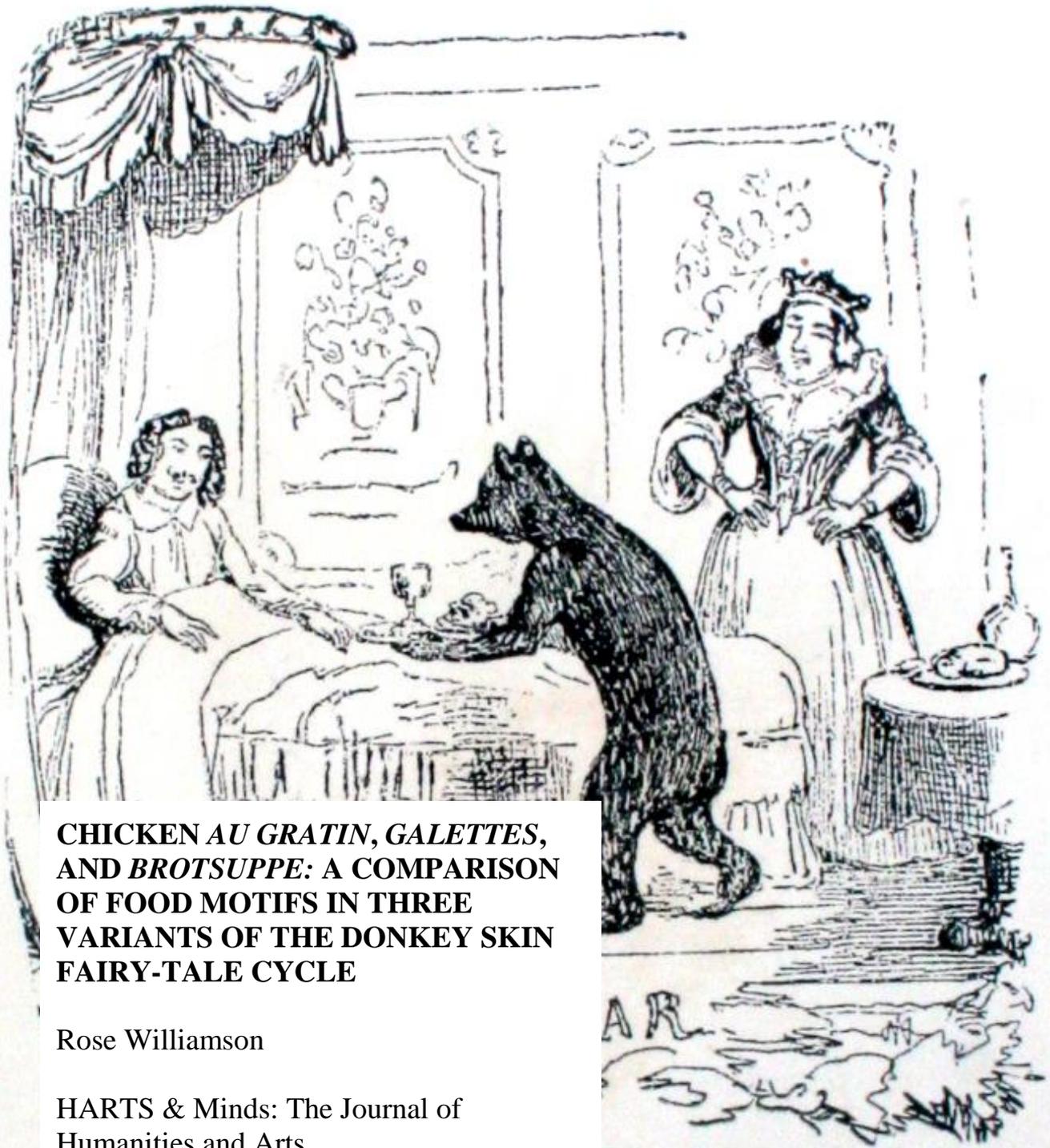


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AND BROTSUPPE: A COMPARISON
OF FOOD MOTIFS IN THREE
VARIANTS OF THE DONKEY SKIN
FAIRY-TALE CYCLE**

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**CHICKEN AU GRATIN, GALETTES, AND BROTSUPPE:
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Abstract

This article will examine three dominant versions of a literary fairy tale often known as the ‘Donkey Skin’ cycle, classified by the Aarne-Thompson-Uther tale type system as ATU-510b. The versions included for analysis are ‘L’Orza’ (‘The She-Bear’), ‘Peau d’Âne’ (‘Donkey Skin’) and ‘Allerleirauh’ (‘All-Kinds-of-Fur’), by Giambattista Basile, Charles Perrault, and the Brothers Grimm respectively, each of which originated from different regions and eras. These three variants include a section with a prominent culinary motif which changes notably between each version. This paper will compare the culinary motifs, exploring what they may have represented in their original historical contexts. Although this paper is concerned with a literal interpretation, it is only through such an understanding of the socio-historical contexts of food motifs that further literary and symbolic analysis can be produced.

The three food motifs which emerge in these tales are *ngrattinato*, from the Neapolitan dialect in ‘L’Orza’, *galettes* in the French ‘Peau d’Âne’, and *Brotsuppe* in the German tale of ‘Allerleirauh’. These three foods have very different places on the historical table, especially in relation to the class of those eating them and to the verisimilitude of the skill of the high-born princess heroine in being able to cook them (and cook them with remarkable proficiency). By contrasting them alongside one another, as well as considering choices made by the translators, the trajectory of changes in the Donkey Skin tale through time can be better understood.

Key Words: fairy tales, atu-510b, donkey skin, food history, giambattista basile, charles perrault, the brothers grimm

Food Motifs in Fairy Tales

A discussion of ‘fairy-tale food’ inevitably brings to mind red poisoned apples, enormous beanstalks leading to lands in the clouds, and tantalizing gingerbread houses. Yet the most frequently recurring foods in popular fairy tales are the bare necessities – bread, meat, and soup, water, beer, and wine. The acts of eating and food preparation are, in some ways, so mundane that they might be overlooked in literary fairy tales as nothing more than records of ordinary life without metaphor or symbolism.¹ But it is for precisely this literal meaning that analysing the foods present in fairy tales is important – fairy tales are as much a historical and cultural indicator as any other primary text. As Alan Dundes states, ‘folklore is *autobiographical ethnography*—that is, a people’s own description of themselves.’² Literary fairy tales, born from (and still sometimes a hybridized part of) folklore and folk tales, are no less reflective of society despite their adherence to ‘*written not oral conventions*.’³ They present both the wondrous and the everyday, and so when one can detect which is which, the fairy tale can fill in both the real and the imagined historical table.

