furs (Cox 1893: no. 161), while others wear a wolf skin, cat skins, and various furs (Cox 1893: nos. 147, 148, 166, 167, 170). Most of the animal skin disguises seem relatively realistic: for example, a person could probably be covered in a pig's skin (Cox 1893: nos. 134, 144, 160, 195, 199). There is a feeling of playfulness in the idea of a cloak made of skins of mice (Cox 1893: nos. 131, 174, 202, 207); such a garment would require a lot of mice and a lot of sewing. The variation in the disguise has a noticeable regional component. Crows' skins (beaks, etc.) are common only in Scandinavia (Rooth

1951:132–134). The mouse skins are Slavic, and a cloak of louse skins is Eastern European (Cox 1893: nos. 153, 206; cf. Saintyves 1923:196–201).

Accustomed as we are to synthetic and fabricated materials, we may not immediately appreciate how much our ancestors depended on animal skins both for warmth and for other purposes. In some places, hunters still disguise themselves as animals in order to attract their prey. Shamans dress up as spirit animals. All over the world, people make and wear clothing from animal skins even when there is no intention to disguise. The nature of the skins can indicate something about the wearer. Leather clothes suggest motorcycle gangs or rock stars, and fur coats identify wealthy matrons. We also are familiar with fur disguises worn by monsters in films and by children at Halloween. Saintyves (1923:187–208) likened the heroine's ugly and splendid clothing to carnival costumes. Much as a skin covering can range from mere clothing to a costume to a veritable transformation, the covering in the Donkey Skin tale ranges from naturalistic (the dresses are sewn) to magical (the dresses come out of nutshells, or the heroine is given a charm that transforms her into an animal). With this array of options, the Donkey Skin tale can be either a naturalistic novella or a magical fairy tale.

There is no incontrovertible evidence that the folktale we are calling Donkey Skin is very old. Brief French references to "the tale of Donkey Skin" from the 16th and 17th centuries (Bolte and Polívka 1913–1932, 2:60) do not necessarily refer to the same tale we know today. For example, in a French tale published in the 1570s, named for "a young girl called Donkey Skin" (Dundes 1982a:4), a squire's son is engaged to a merchant's daughter. The merchant changes his mind and, in order to discourage the marriage, makes his daughter wear an ass's hide. However, the fiancé persists, and the marriage takes place after the bride picks up every bit of grain scattered on the ground, with the help of ants (Cox 1893: no. 234). Aside from the daughter's skin covering, this tale is unlike AT 510B. From it, we learn that a donkey's skin was meant to be an ugly disguise, but not that a woman who possesses such a disguise could hide from or tempt a man she would like to marry. The ants who help with the grain sorting are interesting because the same task is required in AT 510A, where it was added, according to Rooth, in the Middle East. This is, however, a common motif in several different tale types (Rooth 1951:176–180). It is likely that the crow's skin disguise in Scandinavia existed before AT 510B arrived there (see note 14). It is also likely that the donkey disguise in France predates the tale type that we now see. A donkey's skin covering as a sign of humiliation rather than as a voluntary disguise recalls the animals into which the heroes of Apuleius's *Metamorphoses* (The Golden Ass) and Lucian's *The Ass* were transformed. Both of these works were known to educated people in France during and after the Renaissance. After Basile's The She-Bear, which resembles the Hiding Box tale (because the prince keeps the bear in his room, see below), the earliest Donkey Skin tale is Perrault's, from 1694.

The heroine disguised in a skin or in a wooden dress is not exclusive to AT 510B. She is also found in some versions of The Blind Girl, a tale type hidden

under AT 533, The Speaking Horsehead, in which the place of a "true bride" is taken by an imposter. At the end of most variants, the deceived prince comes upon his true bride and recognizes her on sight, but one Persian and several Arab texts postpone the ending: the true bride disguises herself and becomes a servant in the palace. As in the Donkey Skin tale, she is found out sometimes by a token (a ring her husband had given her), and sometimes when her husband accidentally sees through a hole in her disguise.[5] These tales are neatly described as AT 533 (or AT 403, because The Blind Girl is a substituted bride tale with no speaking horsehead) + AT 510B IV. This traditional combination shows the disguise as a motif transferred to another tale, rather than as the central image of its own tale type. There is considerable variation in the disguise itself: a wooden dress or a hollow wooden doll, a mat covering, or a boy's rags.

Thus far we have described the typical motifs of the Donkey Skin tale. References to AT 510B also include tales with other distinctive motifs. When those different motifs configure into traditional tales, such tale types are different from Donkey Skin. Both of the additional tale types described here have been noticed by earlier scholars, but neither has become generally recognized (they are not mentioned in Dundes 1982a, for example). These tale types, The Old Woman's Skin (or The Goose Girl at the Well, in Europe and Africa) and The Hiding Box, deserve their own places in the tale type index.

## *The Old Woman's Skin and the Disguised Flayer*

One particular skin disguise is fascinating because it is so gruesome: the heroine wears the skin of a human corpse, specifically that of an old woman. Aarne's original Type 923 referred to the Grimms' tale, The Goose Girl at the Well (KHM no. 179, Cox 1893: no. 218). This tale has a Love Like Salt introduction and conclusion. The outcast heroine, forced to carry a heavy sack of salt, weeps pearls. Her parents come to regret having sent her away, but they cannot find her. She is taken in by an old woman who gives her the skin of an old woman to wear as a disguise and lets her herd geese. One day a nobleman comes to the home of these two (as he thinks) old women and is given a book that contains a pearl, which is a tear which the heroine had wept. Her mother recognizes this tear and both parents go to find their long-lost daughter. The nobleman discovers her as she is bathing, beautiful (and naked) without her skin disguise. She is restored to her parents and marries the nobleman. Here we have the skin disguise *without* the domestic service in the rich household. As in the Donkey Skin tale, there is a disguise; here, it is a human skin. Instead of taking a position as a servant in the household of a wealthy family, the sham old woman takes care of the poultry. And instead of choosing for herself when she wants to be discovered, the heroine in this tale is found out against her will. Nevertheless, she seems to be pleased to marry the nobleman.

At first this tale looks like a composite of motifs from several other tale types (including the Goose Girl from AT 533, The Speaking Horsehead, and the pearl tears from the Blind Girl tale under the same type number). It is, however, a

tale type corroborated by multiple variants. Out of eight Italian examples (Cox 1893: nos. 140, 141, 209, 215, 217, 285; D'Aronco 1953: nos. 923n, 923s), four have the Love Like Salt frame. In all except one, the "old woman" tends fowl (she sews in the palace in Cox 1893: no. 215). In six, the geese, hens, etc., sing of her beauty, thus calling the attention of the prince to her. In two (Cox 1893: nos. 217, 285), the prince or his agent hides the skin, depriving the heroine of her disguise.[6] In only two (Cox 1893: nos. 140, 141) does the prince become lovesick.

Although this tale is distinguishable from the Donkey Skin tale, there has been some exchange between these two tale types. The sewing work probably comes from Donkey Skin, as does the lamb's skin disguise in D'Aronco no. 923s. In Cox no. 141, the heroine gives the prince food containing a royal signet ring; this is not quite the typical "recognition food," but is instead an indication that the cook is well-bred. The human skin motif is rare in Donkey Skin: in Cox's material, only one example (no. 155, also from Italy) has a human skin disguise and continues as AT 510B with the token objects named at three parties and the recognition food.

There are many examples of the Donkey Skin tale in which the heroine herds geese or poultry (26 of Cox's 96; in eight others, she takes care of goats, swine, et cetera).[7] When these tales include other motifs such as the beautiful dresses, the parties, and the recognition food, they would have to be considered Donkey Skin tales. I am uncertain what to make of those that begin with one of the assorted disguises of the Donkey Skin tradition and end with the Goose Girl who is discovered bathing. However, this particular combination of elements is quite rare (Cox 1893: no. 298 from Walachia; Wheeler 1943:103–104, no. 50).

While its European examples are chiefly Italian, the Old Woman's Skin tale is known on three continents. There are many examples from Africa; a single collection from Sudan includes five. Rather than with the Unnatural Father, these tales begin with a brother who demands to marry his sister, Fatma the beautiful. She and her companions meet an ogress who intends to eat them, but they outsmart her by sending her on an errand and then, with the help of a crocodile, crossing a river. Fatma meets an old man whom she skins with a thorn; she puts on the skin to disguise herself. The women hide in a cave, but young men discover them and take them away. The most prestigious man (e.g., the sultan's son) is left with only the "old man," whom he lets herd his geese (or pigeons or goats). A slave sees Fatma bathing without her skin disguise. The sultan's son spies and sees her too. But rather than confront her, he plays a game (chess, draughts, etc., in one case a wrestling match) with Fatma in her disguise. It is agreed that the loser must submit to being skinned by the winner. Fatma wins and foregoes the privilege, but finally the sultan's son wins and takes off her skin. Then he marries her (Al-Shahi and Moore 1978, nos. 20–24; cf. Bolte and Polívka 1913–1932, 2:55).

In three other variants of this Nubian tale, the skin disguise is taken from an old woman (Kronenberg 1978:44–54, nos. 10, 11; Massenbach 1962:163–165, no. 42). This tale is in one case embedded in a frame where a beautiful warrior

woman with a female cohort makes war on a rich man who had imprisoned her father. At the end, the sultan's son's army helps her to free her father (Frobenius 1923:IV, 224–237, no. 20). The fact that the beautiful woman is often disguised in a *man's* skin adds to the tale's credibility: even an ugly old woman should not be asked to strip in front of a man. When the skin is removed, Fatma is naked, but her immediate marriage restores her respectability.[8] "Old Woman's Skin" is an inappropriate title for this African tale, but the skin disguise, combined with the gooseherding, the spying, and the marriage, leads us to conclude that this is essentially the same tale as The Goose Girl at the Well. The motif-complex of asking an old woman how such a person should be skinned, and then treacherously doing what was prescribed, is also present in a variant of AT 432, The Prince as Bird, at the point where the woman is on a quest to find her husband. In this old woman disguise, she doctors her ill husband and he recovers (Kronenberg 1978:123–125, no. 27). A combination of the escape from the ogre and the skin disguise is also attested: the ogre demands either the camels or the food they carry from a king who is traveling with seven men. Having offered to arrange the ogre's hair, the men skin him with a thorn. The youngest wears the skin and takes gold and silver from the ogre's wife (Kronenberg 1978:96–99, no. 21). In most of these Nubian tales, the heroine or hero, disclaiming any intention to harm the victim, asks how an old person could be skinned, and the victim explains that this can be done from the top of the head with a certain kind of thorn.