The literary fairy tale has long been understood to be a polyphonic genre in terms of class, region, and authorship, and the fluctuations between variants make analysis of all motifs, including those of food and eating, many layered.⁴ Röhrich, in his essay ‘The Quest of Meaning in Folk Narrative’, aptly describes how the:

meaning of a text is not a fixed constant but is a variable, determined by the development of culture and ideas, fashions and trends, and dependent on rulers and ruling ideologies, not to forget the education and cultural awareness, the sex, age, religion, and ethnic group of the consumer.⁵

Thus, even static, printed versions of tales are subject to the reader's (thus the consumer's) own contextual history. In order to extract what meaning is being understood both literally, by giving it a historical material context, and symbolically, from the food symbols of fairy tales, we must understand first how the motifs they utilize are situated in their own contemporary framework in order to dissect them and contextualize each individual element. As Donald Haase notes:

[the] reader's responsibility is to tease apart the layers of socio-historical evidence in the tales so as to understand better each story's historical development and reception, and to understand our own responses to the meanings and values discovered in the tales.⁶

And so, to find meaning in what is consumed in fairy tales, one of these layers must be the literal interpretation of the food motif as it was understood in its original published context.

In order to illustrate the variety of motifs that can exist in just one story throughout its many incarnations, this paper will look at a tale classified in the Aarne-Thompson-Uther international folktale index as ATU-510b. While the narrative skeleton of each variation of a story may have a similar pattern, it is the details which make the stories rich and entrancing, not to mention wildly popular and persistent through time.⁷ The arrangement of stories into a tale-type index by Antti Aarne and Stith Thompson, later expanded and updated in 2004 by Hans-Jörg Uther, has helped to organise tales with these similar plot structures, permitting scholars to see common threads despite differing details in each variant and help to determine possible inspirations and originations (or indeed deviations).⁸ ATU-510 is the category for tales of the 'Persecuted Heroine' type, containing the subtype 510a ('Cinderella' stories), as well as the subtype 510b (tales of 'Unnatural Love') which this article concerns. The 'Unnatural Love' title of this tale-type refers to the taboo of incest, usually in the form of a father wanting to marry his daughter.⁹ A brief overview of the common plot features of tale-type ATU-510b is as follows. A king loses his wife, promising her that his next wife will fulfil a certain condition. Failing to find such a woman, the king notices that his daughter fulfils the condition and orders her to wed him. The daughter tries to delay the wedding by requesting three seemingly impossible dresses ('one being the colour of the sun', for example), and then a final garment made of wood, dozens of fur pelts, or the hide of her father's magical donkey.¹⁰ In some versions, the daughter is gifted a wand or another magical object by a helper, which will allow her to escape from the king, sometimes in the form of an animal such as a bear. The father provides the garments, yet the daughter uses the fur coat or magical object to disguise herself and run away. She is discovered by a prince or his huntsmen in a forest and becomes a cook's assistant or scullery maid. As in many 'Cinderella' tales, the girl sheds her dirty clothing and attends a ball in one of her beautiful gowns. She captivates the prince but does not reveal her identity. In some versions, the prince becomes ill with love for her, and he can only be cured by food prepared by her hand, into which she slips a ring he had given her as a gift. In other versions, he is left with the shoe that fits no foot but hers, or else she is revealed through a tear in her animal pelt clothing which lets the prince glimpse a magnificent dress underneath.

This article considers one of the final key actions in the story, wherein the heroine prepares food for the prince, proving she is worthy to marry him through a demonstration of a domestic skill unbefitting of her original social status. It will situate each item cooked or

baked by the princess within its original historical context in order to better understand the literary implications of the use of particular foods. As there are a great many variants of 510b originating in different regions and eras, this paper only discusses three versions, chosen due to their possession of the cooking motif and their popularity in their own times: 1) Giambattista Basile's 'L'orza' or 'The She-Bear', 2) Charles Perrault's 'Peau d'Âne' or 'Donkey Skin', and 3) the Grimm Brothers' 'Allerleirauh' or 'All-Kinds-of-Fur'.

The Neapolitan Gratin

Seeking out the oldest recorded versions of a tale will help to uncover some of the early food motifs and a food motifs' potential persistence, prolonged usage, or even omission throughout variants. As Zipes asserts in *Breaking the Magic Spell*, both folk tales and literary fairy tales are rooted in 'the experience and fantasy of primitive peoples who cultivated the tale in an oral tradition.'¹¹ Therefore, the motifs and details within the story are prone to change and adaptation as the story travels from storyteller to storyteller. But tales are also liable to move from oral to written form, and then back again from written to oral form. For example, literary fairy tales and folktales are occasionally distilled from or related to well-known older literary texts, such as the medieval chivalric romances:

[T]he corpus of "classic" fairy tales owes much to medieval storytelling, since the former absorbed the latter both directly (in the conversion of tales preserved in manuscripts into collections in books) and indirectly (in transmission in and out of texts through many hundreds of years).¹²

Unfortunately, it is rare that we know the informative oral folk sources of fairy tales, but in many cases the parallel plots and episodes indicate possible relationships between the older literary texts, oral folktales, and literary fairy tales.

One of the oldest known possible ATU-510b plots is a medieval chivalric romance entitled *Vitae duorum Offarum*, or 'The Lives of the Two Offas', which has the characteristic incest motif.¹³ Zipes and Peck also associate the fourteenth-century Italian text, 'Dionigia and the King of England' by Ser Giovanni Fiorentino in *Il Pecorone*, as well as *La Belle Hélène de Constantinople*, *Mai und Beafloer*, and *Emaré* with this tale type, demonstrating that the ATU-510b type has a long history across Western Europe.¹⁴ However, while these early versions are characteristic of 510b through the father's desire to marry his daughter and the discovery of the heroine by a second prince or king, they do not contain the episode in which the heroine becomes a scullery maid or other domestic servant and serves the prince the food that she has prepared. Another early version called 'Doralice', contained in Giovanni Straparola's *The Facetious Nights of Straparola*, is without the food preparation element. In this version, the heroine, Doralice, secretly tidies, beautifies, and scents the prince's bedroom, a domestic process which stands in place of the cooking action in later versions and yet which still gives value to the upkeep of a household.¹⁵ However, the absence of the culinary episode in the previous versions does not necessarily mean that the residue of medieval tales is not still present in later versions and informing the choices made by subsequent authors.

The literary fairy tale, as distinct from the folktale, allows for an accurate positioning of a variant in time and place – the known publication and edition date, native country, or country of residence of the author gives the researcher a secure hold from which to research the tale's historical context. We can hope that the texts from original published versions are authentic representations of their time periods and embody cultural signifiers (such as food) accurately, to the author's experience. Unfortunately, translators do not always accurately convey an author's original text, and may censor the text, alter the text artistically, or mistranslate the text based on a mistake or semantic (and culinary) drift. Translators may also choose to

represent a food motif as something similar from their own culture, rather than retaining an exact motif which might be a foreign or unknown food for their readership.