In The Old Woman's Skin tale in Europe, the skin comes from a person who is already dead, so the heroine is not a murderer. In the African tales, the murder and flaying are part of the story.[9] This is also usually the case in India. The relevant Indian tales lack the gooseherd detail, and they are also less uniform than those we have seen already. One point found in several texts is when the heroine comes upon an old woman who is threshing rice. She offers to help but instead beats the old woman to death and takes her skin. Sometimes, the heroine is married in her old woman disguise and refuses to take it off except privately, when she bathes. Her husband then comes and steals the skin (cf. note 6). In two cases, the prince sees the heroine bathing and then insists on marrying her. In addition to these four similar tales (Elwin 1944:139–147, nos. 4–6; Frere 1897:236–247), in another a boy wears a skin (in this case, that of a tree), and his wife, assisted by an old woman, discovers his disguise (Elwin 1944: no. 7). In a tale from Ceylon, as in the African tales, the heroine goes to visit an ogre—here a Rakshi. She works for the ogre's daughter and manages to get back home without being eaten. Her adoptive parents, a pair of cranes, send her away wearing a dress of scabs. The Rakshi declines to eat such an ugly creature. The girl becomes a cook's helper at a palace and is seen bathing, without her scab dress, by a man who tells the king. The king forces her to remove her covering and marries her (Perera 1917:48–49).

In Japan, there is a word, *Ubakawa,* that means "old woman's skin tale." One example is included in a collection of folktales, *Otogi Zooshi,* from the 15th and 16th centuries. An outcast heroine is given a magic skin that turns her into an

old woman. She becomes a servant in a rich household, where the son of the house accidentally sees her without her disguise. He falls ill with lovesickness, and when all the servants are summoned, he recognizes her. Sometimes she must complete some tasks (as in Japanese Type 510A) before he marries her.[10]

The essential components of this Old Woman's Skin tale include the outcast heroine, her human skin disguise, her being seen bathing without it, and her marriage to the prince. Optional traditional components include the Love Like Salt frame or the threat of incest introduction, the encounter with the ogre (an episode that, broadly defined, belongs to AT 327, The Children and the Ogre), the gooseherding, and the game where the loser loses her skin.

In general, the splendid dresses and the parties in the Donkey Skin tale fit together: the parties (feasts, attendance at church or the theater) are the occasions where the dresses can be worn and when the beautiful woman can attract her lover. While this is the case in most of the European and Japanese tales (Perrault's is an exception), in New Guinea there are tales with skin disguises that do not follow this pattern. In three examples, the main characters are, variously, a man, two women, and one woman. All are able to remove their ugly skins (which they seem to have grown themselves), under which they are beautiful. All are generally despised. Without their ugly skins, they go to dances where they are much admired. In two cases, someone spies and sees them removing their skins. In all, someone destroys the skins. In one case, the man's wife is happy to have a beautiful husband; in the others, the women marry the men they had been living with (LeRoy 1985:193–204, nos. 63, 65, 66).

In the material up to this point, the purpose of the skin has been to render a person unrecognizable. Usually, it covers up a woman's beauty in order to protect her from unwelcome advances. Whether the skin comes from a living or a dead person does not affect the tale. However, the motif of the Disguised Flayer (motif K1941) has more to offer. A person disguised in animal skins may be unrecognized and anonymous, but he or she is still known to be unknown, i.e., apparently a stranger but possibly an acquaintance. But a person disguised as another, known person is (figuratively speaking, of course) invisible: people would have no idea that there was any interloper at all. This happens in one of the Indian tales (Elwin 1944: no. 6): the heroine takes the place of the old woman who husked the villagers' rice, and they suspect something is amiss only because she gets so much work done. Tales from northern Africa through Asia and the Pacific islands and on into North America achieve other clever twists in their plots when one person virtually becomes another.

In Berber versions of AT 310/313, The Maiden in the Tower and The Magic Flight, a man seeks a beautiful wife who, he finds, lives with an ogress-mother. The couple escapes, pursued by the ogress in bird form, or past hedges and rivers. Cursed by the ogress, or simply captured by an eagle, the man tells his sweetheart to go to a well near his house. She does so and, when a black servant comes to get water, the sweetheart kills the servant and disguises herself in the black skin. In one variant, her ogress-mother buys her back. In the others, she stays with her lover's family as a servant until he returns and marries her (Amrouche

1971:21–26; Nacib 1982:61–69; Rivière 1882:209–213; Savignac 1978:76–79, no. 5).[11] Apparently, in this tale it is perfectly all right for the sweetheart to kill the slave, just as it was acceptable for the woman to kill the old person in the other African tale and to beat the old woman to death in the Indian tale.

In tales from Madagascar, a woman going to fetch water is surprised by an unexpected reflection in the water: someone is hiding in the tree overhead (motif R351). The water-carrier directs another person to the tree. The fugitive in the tree kills and skins this person and wears the skin as a disguise. In two tales, the figure in the tree is a son avenging his father's murder (Haring 1982: nos. 1.6.21, 1.6.24). In another, it is a husband rescuing his kidnapped wife (Haring 1982: no. 1.6.57); in yet another, a wife rescuing her wounded husband (Haring 1982: no. 4.432).

A relevant Indian tale begins with a variation of a Swan Maiden scene. A monkey sees a girl bathing and refuses to return her clothes unless she will marry him, which she does. When he is away, she kills his mother and puts on her skin. The monkey is angry at not finding his wife, and drives his "mother" away. Thus the unhappy wife escapes (Parry 1932:559).

The Disguised Flayer is sometimes a villain. In Japan, she appears in a popular tale of a melon princess (Ikeda 1971, Type 408B). The ogress, wearing her victim's skin, is nurtured by the girl's family. The victim, having turned into a bird, reveals the murder and is restored to her human form. In Indian tales from North America, a jealous old woman kills a young wife, throws the body into the water, and disguises herself in her victim's skin. The old woman is discovered because of the stench when the skin rots. The wife is sometimes restored (Thompson 1929:350, no. 265). In tales from North and South America, a man disguises himself in another man's skin (Soons 1990:625).

Thus in many parts of the world, in the Disguised Flayer episode, a fugitive or a villain (either way, a person with enemies) who takes the place of another character is for some time entirely unrecognized. His or her purpose may be only to be nurtured, to have enough to eat. Or there may be a previous villainy that has to be righted. Its Asian American pattern of distribution suggests that this may be a very old motif, carried across the Bering Strait thousands of years ago. In contrast, in AT 510B in Europe, there is no need for the heroine to impersonate any particular person, and the disguise in human skin becomes no different from the disguise in animal skin. In fact, outside of the Italian Old Woman's Skin tale, animal skin is much preferred.

Japan is a long way from Italy, yet both the Old Woman's Skin tale and the Donkey Skin tale are found in both places. European contact with Japan began in 1543 with some shipwrecked Portuguese sailors, and quickly developed into commercial trade and missionary programs. If the Japanese Old Woman's Skin tale was indeed recorded in the 15th century, it antedates this modern European trade. Presumably, though, the tales could have traveled by then between India and Japan. None of the European examples of the Old Woman's Skin is older than the 19th century, so the tale could easily have come from Japan, India, or Africa, to Europe. However, the European and African tales share the goose-

herding detail, so they should be considered more closely related than either is to the Indian or Japanese tales without it. The versatile motif of the Disguised Flayer has helped to sustain the notion of a human skin disguise. I will go on to argue that the Old Woman's Skin tale is probably the prototype of the Donkey Skin tale. If this is true, the Old Woman's Skin must have been known in (or at least on the edge of) Europe for several centuries.

## *The Hiding Box*

In the Donkey Skin tales, another common form of covering is a dress or disguise made of wood. Rooth (1951:124) perceived that the wooden dress is a combination of the ideas of a covering that the heroine wears to disguise herself and a wooden piece of furniture in which she hides. And indeed, the wooden dress is found in the Donkey Skin tale in southern Europe and the Middle East (Saintyves 1923:198), where the motif of the hiding box is known.

The hiding box (motif K1342.1 in the *Motif-Index* [Thompson 1955–1958] refers only to Cox) is another useful motif. A person is concealed in a piece of furniture that is removed to a new setting. This motif is not exclusive to AT 510. In India, a prince hides inside something (a wax horse, a lamp, or a box) that is introduced into the chamber of a princess. In two variants from Ceylon, the situation comes to light when the princess, who is weighed regularly, is found to be pregnant (Day 1883:124–137, no. 8; Parker 1914,3:193–206, 304–309, nos. 225, 245). A ram made of gold is used to enter a woman's room in AT 854, The Golden Ram, and AT 900, King Thrushbeard.[12] Especially in the days before built-in closets, lovers were repeatedly concealed inside furniture, as well as under beds, in humorous anecdotes and dramatic farces.