The insight given by examining the original context for each variant is fundamental. Even by looking at a superficial reading (that is, seeing the food as only a material object that is eaten and not as a deeper symbol or metaphor), one can gain historical information from a literary fairy tale. Once a story is situated in its original place and time, the reader can then draw from those scenes an understanding of food motifs which combines their own contemporary interpretation with one which is informed by the political and cultural context of the variant's origin. Zipes reminds us that what is added, changed, or missing in a new variant is equally important to understanding the past and future versions, because

in each new stage of civilization, in each new historical epoch, the symbols and configurations of the tales were endowed with new meaning, transformed, or eliminated in reaction to the needs and conflicts of the people within the social order.¹⁶

The influence of the surrounding society will always remain embedded within the text, and will layer upon itself as new variants emerge.

Basile's 'L'orza' was published posthumously in 1634 and contained in the collection *Lo cunto de li cunti*, sometimes known as *Il Pentamerone*. It was written in the 'low' Neapolitan dialect of Baroque Naples.¹⁷ 'L'orza' is the first known version of ATU-510b with the cooking function. The heroine, Preziosa, inserts a magic block of wood into her mouth to magically transform into a she-bear in order to escape her father's unnatural desires. In the home of the prince, she becomes his servant and the prince spies her in her true form. He falls into a love-sickness, requesting only the bear to prepare his meals:

And so his mother had an armful of chickens brought in, and the fire was lit in a fireplace right there in the bedroom, and water put to boil; and the bear, taking a chicken in her hand, scalded it, plucked it expertly, and when she had gutted it stuck part of it on a spit and with the rest made a nice gratin. The prince, who hadn't been able to keep even sugar down, was now licking his fingers, and when he had finished stuffing himself she gave him something to drink with such grace that the queen wanted to kiss her on the forehead.¹⁸

The fame of Basile's collection popularised this new strain of ATU-510b with the above cooking function.¹⁹ The she-bear is capable of wifely duties – cooking and serving before tidying the bedroom and beautifying it with flowers (reminiscent of the Straparola version) – and she does these tasks with a civilised grace.²⁰ Even with bear paws, she deftly plucks, roasts, and cooks the chicken *au gratin*. As Zipes discusses in *Fairy Tales and the Art of Subversion*, such demonstrations of appropriate behaviour are key in the role that fairy tales began to play in what Norbert Elias calls 'the civilising process' across Europe, despite demonstrating an absurdity which actually satirizes and destabilizes the cultural norms of the time.²¹ It is through the comedy of representing the nobility as 'pretending to uphold the standards of *civilité*' and the juxtaposition of the unexpected characters who demonstrate good behaviour (such as the gentle she-bear) that both criticism and affirmation of Basile's society can be presented through his fairy tales.²² Because one cannot truly expect a princess to pluck a chicken, or even know how, the story does two things. First, it is able to mock the ruling class by presenting the comedic juxtaposition between nobility and the lesser tasks of food preparation. There were many books printed in Europe in this time period detailing appropriate behaviour for management of a household, and in particular, discriminating which staff were expected to perform which particular duties.²³ It not only separated the upper from the lower classes in terms of domestic expectations, but also:

[t]he aim [of works for the court] is to inculcate a code of manners that is specifically contrasted with that of the rustic; there is “town – country” distinction that is also a kind of class distinction, though as in Restoration times the latter category may include aristocrats who have spent their days in the country, away from the civilising influence of court life.²⁴

The ‘rustic behaviour’ (such as the plucking and gutting of a whole chicken) is ‘not merely quaint but barbarous.’²⁵ Moving this behaviour from the unseen kitchen into the upper-class bedroom is an inverted presentation of expected civilised behaviour and lets Basile make merry with the conventional roles of person and place in his time. As the number of whole animals served at the seventeenth-century table decreased due to the civilising process and the rise of manners and *civilité*, a new ‘rapidly articulated standard of taste suppresses reminders that meat-eating is connected with the killing of an animal’; thus, humans began to move away from reminders of their own animal behaviours.²⁶ Yet, Preziosa, in bear form, *is* an animal and accordingly has no hesitation in ‘rustically’ preparing and serving the whole, roasted chicken. Secondly, the preparation of the chicken by the princess also implies that, although her status is outwardly noble, her deeds are those of a working-class member of society. However, as the story reached lower-class audiences who were themselves in rustic or domestic roles, Preziosa could become an example of a person who had fallen from grace but arrived at a familiar rank and status and was still able to rise above her circumstances to a new class distinction. She is then rewarded for performing those duties capably, giving the lower-class audience reason to fulfil their toils and perpetuate the status quo in hollow hope of their own advancement. Thus, this fairy tale simultaneously allows for imaginary escapism from domesticity while reinforcing the divided class system.

The cooking function also allows the princess to take what is ‘raw’ and thus ‘wild’ and transform it through the act of roasting and grilling into something which is ‘cooked’ and ‘tamed’.²⁷ The culinary triangle of Claude Lévi-Strauss, which illustrates the cultural systems at work in varying food preparation methods, puts raw foods in the category of ‘nature’ and cooked foods, especially those which employ a utensil or receptacle, in the category of ‘culture’ (the third point of the triangle being ‘rotted’ food).²⁸ This is the same paradox of ‘nature’ and ‘culture’ that the high-born princess in her bear form embodies. As the she-bear prepares the chicken both roasted and as a gratin (which requires a receptacle, and thus is in the category of ‘culture’), the scene covers two further divisions in the culinary triangle: the roasted (midway between raw and cooked on the axis of the intermediate element ‘air’) and the boiled (midway between raw and rotted with the addition on the axis of the intermediate element ‘water’).²⁹ This resolves any movement of boiled or roasted food between endo-cuisine (‘prepared for domestic use’) or exo-cuisine (‘that which one offers to guests’), considering that Lévi-Strauss notes that different societies have different appraisals of the value of boiled versus roasted meat.³⁰ Nonetheless, Preziosa shows she is capable of preparing both, covering all bases in order to receive the approval from the prince’s mother. This change of food from raw to cooked is paralleled by the change the princess herself goes through in becoming a wild bear whilst continuing to demonstrate civil qualities. In later versions, the contrast is also present, as although the princess is not explicitly an actual animal, but is merely dressed in animal pelts. Recalling Zipes and his use of Norbert Elias’ ‘civilising process’, this demonstrates again the need for a distinctive *civilité* in order for the princess to rise again as an appropriate member of the state’s ruling (royal) class.³¹