In addition to facilitating entry, a hiding box can also be used for escape (as in Hahn 1918:I, 110–116, no. 19). It is an excellent way for a closely-watched woman to leave her home when her father wants to marry her. The furniture (sometimes a large candlestick) in which she hides is then bought by a prince (or a rich man) who discovers the beautiful woman when she emerges.[13] In this case, she comes out of concealment in the privacy of the prince's room, a situation not at all suitable for a *Kindermärchen*. With regard to the minimal definition of AT 510B, the Hiding Box tale lacks the motif of the heroine working as a servant; rather, she is either a mysterious visitor, a companion, or both in succession. The prince can marry her and the tale can end at this point (Cox 1893: nos. 189, 216, 262). However, the Hiding Box tale often has a sequel in which the heroine is abandoned or attacked (Cox 1893: nos. 156, 158, 171, 179, 187, 200, 297), which is not part of any of the AT 510–511 tradition. For example, in Straparola's version from 1550 (night 3, tale 4), as in a couple of modern tales (Dawkins 1916:511–515; Eberhard and Boratav 1953, Type 244, variant j), after the heroine has become a mother, her father (who had wanted to marry her) kills the child(ren) and implicates the mother. In a Mexican Hiding Box tale, after the wedding an old witch blinds the heroine, who later retrieves her eyes and her sight (Wheeler 1943:100–103, no. 49). These Hiding Box tales

have very little in common with either a minimal form or the full form of the Donkey Skin tale, nor are they related to AT 510A.[14]

Folktale narrators have noticed the similarity between Hiding Box tales and Donkey Skin tales: the hiding box *motif,* as distinct from the tale type, does appear in various configurations with AT 510. In an Italian tale (Cox 1893: no. 148) there are both a hiding box and a skin dress, the meetings at the parties, the lovesick prince, and the recognition food. Another (Cox 1893: no. 165) has the hiding box along with the riddling (Cox's "token objects named") at the parties. In a third (Cox 1893: no. 260), the hiding box comes into the possession of a poor man who shelters the heroine before she becomes a servant at the palace.[15] A Scottish tale (Cox 1893: no. 151) begins with the Unnatural Father and the hiding box and switches to AT 510A with the shoe test. When the heroine's wooden box is replaced with a wooden dress, she becomes mobile and can work as a servant, and we certainly recognize AT 510B.

## *The Spying*

In both the Old Woman's Skin tale and the Hiding Box tale, the prince sees the heroine without her disguise and is astonished by her beauty. Often, a series of circumstances anticipates this crucial event. In the African Old Man's Skin tale, a dumb slave, having seen the beautiful woman bathing without her disguise, tries to tell the prince what he saw, but the slave is misunderstood and killed (or, this happens to *all* the prince's slaves). In some of the European Old Woman's Skin tales, a servant likewise sees the woman bathing and tells his master. In both cases, and also in the Indian examples, the prince then hides and spies on the heroine in order to see for himself. This erotic scene of a man spying on a naked young woman is a popular motif (motifs N716, T16). It is a typical feature, for example, in tales of Swan Maidens (motif D369.1). In 2 Samuel 11.2, David first sets eyes on Bathsheba as she washes herself. Bathing women are popular subjects in art, from the apocryphal story of Susanna and the elders to modern domestic scenes.

We saw above that the person who comes out of the hiding box is sometimes discovered immediately. Alternatively, this event can be drawn out: no one sees her, but something happens in the room to show that someone has been there. The prince, curious, hides (or feigns sleep) and spies. In this case, the episode is structured as is the widely known episode of the Mysterious Housekeeper (motif N831.1). There, while everyone is out, someone (usually a woman) comes out of some object or animal in which she was hiding and does the housework. The person in whose house this happens wonders how the work was done, and hides in order to see (just as, in the Old Woman's Skin tale, the prince hides in order to spy on the heroine without her covering). In the royal setting of the Hiding Box tale, there is no need to do housework (although this does happen in Cox 1893: nos. 189 and 200), so the evidence is usually different: the heroine steals the food meant for the prince (Cox 1893: nos. 156, 158, 171, 216, 262, 297). In one case (Cox 1893: no. 179), she writes on his hand.

The episode of the Mysterious Housekeeper occurs from Italy to India in AT 408, The Three Oranges. It is occasionally a part of AT 709, Snow White (for example, the Grimms' version), in Europe. In Asia, it figures in tales of supernatural and animal wives (e.g., Eberhard 1937, nos. 34–36; Thompson and Balys 1958). Like the Disguised Flayer, the Mysterious Housekeeper appears to have been carried from Asia to North America (Hatt 1949:96–102). This episode is undoubtedly very old. It requires the spying motif: someone has to find out who the mysterious housekeeper is, or there is no mystery and no point to the episode. So the detail of a man spying on an unknown woman must also be very old. In AT 511, One-Eye, Two-Eyes, Three-Eyes, and in its parent form (Rooth's Type A 1), siblings spy on one of their number who has a secret food supply or secret assistance with spinning. According to Rooth, this tale is similar to an ancient Greek myth in which Argos guards the cow Io (1951:159–164). Regardless of that dubious identification, the idea of spying has long been a useful one in folk narratives. Because it dramatizes a discovery, it emphasizes one of the tale's important points and contributes to the audience's suspense.