Aside from the roasting of the chicken, the next significant motif in this section is the preparation of the *ngrattinato*. Once more adding another layer of culture, this shows Preziosa is able to prepare not only food, but cuisine. This symbol is rarely translated as *gratin* into English, but rather as stew, hash, or soup. John Edward Taylor, the first to translate *Il*

Pentamerone into English in 1847, translates this as ‘hash’.³² Sir Richard Francis Burton translates this motif in 1893 as ‘stewed’ chicken.³³ However, it appears that Canepa, whose translation of Basile’s Neapolitan captures most successfully the original style of the text without omission, has come closest by translating *ngrattinato* as gratin. I contest that there are two possible foods that Basile’s *ngrattinato* could refer to: an Italian version of a French chicken *au gratin* or something like the Italian dish recorded by Bartolomeo Scappi in his notable record of his sixteenth-century papal kitchen in Rome, *pan grattato*.³⁴

Foods cooked *au gratin* were at least known in Italy in the 1600s. Making a food *au gratin* originates from the French practice of browning breadcrumbs or cheese under a grill to make a crust atop a dish.³⁵ It may have originated as far back as the fifteenth century, since it is referenced in archival texts from Provence.³⁶ It is also present in sixteenth-century Spain, although Merino, tracing the origins of the word, concludes that is impossible to tell from available sources if the influence of the Spanish dish *gratonada*, and the origin of the word itself, is French or possibly Italian.³⁷ Although gratin seems to bear resemblance to ‘grater’, the verb for ‘to grate’, and could be related to the act of grating cheese or breadcrumbs, Ayto links it to ‘gratte’ or ‘the scraping of the burnt crispy bits from the bottom of the pan.’³⁸ The gratin originally referred only to the crust on top of the dish, and *au gratin* was the practice of making a food with this crust on top. Scappi’s *Opera* recommends preparing the sweetbreads of a suckling calf *au gratin* and in his directions he uses the Italian word ‘grattinata’, very close to Basile’s word ‘ngrattinato’ in the Neapolitan dialect.³⁹ Even in Naples today, *macaroni au gratin* is still popular and Croce’s footnote in his edition of Basile’s *Il Pentamerone* further implies contemporary knowledge of this dish (and also to a the association of gratin with poultry).⁴⁰ And although it is not explicitly designated as a dish *au gratin*, Scappi’s recipe for ‘a spit-roast capon after it has been half cooked by boiling’ is finished with a very gratin-like browned crust of ‘melted rendered fat or hot lard, [sprinkled] right away with sugar, cinnamon, flour, grated bread and fennel flour’.⁴¹ This recipe echoes the steps Preziosa takes with the chickens that the queen brings to her to prepare, giving a real-world example of a similar Italian dish.

In light of the above, it may seem incorrect that the tendency of many translators is to translate the word *ngrattinato* as a stewed chicken or chicken soup instead of as a gratin. However, in subsequent variants of ATU-510b, the prince is given a soup or simple broth (without the chicken mentioned, and on occasion the food motif is specifically bread soup) which cures him of his illness. This may be due to the folk wisdom surrounding chicken soup and broth as a curative and nourishing dish. This also emphasises that it is the princess who truly restores him when she reveals herself through a trinket or ring dropped into the bowl. Thus, she also gives him herself, which cures his genuine ailment: lovesickness. So despite the obvious link to a modern dish, the choice of the translators appears to be in favour of foods which further encourage the association with Preziosa’s prepared food to that which is curative, healing, and medicinal. Even Canepa gives *ngrattinato* yet another translation as either ‘stew’ or ‘casserole’ in ‘The Merchant’ tale from the same set of texts.⁴² This could be indicative of the *ngrattinata* being not chicken *au gratin*, but indeed a version of a soup that might be given to a sick person, such as *pan grattato* (grated bread). If this was the intention at the time, the food motif may have persisted as soup because Basile’s *ngrattinato* itself was more like soup. Thus oral variations distilled from Basile’s works which had the privilege of understanding this motif as Basile himself envisioned it led to the later versions, which in turn informed the translators’ choices. Scappi’s recipe for *pan grattato* is notably found in Book VI of his *Opera*, ‘Dishes for the Sick: Thick Soups’. It is as follows:

To prepare [*pan grattato*].

Grate white breadcrumb that is firm, because otherwise you would not be able to grate it with the cheese grater. While it is still dry like that, put it through a colander whose holes should not be too fine. Take the finest part of it and put it into boiling chicken broth or veal broth that has been strained... .Whichever way it is made, you always have to mind this instruction, that you put it into broth or water that is boiling. Serve it hot.⁴³

Whichever of the two was meant by Basile, it is the broth or thick soup element which persists into variants like that by the Brothers Grimm, and not the roasted chicken prepared *au gratin*.

The French Galette

Not long after Basile's *Il Pentamerone* was published, Charles Perrault published his verse version of 'Peau d'Âne' in France in 1694.⁴⁴ Yet, despite the close proximity in time, the French version has notable differences from Basile's 'L'orza'. Here, the princess, clad in her donkey-skin pelt, resorts to seeking work on a tenant farm which houses an extensive aviary belonging to a king. The tale has changed, now more closely resembling the landscape of France, the fashionable French court, and its nobility's practices.⁴⁵ And food in the tale is no different, as this was a time when national cuisines were beginning to take shape and become less homogenized across Europe.⁴⁶ The story continues with the prince catching a glimpse of the heroine in one of her beautiful dresses instead of her repulsive donkey skin, falling sick with love, and claiming that only a cake made from the Donkey Skin's hand will cure him.

Cake now replaces the chicken, the gratin, and the references to soup and stew. Perrault's original verse uses *galette* (which Appelbaum translates as 'biscuit') rather than the expected *gâteau*, perhaps to fit the rhyming scheme.⁴⁷ The prince, in fact, initially requests a *gâteau*, but receives the *galette*. Perrault continues the use of *galette* even when it does not matter to the rhyming scheme, indicating that although the choice may have been for poetic purposes initially, it does not fluctuate again once the item has been baked and created in the text.⁴⁸ The change is noteworthy, both as it relates to the contrast between chicken *au gratin*/chicken stew and pastry/cakes and also to the contrast between cakes as we understand them in a modern context and seventeenth-century *galettes*. To the first point, chicken stew is healthy and nourishing, but a *gâteau* is an indulgence befitting a prince. Yet this *galette* is not necessarily a sweet and risen dessert, as translators suggest by using the word 'cake'. Indeed, the prince should not have been indulging in his ill state; rather, he should have eaten 'proper nourishment.'⁴⁹ To the second point, it is possible that 'cake' is a mistranslation in this instance. There is a strange omission by Perrault when he describes the ingredients Donkey Skin gathers to bake the cake:

*Peau d'Âne donc prend sa farine
Que'elle avait fait bluter exprés
Pour render sa pâte plus fine,
Son sel, son beurre et ses œufs frais;
Et pour bien faire sa galette,
S'enferme seule en sa chambrette.*

[And so, Donkey-Skin took her flour,
Which she had had bolted expressly
To make her dough more delicate;
She took her salt, butter, and fresh eggs;
And to make her biscuit properly,

She shut herself into her little room alone.]⁵⁰

Perrault has failed to include any kind of sweetener and makes no mention of honey, sugar, or any other addition of an ingredient to flavour the *galette*.⁵¹ If this omission is not an oversight by Perrault, then the cake which Donkey Skin bakes is not necessarily a dessert or luxurious rich treat, but instead could be a cracker- or biscuit-like flat pastry (like a shortcrust pastry or *pâte brisée*), or a puff pastry like the *galette des Rois* which is eaten on Epiphany and sweetened with a layer of frangipane, or a Breton buckwheat pancake.⁵²

The place of the *galette* at the table certainly differs from the curative chicken that Preziosa brings to the ailing prince. Baking, too, is more intricate and cultured than the now comparatively barbaric moment where the bear plucks, guts, and roasts the chicken. It transmits an air of a more civilized household task, because although they are both outside the realm of a princess's knowledge, baking is far more dainty an undertaking than the roasting of meat in one's bedroom. It is also interesting that Donkey Skin's *galette* has no other flavour besides that of the dough, as *galettes* would often be flavoured or sugared (for example, as detailed in the prescribed food necessary for a wedding feast in *Le Ménagier de Paris*).⁵³ However, without any mention of additions like frangipane or sugar, Donkey Skin's *galette* most likely resembled the unsweetened puff pastry round, the Breton pancake, or a small, flat cracker. Donkey Skin's end result must be risen enough to disguise her ring which has fallen into the dough, but the *galette Bretonne* resembling a pancake or *crêpe* probably would not have done this, nor would the wafer-thin shortcrust cracker or biscuit. The inclusion of the ring inside may also be reminiscent of the bean placed in the *galette des Rois* to celebrate Twelfth Night, where the person who receives the bean is king for the day.⁵⁴ Similarly, the prince's acquisition of Donkey Skin's ring from the *galette*, and therefore her hand in marriage, allows him to fulfil one of the necessary duties of kingship. This was indeed an age in which gastronomic concerns and cuisine were beginning to indicate social status and aristocratic lifestyles. Yet, the plain *galette*, as Donkey Skin makes on the farm, is not quite the courtly food associated with French cuisine under the reign of Louis XIV. Perrault's choice of setting the scene in the countryside, and not at court, helps to reflect perhaps why her *galette* is so simple. She is learning the ways of the peasantry as a servant on a farm (not in a royal kitchen, as in some variants), and that includes the knowledge of cooking and baking the peasantry's simple dishes.⁵⁵ Although there are kinds of *galettes* which might be considered appropriate for courtly consumption, this unflavoured, humble food baked by Donkey Skin reflects her new farmstead surroundings as much as her fallen class status. But once again, as in 'L'orza', the performance of a lower-class task and now the presentation of an unadorned foodstuff, is the pivotal moment for the fallen heroine to be lifted once more to her former station.

The German Bread Soup

As we move forward again in history to the version collected, edited, and adapted for print by Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm, there is a return of the soup or stew motif in their tale 'Allerleirauh'. The residual elements of that particular food may have survived from Basile through the Grimms' oral source, though the Grimms themselves certainly knew many of the previous versions, including Perrault's.⁵⁶ But unlike in Basile, the chicken adroitly prepared in the bedroom is missing, and instead the tale has a threefold repetition of the heroine, Allerleirauh ('All-Kinds-of-Fur'), preparing a simple *Brotsuppe* or bread soup.⁵⁷ Another version, which the Grimms heard from Paderborn, has the food item listed in their notes as 'some very good soup', although for print they have favoured the version specifying *Brotsuppe*.⁵⁸

Like the *pan grattato* recipe which Scappi provides in his *Opera*, bread soup is a simple dish made from bread and a meat or vegetable broth. Soup itself originates from a practice of pouring liquid over a piece of bread, or a ‘sop’, and allowing the bread to soak up the liquid so that one has an easy way of ingesting the entirety of the broth or liquid portion.⁵⁹ Bread soup was often a way to use up stale bread, making it softer to chew and more palatable, as in the Italian *ribollita* or the French *panada*. Thus, its association with a need to not let anything go to waste meant that it represented a more rustic, provincial food for much of Europe.⁶⁰ As the German nobility had imported a taste for French cuisine (and with it French chefs), regional German foods rose in popularity not in the courts but in the independent cities where the burgher culture was allowing regional pride to thrive.⁶¹ This same Romantic desire for a German nationalism and identity that inspired the Grimms to collect tales was also visible in the new inclination for regional foods. The Grimms’ choice to use *Brotsuppe* could be to reinforce the particular German-ness of ‘Allerleirauh’. But this soup was not completely unknown to nobility, allowing the nourishing and curative nature of a broth-based soup to carry over from the Italian variants without losing meaning and significance. Although bread soup is a food of the lower class, made out of necessity, and soup generally would never have equated to a full meal for the nobility, it perhaps would have been included as part of a first course, digestive aid, or food for the sick.⁶² It may also be considered akin to a ‘comfort food’, giving the prince a spell of nostalgia, a feeling of warmth, or a calming of the stomach.

As in ‘L’orza’, it is a curiosity that the princess heroine knows how to cook such a dish so skilfully (the prince remarks that it tastes better than any soup he has ever had before), given the usual skill sets of the nobility. Ignoring the real historical roles of princesses opens the discussion to the roles of wives, as Jorgensen comments on:

When the heroine cooks or bakes for the prince, this is a functional display of her domestic abilities, as well as a demonstration of her replacement of his mother as the main nurturer in his life (which is an interesting transformation of her father’s attempt to force her to replace her mother, his wife). In some versions, the heroine engages in other clearly “feminine” activities, such as spinning. Thus, she is not only reincorporated into a cultural sphere where she is no longer identified as or with animals, but also valued for her human skills.⁶³

Jorgensen touches on the fact that these skills are traditionally feminine, and that is, I believe, where most of that value arises. Although chief courtly cooks were often male, the majority of household bakers and soup-makers would have been domestic, lower-class women. Once again, the use of lower-class dishes can help to send a message to the listener of the tales. In the case of the lower-class woman, it can give her a feeling of value in her skills, or give hope to the possibility of upward movement through them (even when no such possibility may exist).