This spying detail is standard in both the Old Woman's Skin tale and the Hiding Box tale described above. In contrast, in most of the Donkey Skin tales there is no spying at all. The addition of the beautiful dresses, and, even more so, that of the recognition token, has displaced it: when the heroine goes to the parties, she purposely displays herself. Later, when the prince is ill, she leaves a ring that serves to identify her in the food that she prepares for him.[16] Alternatively, the heroine can leave her own ring, which then becomes, like Cinderella's shoe, a marriage test: whoever it fits is the sought-after woman. In a tale with these events, there is no need to spy. However, the spying motif is present in Basile's tale The She-Bear. It also appears, even along with the beautiful dresses, in Perrault's Peau d'Âne. That variant has no parties: the heroine, in the privacy of her room, puts on her dresses, and the prince, looking through the keyhole, sees how beautiful she is. The spying motif also follows the recognition food in a few modern Donkey Skin tales (e.g., Cox 1893: no. 134f.).

Popular though it is, the tale of Donkey Skin does not have enough early evidence to permit us to define with certainty its historical development. But we can make an educated guess. While Perrault's Peau d'Âne included the splendid dresses as early as 1694, the earliest European version of AT 510B with the parties is a German text from 1798, a source for the Grimms' All Kinds of Fur (Rölleke 1972). In both previous examples (Basile's and Perrault's [Straparola's is a Hiding Box tale]), the prince discovers the heroine by spying on her. We saw that a spying motif is popular in several tales and that it is certainly very old. I think it is very likely that it was a standard part of early Donkey Skin tales. The spying motif occurs even in some relatively recent Donkey Skin tales. Cox nos. 145, 180, and 190 (1893) seem to derive from Perrault's version, so they are not very good evidence for the age of the motif. However, the spying also appears in Cox nos. 177, 178, 191, 196, 207, 210, 213, 222, 223, 251, 285, and 298 (1893), all of which have traditional details not found in Perrault's version. The latter tales come from all over Europe: Portugal, Spain, Italy, France (four

are Breton), Poland, and Walachia (Romania). The spying motif may well be more popular even than Cox's variants reveal: it has undoubtedly suffered suppression at the hands of folktale editors who preferred to publish tales without naked women and Peeping Toms.

In the Old Woman's Skin tale in Europe, the heroine is a goose girl, as she is also in about a quarter of the Donkey Skin tales. Espinosa (1946–1947, vol. 2: nos. 107–108) deemed this gooseherding important enough to use it in the classification of subtypes of AT 510B. The outdoor service of the goose girl could be an earlier form of the scullion or kitchen maid who has access to the food that is served to the lovesick prince in Donkey Skin.

Thus the Old Woman's Skin tale is a probable source of the Donkey Skin tale.[17] It is perfectly understandable that the grotesque image of a human skin disguise in a fairy tale should have been quickly replaced with something less offensive, such as an animal's skin and then some sort of vegetable material. Because together they make a perfect contrast, the ugliness of the skin disguise attracted the motif of the splendid dresses. This in turn attracted or strengthened the introduction of the Unnatural Father. When Donkey Skin begins with that introduction, the strength of the unlawful desire of that character is emphasized by his willingness to go to any expense to provide his daughter with the dresses she requests. Even her ugly covering can be costly: in Perrault's version, the ass that had to be killed was the source of the family's wealth (it produced gold in motif B103.1.1). The heroine in the Grimms' Allerleihrauh (Bolte and Polívka 1913–1932: no. 65) demands (and receives) a cloak made from the skin of every animal in the kingdom—a thousand kinds of fur.

In the spying scene the heroine's privacy is violated by masculine scrutiny. When this scene is replaced with the visits to the parties and the recognition token, the heroine achieves a considerable degree of self-determination; now, she decides to attend the parties, and she chooses to put the ring in the prince's food. Moreover, in the versions with the riddling repartee, she teases the prince: for example, she says she comes from Slipperthrowingland, referring to the fact that he had struck her (in her servant guise) with a slipper, and he is not sharp enough to understand the allusion. The development of such a spunky, self-reliant female character is, if this scenario is accurate, a very interesting piece of folktale evolution.

Tale types should be defined not by Aarne's and Thompson's type index, which is only a preliminary list, but *by the material,* by the way the variants actually configure. As Rooth showed in *The Cinderella Cycle,* complex folktales can be built up over time: tales can evolve from simpler to more complex forms. That study also showed that tales can break down from more complex into simpler forms. Complex tales are not easily described: the tale types include numerous episodes and detail motifs, all of which can—and do—vary. When tale types are found to overlap, to borrow and lend their episodes, call them parts of a tale cycle, or give mutual cross-references in discussions and in the tale type index, is too vague. We need to know *which* elements they share, and *where, when,* and even, if possible, *why*. Studies such as this prove that the basic

terms and concepts of traditional folktale scholarship continue to be useful in asking and answering these questions. If new terms and concepts are needed, they too can be introduced and developed. The technical description of a folktale is not just an end in itself. It is part of the process that leads us toward an understanding of how folktales are created and maintained.