Certainly it is also strange for such a humble dish to be served to the prince in light of the omission of an ailment. But in the tradition of the literary fairy tale, the authorial hand can sometimes be very evident. Much has been written on the ways in which the Grimms’ edited and authored their collection, not maintaining the purported ‘purity’ of the folktales. As Zipes discusses, ‘they used their aesthetic and ideological preferences in selecting and reworking the motifs in tales that had a bearing on their own lives.’⁶⁴ And the Grimms themselves lived an austere life, as evidenced by a letter from Wilhelm in 1812 which detailed how little they ate: ‘We five people eat only three portions and only once a day. I usually save something for breakfast because I cannot bear waiting until five o’clock. Jacob usually eats only breakfast when each of us drinks but a single cup of coffee and eats nothing more than milk bread.’⁶⁵ The choice for *Brotsuppe* may, then, have been informed by a desire to represent not only a

nobility which is not consuming French food (thus, not choosing the *galette* of ‘Peau d’Âne’), but also one which is a reflection of the Grimms’ own ascetic lifestyle and where the lowly bread soup plays a key role.

It is obvious that the three variants of the ATU-510b tale type discussed in this article are related in terms of their narratives, but are informed by very different choices by both author and translator when it comes to the central food motifs. They are not passive props for the tale, chosen at random. They are sometimes chosen because they were simply the unremarkable foods which appeared on tables at the time, or because they had a further weight in that society as cures, luxuries, foods of the peasantry, or foods of the elite. They give the reader an image of the food culture from which the variant originated, and they intimate ideas about the class and role of the characters or even of the tellers themselves. We cannot make assumptions based on our modern food habits, or what we fancifully imagine fairy-tale foods to be. Only when we understand the food motifs literally can we begin to attempt to understand them metaphorically.

Notes

¹ Cultural food studies as a field, however, has been gaining traction since the 1970s – although history, anthropology, and ethnography have all long been examining food, literature studies, sociological studies, and other humanities fields not typically observing food in their analysis have begun to consider it seriously: ‘Perhaps the sheer biological necessity for human beings to take in nutrients at regular intervals, and even the importance of meals and commensality in the social life of most human societies, were so obvious that they were simply taken for granted – part of the background of ‘what everyone knows’ already.’ This is prompting a trend towards incorporating food research in a variety of fields. See Steven Mennel, Anne Murcott, and Anneke H. van Otterloo, *The Sociology of Food: Eating, Diet, and Culture* (London: Sage, 1992), p. 1.

² Alan Dundes, ‘Folklore as a Mirror of Culture’ in *Elementary Education*, 46:4 (1969), 471–82 (p. 471).

³ Dundes, p. 472 (emphasis is the author’s own).

⁴ Jack Zipes, *Breaking the Magic Spell* (Kentucky: University Press of Kentucky, 2002), pp. 8–9.

⁵ Lutz Röhrich, ‘The Quest of Meaning in Folk Narrative Research’, in *The Brothers Grimm and Folktale*, ed. by James M. McGlathery (Illinois: University of Illinois Press), pp. 1–15 (p. 2).

⁶ Donald Haase, ‘Response and Responsibility in Reading Grimms’ Fairy Tales’, in *The Reception of Grimms’ Fairy Tales: Responses, Reactions, Revisions*, ed. by Donald Haase (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1996), pp. 230–49 (p. 235).

⁷ Jack Zipes, *Fairy Tales and the Art of Subversion*, 2nd edn (London: Routledge Classics, 2012), pp. 4–11.

⁸ Hans-Jörg Uther, *The Types of International Folktales: A Classification and Bibliography, Based on the System of Antti Aarne and Stith Thompson*, 3 vols (Helsinki: Finnish Academy of Science and Letters, 2011), I, pp. 293–6.

⁹ There is an enormous amount of literature already written on the incestuous beginning to this tale-type, and I direct those interested in that discussion to the work of Helen Pilinovsky and Marina Warner, as well as D.L. Ashliman’s article ‘Incest in Indo-European Folktales’. See Helen Pilinovsky, ‘Donkeyskin, Deerskin, Allerleirauh: The Reality of the Fairy Tale’ in *Journal of Mythic Arts* (Spring 2007), <<http://endicottstudio.typepad.com/articleslist/donkeyskin-deerskin-allerleirauh-the-reality-of-the-fairy-tale-by-helen-pilinovsky.html>> [accessed 14 September 2014]; Marina Warner, *From the Beast to the Blonde: On Fairy Tales and their Tellers*, new edn (London: Vintage, 1995); D.L. Ashliman, ‘Incest in Indo-European Folktales’ (1997). <<http://www.furorteutonicus.eu/germanic/ashliman/mirror/incest.html>> [accessed 15 September 2014]. For further reading on more variants of 510b tales, and the related Cinderella tale-type, 510a, see Marian Roalfe Cox, *Cinderella: Three Hundred and Forty-Five Variants of Cinderella, Catskin, and Cap o’ Rushes* (London: David Knutt, 1893); Heidi Anne Heiner, *Cinderella Tales from around the World* (CreateSpace Independent Publishing, 2012).

¹⁰ In Perrault, the princess requests a dress the colour of the sun, the moon, and the sky, before asking her father to kill his precious donkey which defecates pieces of gold. See *The Complete Fairy Tales in Verse and Prose/L’intégrale des Contes en vers et en prose: A Dual-Language Book: Charles Perrault*, ed. and trans. by Stanley Appelbaum (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 2002), pp. 77–81.

¹¹ Zipes, *Breaking the Magic Spell*, p. xi.

- ¹² Jan M. Ziolkowski, *Fairy Tales from before Fairy Tales: The Medieval Latin Past of Wonderful Lies* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2007), p. 6.
- ¹³ *The Lives of Two Offas: Vitae Offarum Duorum*, ed. Michael Swanton (Devon: Medieval Press Ltd., 2011).
- ¹⁴ Jack Zipes, *The Golden Age of Folk and Fairy Tales* (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 2013), pp. 367–9; Richard Peck, ‘Cinderella Sources and Analogues: Medieval and Renaissance’, in *The Cinderella Bibliography* (New York: University of Rochester, created 1995 [ongoing]) <<http://d.lib.rochester.edu/cinderella/text/cinderella-sources-and-analogues#medieval>> [accessed 15 September 2014].
- ¹⁵ *The Nights of Straparola*, trans. by W. G. Waters (London: Lawrence and Bullen, 1894), I, pp. 35–44.
- ¹⁶ Zipes, *Fairy Tales and the Art of Subversion*, p. 7.
- ¹⁷ Despite Basile’s conscious choice to use the ‘low’ Neapolitan dialect, *Lo cunto de li cunti* was probably read aloud at courtly gatherings (to an upper-class, adult audience). In part, the popularity of dialect literature and art with a local flavour was resurging due to the pressure of Spanish rule being exerted upon Naples. Using dialect allowed authors ‘relatively greater freedom in criticizing the social institutions of their time’. See Nancy L. Canepa, *From Court to Forest: Giambattista Basile’s Lo cunto de li cunti and the Birth of the Literary Fairy Tale* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1999), pp. 62–70; Nancy L. Canepa and Antonella Ansani, ‘Introduction’ in *Out of the Woods: The Origins of the Literary Fairy Tale in Italy and France*, ed. by Nancy L. Canepa (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1997), pp. 9–33 (p. 13); Anna Moro, *Aspects of Old Neapolitan: the Language of Basile’s Lo cunto de li cunti* (Munich: Lincom Europa, 2003), pp. 15–18.
- ¹⁸ Giambattista Basile, ‘The She-Bear’ in *Giambattista Basile’s The Tale of Tales, or Entertainment for Little Ones*, trans. by Nancy L. Canepa (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2007), pp. 177–83 (p. 182).
- ¹⁹ Zipes, *Fairy Tales and the Art of Subversion*, p. 18.
- ²⁰ Basile, ‘The She-Bear’, trans. by Canepa, p. 182.
- ²¹ Zipes, *Fairy Tales and the Art of Subversion*, pp. 13–27.
- ²² Zipes, *Fairy Tales and the Art of Subversion*, p. 27.
- ²³ For example, *The Babees Book: Medieval Manners for the Young: Done into Modern English, from Dr. Furnivall’s Texts*, ed. by E. Rickert (London: Chatto and Windus, 1908) and *The Boke of Nurture by John Russell, ab. 1460-70 a.d. The Boke of Keruyng by Wynken de Worde, a.d. 1513. The Boke of Nurture by Hugh Rhode, a.d. 1577*, ed. by Frederick J. Furnivall (Bungay: John Childs and Son, 1867). See Jack Goody, *Cooking, Cuisine and Class: A Study in Comparative Sociology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), p. 140.
- ²⁴ Goody, p. 140.
- ²⁵ Goody, p. 140.
- ²⁶ Philip Lewis, ‘Food for Sight: Perrault’s “Peau d’âne”’ in *Modern Language Notes*, 106:4 (1991), 793–817 (p. 799).
- ²⁷ Claude Fischler, ‘Food, Self and Identity’ in *Social Science Information*, 27 (1988), 275–93 (p. 287).
- ²⁸ Claude Lévi-Strauss, ‘The Culinary Triangle’ in *Food and Culture: A Reader*, ed. Carole Counihan and Penny von Esterik (London: Routledge, 2008), pp. 36–43 (pp. 36–7).
- ²⁹ Lévi-Strauss, pp. 38–42.
- ³⁰ Lévi-Strauss, pp. 38–40.
- ³¹ Zipes, *Fairy Tales and the Art of Subversion*, pp. 13–27; Norbert Elias, ‘Towards a Theory of the Civilizing Processes’ in *State Formation and Civilization*, trans. by Edmund Jephcott (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1982), pp. 229–333 (pp. 256–8).
- ³² Giambattista Basile, ‘The She-Bear’, in *The Pentamerone or the Story of Stories by Giambattista Basile*, trans. by John Edward Taylor, new edn, rev. by Helen Zimmern (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1893), pp. 102–11.
- ³³ Giambattista Basile, ‘The She-Bear’, in *Il Pentamerone: or, The Tale of Tales; being a Translation by the late Sir Richard Burton of Il Pentamerone: overo, Lo cunto de li cunte, trattenemiento de li peccerille of Giovanni Battista Basile, count of Torone (Gian Alessio Abbattutis)*, trans. by Sir Richard Burton, 2 vols (London: Henry and Company, 1893), I, pp. 181–90 (p. 189).
- ³⁴ *The Opera of Bartolomeo Scappi (1570): l’arte et prudenza d’un maestro cuoco*, trans. by Terence Scully (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008), p. 566.
- ³⁵ Prosper Montagné, *The New Concise Larousse Gastronomique: The Culinary Classic Revised and Updated*, rev. edn by Joël Robuchon (London: Hamlyn, 2007), pp. 575–7; Alan Davidson, *Oxford Companion to Food* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 350.
- ³⁶ This early reference to ‘gratoneya’ can be found in the accounts of one Mathieu Chantelmi, an apothecary, in 1431. Similar to the Neapolitan practice of making *macaroni au gratin*, the *gratoneya* is mentioned alongside *crozets*, a kind of French buckwheat pasta that is still served *au gratin* today. See Édouard de Laplane, *Histoire de Sisteron, tirée de ses archives* (France: Paulin, 1840), p. 490, n. 1; Sylvianne Léveillée, *La Cuisine Savoyarde*, (Paris: Editions Jean-Paul Gisserot, 2004), p. 58.

³⁷ Elena Varela Merino, *Los galicismos en el español de los siglos XVI y XVII*, 2 vols (Madrid: CSIC Press, 2009), I, pp. 1335–8.

³⁸ John Ayto, *An A–Z of Food and Drink* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 148.

³⁹ *Opera*, p. 160.

⁴⁰ Indeed, Croce's note, although for the tale of 'The Merchant' and not 'The She-Bear' (possibly only because it is the first mention of *ngrattinato* in *Lo cunto de li cunti*, although it seems more relevant to the latter story), refers readers to Giulio Cesare Cortese's mock-heroic poem, *Micco Passaro 'nnammorato*, originally published in 1619. It refers to a stanza which describes prepared chicken in almost exactly the way Preziosa prepares it: two chickens, one roasted, and one served *au gratin*. Basile and Cortese were well acquainted personally and with each other's work. We can only speculate whether Basile's choices for Preziosa's cooking function is referential to Cortese's work or Basile's choice was made because it was a common way of serving chicken dishes during the time Cortese and Basile were both together in Naples. See Giambattista Basile, *Lo cunto de li cunti (Il pentamerone)*, ed. by Benedetto Croce (Naples: 1891), p. 92, n. 36; Giulio Cesare Cortese, *Opere di Giulio Cesare Cortese detto il Pastor Sebeto*, 2 vols (Naples: Presso Giuseppe Maria Porcelli, 1783), I, p. 71; Canepa, *From Court to Forest*, p. 63–8.

⁴¹ *Opera*, p. 199.