Because our predecessors' ideas about folktale stability were often different from ours, inferences they made sometimes seem unjustifiable to modern scholars. In addition, recent indexes and collections have given us access to more material from previously underrepresented regions. For some tale types, this material affects how European examples should be understood. The old "Ireland to India" region of "the European folktale" is in many cases not adequate; other Asian tales are often relevant, and in some cases tales from other continents must also be considered in order to explain the components and composition of tales that at first seemed to be only European. Folklorists should not settle for tale types that have not been thoroughly revised since 1910. There is much to be learned about these and other folktales that can only be discovered by examining large numbers of variants.

Here, we have identified two additional tale types, one of which has very wide-ranging connections, that have been hidden under AT 510B along with the tale of Donkey Skin. Neither of these two hidden tales contains the hallmarks of the full form of AT 510B: the splendid dresses, the riddling repartee, the visits to the parties, or the recognition food. Since they are so distinctive, both The Old Woman's Skin and The Hiding Box ought to have places in a future edition of *The Types of the Folktale.*[18] As more scholars and folktale collectors become aware of these tales, more and perhaps better evidence will become available. In that event we may deepen our understanding of both the separateness of these tale types and the connections among them.

## *Notes*

[1]Taylor's complaint (1982:123) that Rooth's designations "do not accord with those of the [Aarne-Thompson] typelist" is unjustified: when the entries in the typelist are found to be wrong or misleading, it is foolish to insist upon them.

[2]She also stated clearly "that Type B 1 [AT 510B] has no original affinity with Types AB or B [AT 510A] through style or through content" (Rooth 1951:119). Previous scholars, including N. M. Penzer, anticipated Rooth here: in his annotations to Basile's *Pentamerone,* Penzer considered Cinderella to be distinct from Donkey Skin (Basile 1932). Dundes, in contrast, seems to believe that the two tales are offshoots of a single tale (1982a:4, 12). Dundes refers agreeably to "Thompson's grouping of AT 510A, Cinderella, and 510B, The Dress of Gold, of Silver, and of Stars, under the same basic tale type number, [which] reflects the probable cognation of the subtypes" (1982b:233). In fact, the numbers were Aarne's; Thompson merely chose not to alter them. The evidence mustered here confirms Rooth's conclusion that, rather than being cognate forms, AT 510A and AT 510B were originally separate tales that came to be similarly inflected (I keep the linguistic terminology) with parties, dresses, and recognition tokens.

[3]D'Aronco (1953) separates the Unnatural Father tales (no. 510B) from the Love Like Salt tales (no. 923). Espinosa (1946–1947:II) separates the goose-girl tales (no. 107 with the Love Like Salt frame, no. 108 with the Unnatural Father) from the "three dresses" tales (nos. 109–110).

[4]Dundes (1982b) argued that the Love Like Salt motif was equivalent to the motif of the Unnatural Father. In my opinion, they are alternatives, not equivalents. A person does not have to be a Freudian to appreciate that under some circumstances, narrowly-avoided incest is better not mentioned, so the Love Like Salt introduction is used to fill its place. Moreover, the misunderstanding in Love Like Salt is an interesting idea, and narrators would be happy to unite it with a tale, such as Donkey Skin, that sets it off to good advantage. The heroine's cooking of the prince's food accords well with the salt-free banquet. Dundes (1982b:242, no. 11) was also wrong to call AT 923 an abridged form of AT 510B (see Cox 1893: nos. 212, 214, 221, 225f; Bolte and Polívka 1913–1932, 3:305–308; Taylor 1982:123, 127, no. 14).

[5]Al-Shahi and Moore 1978:95–98, no. 14 (wooden doll); Bushnaq 1986:75–79 (disguised as a boy; ring recognition token); El-Shamy n.d., no. 35 (mat covering; ring recognition token); Stevens 1931:15–19, no. 5, (wooden dress); Marzolph 1984, Type 403, no. 5. See Goldberg 1996.

[6]A skin disguise is destroyed in order to disenchant in motif D721; this is a component of Swan Maiden tales (motif D361.1).

[7]Geese sing of the heroine's beauty (motif H151.12) in Cox 1893: nos. 139, 183, 251, 285, and in AT 533, The Speaking Horsehead, which also includes the goose-girl disguise (motif K1816.5). Geese (or other fowl such as turkeys) also sing occasionally in AT 403, The Black and the White Bride (e.g., Basile's [1634] day 4, tale 7). In spite of Cox's ample evidence, our folktale indexes have overlooked the fact that both of these motifs are common in AT 510B.

[8]According to Al-Shahi and Moore (1978:50–53), the tale discusses endogamy and exogamy, with the "old man" and the cohort of girls constituting a family unit. Muhawi and Kanaana (1989:345) emphasize the power and problems that result from the woman pretending to be a man. It is interesting that in their Donkey Skin tale (no. 14), the prince pretends to be a woman. Furthermore, he spies on Sackcloth and discovers that she is his beloved; then, having ordered her to bring him food and to eat with him, he strips the disguise off the "old man." This is unlike the independent Donkey Skin, who decides when to reveal herself.

[9]There is also a murder and human skin disguise in Greece. A boy kills an old man, "shakes the skin from his bones," and wears the skin as a disguise. In one case, the boy's horse and dog are also clad in flayed skins (Hahn 1918:I, 232–235, no. 45; II:319–322, no. 6 var. 2).