⁴² However, this is translated by Canepa alongside the word *piccatiglie* in the tale 'The Merchant' as 'stew and casseroles'. *Piccatiglie* is possibly related to the later Italian words *piccatiglio* or *piccatiggio*, and indicates a dish of finely chopped meat that originates from Spain (the word comes the Spanish *picar*, or 'to shred' and relates to the popular Spanish and Latin American dish *picadillo*). This could have come from the Spanish influence during their rule of Naples during this time. Interestingly, this food could be more akin to Taylor's translation of *ngrattinato* as 'hash'. Taylor, however, omits the section of 'The Merchant' in which Cienzo laments the Neapolitan foods he will miss, so there is no opportunity to compare his translation in the other tale's context. See Basile, *The Tale of Tales*, trans. by Canepa, p. 93; Ottorino Pianigiani, *Vocabolario etimologico della lingua italiana* (Rome: Società editrice Dante Alighieri di Albrighi, Segati e C., 1907), p. 1015; Basile, 'The She-Bear', trans. by John Edward Taylor, p. 109.

⁴³ *Opera*, p. 566.

⁴⁴ *The Complete Fairy Tales*, pp. 68–99 and 210–31.

⁴⁵ Take, as an example, the French king's aviary as represented in the tale. The Perrault text from 1694 says: 'I almost forgot to mention by the way / that in that large farm / a magnificent and powerful king's / collection of rare birds was kept' (and it goes on to list the types of birds contained in 'ten entire farmyards'). Both Louis XIII and Louis XIV were known for their proclivity for and building of menageries and aviaries. See *The Complete Fairy Tales*, p. 85; Eric Baratay and Elisabeth Hardouin-Fugier, *Zoo: A History of Zoological Gardens in the West* (London: Reaktion Books, 2003), p. 41; Julia Pardoe, *Louis the Fourteenth and the Court of France in the Seventeenth Century*, 3 vols (London: Richard Bentley, 1847), I, p. 8; Peter Sahlins, 'The Royal Menageries of Louis XIV and the Civilizing Process Revisited', in *French Historical Studies*, 35:2 (2012), 237–67 (pp. 246–7).

⁴⁶ Eva Barlösius, 'The Dominance of the French Grande Cuisine', in *The Cambridge World History of Food*, ed. by Kenneth F. Kiple and Kriemhild Conee Ornelas, 2 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), II, pp. 1210–16.

⁴⁷ A *galette* is any 'flat, round cake of variable size,' which 'probably dates from the Neolithic era, when thick cereal pastes were cooked by spreading them out on hot stones.' They 'are not always sweet'. See Montagné, p. 538. In Perrault's own time, the dictionary entry for *galette* from the 1694 *Dictionnaire de l'Académie française* defines it as 'a kind of flat cake which is made when bread is baked'. See *Dictionnaire de l'Académie française dédié au Roy*, ed. by Académie française, 2 vols (Paris: J.B. Coignard, 1694), I, p. 509.

⁴⁸ *The Complete Fairy Tales*, pp. 88–91.

⁴⁹ Lewis, p. 812.

⁵⁰ *The Complete Fairy Tales*, pp. 88–9.

⁵¹ While a filling isn't strictly necessary, *galettes* traditionally have specific regional flavours, such as 'the galette of Corrèze (made with walnuts or chestnuts), the galette of Roussillon (made with crystallized [candied] fruits), the marzipan galette of the Nivernais, the curd-cheese galette of the Jura, the puff-pastry galette of Normandy, filled with jam and fresh cream, the famous galette of Perugia (a delicatèd yeasted pastry, like brioche, flavoured with lemon zest and topped with butter and sugar), and, of course, the traditional puff-pastry Twelfth-Night cake'. When they are the flat and crunchy style, decorated 'sometimes with crimped edges', they are often 'variously flavoured, filled or iced (especially with coffee or chocolate).' See *Larousse Gastronomique*, p. 538. If Perrault's omission of a sweetener is simply an error, it is possibly due to his own limited experiences with baking. From an early age, Perrault led an academic life which put him into administrative roles or positions within the Academies in France. His *Mémoires de ma vie* are woefully bare of quotidian details like

meals or even food preferences, despite his capabilities with verse. See *Charles Perrault: Memoirs of my Life*, ed. and trans. by Jeanne Morgan Zarucchi (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1989).

⁵² Montagné, p. 538.

⁵³ *Le Ménagier de Paris*, ed. and trans. by Gina L. Greco and Christine M. Rose (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009), p. 266.

⁵⁴ Nicola Humble, *Cake: A Global History* (London: Reaktion Books, 2010), pp. 72–4.

⁵⁵ Pierre Goubert, *French Peasantry in the Seventeenth Century*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp. 83–5.

⁵⁶ *Grimm's Household Tales: with the Author's Notes*, ed. and trans. by Margaret Hunt, 2 vols (London: George Bell and Sons, 1884), I, pp. 429–30.

⁵⁷ Jakob Grimm and Wilhelm Grimm, *Kinder- und hausmärchen*, 7th edn, 2 vols (Göttingen: Verlag der Dieterichschen Buchhandlung, 1857), I, p. 356.

⁵⁸ *Grimm's Household Tales*, p. 430.

⁵⁹ D. Eleanor Scully & Terence Scully, *Early French Cookery* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1995), p. 102; Janet Clarkson, *Soup: A Global History* (London: Reaktion Books, 2010), p. 11–12.

⁶⁰ Anthony F. Buccini, 'From Necessity to Virtue: The Secondary Uses of Bread in Italian Cookery', in *Food and Morality: Proceedings of the Oxford Symposium on Food and Cookery 2007*, ed. by Susan R. Friedland (Totnes: Prospect, 2008), pp. 56–69.

⁶¹ Ken Albala, *Food in Early Modern Europe* (Westport: Greenwood, 2003), pp. 188–90.

⁶² 'At upper-class tables, soups or pottages were consumed as a prelude to other dishes. In poorer households, the soup was often the only dish of the meal.' See Ivan Day, *Cooking in Europe 1650–1850* (Westport, London: Greenwood Press, 2009), p. 8.

⁶³ Jeana Jorgensen, 'Sorting Out Donkey Skin (ATU 510B): Toward an Integrative Literal-Symbolic Analysis of Fairy Tales', in *Cultural Analysis*, 11 (University of California), 91–120 (pp. 108–9), <<http://socrates.berkeley.edu/~caforum/volume11/pdf/Jorgensen.pdf>> [accessed 2 June 2014].

⁶⁴ Jack Zipes, 'Dreams of a Better Bourgeois Life: The Psychosocial Origins of the Grimms' Tales', in *The Brothers Grimm and Folktale*, ed. James M. McGlathery (Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 1991), pp. 205–19 (pp. 215–16).

⁶⁵ Trans. by Zipes in 'Dreams of a Better Bourgeois Life', p. 213.

* **Cover Image:** 'The She Bear' in *The Pentamerone, or the Story of Stories* by Giambattista Basile, ed. by Helen Zimmern, trans. by John Edward Taylor, illustrated by George Cruikshank (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1893), p. 108.

Thumbnail: Illustration by Harry Clarke from *Fairy Tales of Charles Perrault* (London: Harrap, 1922) p.137

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Biography

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