[10]Seki 1966:114, no. 214; Ikeda 1971:510B; e.g., Rumpf 1938:169–172, 329, no. 63; Mayer 1984:47, no. 37. Taylor's article (1982) points, not always accurately, to a considerable number of Japanese examples relevant to the Donkey Skin cycle. Sometimes, instead of the skin disguise, the heroine's head is hidden in a bowl (Seki 1966: no. 215; Ikeda 1971: Type 510C; Rumpf 1938: 76f, 322, no. 24, a subtype known since the end of the 16th century). Sometimes, at the beginning of the tale, the heroine is married to a snake (Rumpf 1938:152–155, no. 59; Yanagita 1968:90–92, no. 52). Taylor dates a chapbook, *Ubakawa,* to 1629, but as he gives no further indication of its contents, we cannot tell how similar it is to AT 510B (1982:124). He must have had some trouble with his notes: the summaries he does give for Cox 1893: no. 277 and Seki 1966: no. 215 are both wrong.

[11]Nacib 1982:31–37, no. 3, is a variant without the skin disguise.

[12]This hollow artificial animal calls to mind both the Trojan horse and the golden bull in the French tale from Cox 1893: no. 156 (Cosquin 1886,1: no. 28). That it should be a ram recalls the fact that Odysseus and his men hid underneath live rams to escape from Polyphemus.

[13]This Hiding Box tale (motif N712) is spread across southern Europe and the Middle East. Over a hundred years ago, Cosquin (1886,1:273–280, no. 28) distinguished it from Peau d'Âne. Rooth 1951:124, especially no. 29. Marzolph 1984, Type 652A. Eberhard and Boratav 1953, Type 244. Espinosa 1946–1947:II, 396–398, no. 105. Mouliéras 1965:I, 153–163, no. 13.

[14]The example in the Icelandic saga of Aslög-Kraka is, according to Rooth, taken from medieval literary sources (1951:126–134). Rooth's explanation of the traditional components of Aslög-Kraka's story, which is continued in Ragnar Lodbrok's saga, invokes four tale types (the Hiding-Box Type, AT 510A, AT 510B, and AT 875, The Clever Peasant Girl). In my opinion, this gives too much credence to the stability of those tale types over a thousand years. Certainly there are motifs from all those tales in the story of Aslög-Kraka, but this does not mean that the whole tale types,

as we can identify them based on ample recent and scanty historical evidence, lie behind the story. For many of the tale types in the Cinderella cycle, Rooth assumed great age. If any part of a tale type was present in ancient sources, she wanted to assume that the whole type was at least that old. However, a part of a tale does not necessarily imply the entire tale, and some of the complex tale types that we can now establish were put together from bits and pieces that are older than the composite tales. See Moser 1977.

[15]Dawkins 1953:253–258, no. 40, and Eberhard and Boratav 1953, Type 189, give additional examples of the hiding box motif in Donkey Skin tales.

[16]Saintyves (1923:205) very perceptively likened this motif to the popular divinatory practice of putting small charms (a coin, a button, a bean, a ring) in food. Each charm foretells the future of the person who finds it in his or her portion.

[17]This is the same conclusion that Cosquin (1922:2–10, first expressed in 1894) reached, based—amazingly—only on Cox's evidence, the Greek tales in note 9 above, and a single Indian text (Frere 1897:236–247). Taylor's curt assessment of Cosquin's and also of Saintyves's contributions to our understanding of Peau d'Âne is far too harsh. First, both scholars did use Cox's material effectively. Moreover, Taylor is quite wrong to say that Cosquin "deals with incidents belonging to the cycle rather than with the tales" (Taylor 1982:122). In spite of the fact that Cosquin does express his interest in preexisting themes on page 10, throughout pages 4–7, he meticulously distinguishes the tale type of Peau d'Âne from that of Cinderella. One does not have to accept Cosquin's claims of Indian origins to appreciate how well he was able to handle all the different components of folktales: motifs, episodes, tale types, and groups of related tales (folktale cycles).

[18]Exactly where they should be put depends on how thoroughly the existing numbers are to be revised. It would cause the least disruption to insert these two tales as subtypes C and D of AT 510. However, there are many tale types that need to be redefined, and a new format may be desirable for the entire tale type index (possibly in conjunction with a new motif index). Ideally, different combinations of episodes within a type should be indicated, as well as episodes that are shared between different types (see Goldberg n.d.). In the case of the tales discussed here, The Old Woman's Skin should be separate from Cinderella, and Donkey Skin should be shown to be a combination of that tale and parts of Cinderella. The Hiding Box tale, which should be on its own, should also be shown to be a component of tales of persecuted wives. The fact that the same gooseherding and spying scenes appears in different tale types should be noted, as should the presence of the hiding box motif in the Donkey Skin tales. A scheme that could show all this would have to be quite complicated. The decision as to how radically the tale type index should be revised should, I think, be a practical, not a theoretical one: it should be based on what will best facilitate future folktale research.

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