FRAU HOLLE: IN THE MÄRCHEN AND BEYOND
AN ANALYSIS OF THE FIGURE FRAU HOLLE IN THE GRIMM BROTHERS
FAIRY TALE AND GERMANIC MYTHOLOGY

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A Thesis

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Department of Interdisciplinary Studies
Abstract

of

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Statement of Problem
Known internationally through the Aarne-Thompson Tale Type Index as AT-480, and also known in the fairy tale world of the Grimm Brothers as Frau Holle, the fairy tale Frau Holle is arguably one of the most well known tales in all of Germany. How is the figure Frau Holle in the Grimm Brothers' fairy tale the same as the figure Frau Holle in Germanic mythology and what is the relationship between the two.

Sources of Data
Sources of data used to examine this relationship include literature from areas such as folklore studies and German studies. This study addresses points of interest in each of those areas and attempts to showcase important aspects of the genre of fairy tales and how they relate to Germanic mythology through the analysis of the figure Frau Holle.

Conclusions Reached
Initially seen as two figures, the Frau Holle that appears in the fairy tale is interconnected with the figure in Germanic mythology, which appeared first and ultimately became absorbed into her counterpart in the fairy tale.

Sponsor
Cindi SturtzSreetharan, PhD

Date
August 17, 2005
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I have come to the conclusion that what matters the most is the contribution you make to your field of study; a contribution that you are happy with, and one that you believe will inspire others. It is my hope that this thesis will provide insight into Frau
Holle world, where I spent all of my time during the last year. I know that no matter what, I'll always have Frau Holle. *Licht, Leben, Liebe.*
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Chapter 1

OVERVIEW AND DEFINITIONS

Introduction

Beyond the printed lines of text, folk tales and fairy tales exist in society first and foremost as entertainment. However, folk and fairy tales are more than this. They are deliberately used to communicate and to instruct. Fairy tales are traditional in the sense that they have been told and retold, passed down from person to person and are part of a traditional genre. This thesis is about one such fairytale: Frau Holle. In this thesis, I provide an introduction to the genre of Märchen, including basic functions, definitions and classifications. The figure of Frau Holle also appears in Germanic mythology. This thesis explores the mythological figure of Frau Holle, tracing the connections between the folk tale and mythic figure. I specifically ask: How is the fairy tale different from or similar to the mythology surrounding Frau Holle? The goal of this thesis is to discover the differences and possible connections between the figure Frau Holle in the fairy tale and the figure Frau Holle in Germanic mythology.¹ The organization of this thesis provides background information about folklore and fairy tales; Frau Holle was chosen because it exemplifies some of the ways in which fairy tales have come into being. As a structural and functional analysis of the fairy tale will show, the processes that occur in the tale reveal strong connections to Germanic mythology involving the figure Frau Holle. If myths are too distant or too esoteric, a fairy tale provides a closer-to-earth narrative that serves to buttress the mythology of a culture, making the ideas and lessons

¹ This thesis incorporates information on the mythological traditions of Frau Holle from Jacob Grimm’s Deutsche Mythologie as well as sources from Scandinavian and Icelandic literature.
of myth more readily accessible. This thesis suggests that the figure of Frau Holle herself is a true part of the fabric of the culture, if not an object of earnest belief. Ultimately I suggest that the figure Frau Holle in the fairy tale and the figure Frau Holle in Germanic mythology are at least connected (and possibly the same figure); I am convinced that a significant contribution is made to the mythology and folk belief of the Germanic people by the figure Frau Holle.

**Structure of the Thesis**

The current chapter will include an introduction to the study of folklore, which will examine, among other things, basic definitions that will be useful to the reader for the remainder of this thesis. Chapter Two consists of an analysis of the tale *Frau Holle*. Chapter Three develops the argument that the fairy tale figure is connected to a greater entity of the mythological figure Frau Holle. The fairy tale *Frau Holle* came from the oral tradition; however it is the myth that is the main focus in this chapter due to the impact it had on the fairy tale. At the end of this thesis, the reader will have gained the background knowledge necessary in order to understand the fairy tale *Frau Holle*, and be able to see how the figure Frau Holle in the fairy tale relates to the figure Frau Holle in Germanic mythology. Chapter Four concludes by noting the significance of this thesis and proposes some ideas for future research.²

**Definitions**

The basic characteristics of folklore are that it is transmitted in the oral tradition, meaning that it is non-institutional (not sanctioned by “governments, religions, and

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² All of the translations within this thesis were done by the author, under the guidance of Dr. Marjorie Gelus.
commerce") (Ashliman 51); it has multiple existences (many versions) and multiple variations (lives in variance) (Ashliman 106). “In other words, folklore is often regarded as a mode of expression which emphasizes the human and personal as opposed to the formal and institutional” (Oring 16). According to Stith Thompson, “… the term “folktale” is often used in English to refer to the “household tale” or “fairy tale” (the German Märchen), such as Cinderella and Snow White; it is also legitimately employed in a much broader sense to include all forms of prose narrative, written or oral, which have come to be handed down through the years” (4). According to the World Encyclopedia, folklore consists of “traditions, customs and beliefs of people. The most prevalent form of folklore is the folk tale. In contrast to literature, which is transmitted through written texts, the folk tale has an oral basis and is transmitted mainly through memory and tradition. Often the tales take the form of myths, fables and fairy tales” (“Folklore”). “The beginnings of the fairy tale with its Once upon a time and the various end formulas such as they lived happily ever after are always expected” (Thompson 457). As opposed to myth and legend, which are assumed to be real, folk and fairy tales do not claim to be real, and are very content, indeed often demand, to exist in the make-believe world. Ashliman notes: “these are stories that admit to being fictitious; they are products of fantasy, make-believe stories that create new worlds, thus providing an outlet for our

3 “A Märchen is a tale of some length involving a succession of motifs or characters and is filled with the marvelous” (Thompson 8). Thompson notes that the German term Märchen is often translated into English as “fairy tale” or “household tale” but these terms do not quite describe the genre as well as the German term (7). Throughout this thesis, I will be using the term Märchen and fairy tale interchangeably.

4 A fable is “a term most commonly used in the sense of a short story devised to convey some useful moral lesson, but often carrying with it associations of the marvelous or the mythical, and frequently employing animals as characters” (Drabble and Stringer, “fable”).

5 The terms myth, legend and fairy tale are each their own genre, and are not to be used interchangeably.
frustrations and fears, and a platform for our hopes and dreams” (1).

Stories are quintessentially an oral genre. We hear stories and we retell them—often without all of the details intact. As stories spread through a culture via oral tradition, there is not one correct version. A good storyteller might add details and embellishments; a hurried mother may leave out these extras as she retells various tales night after night. But even amidst this variation, we can imagine that there is a core to each story—the general structure of the tale is stable. Variation in oral tales is very difficult to document; for until they were recorded and archived no one could trace the development of any tale. Fairy tales are also difficult to date; what is certain is that oral narratives existed long before written records. Until a more scientific and standard method of recording tales was developed, this particular genre was difficult to define. As I will explain below, folk and fairy tale scholarship transformed the way in which tales were presented.

This thesis encompasses both a fairy tale and myth. To fully understand the scope of this thesis, it is critical to understand mythology, and the important role it plays in history. According to Alan Dundes, “a myth is a sacred narrative explaining how the world and man came to be in their present form” (Sacred Narratives, 1). Stith Thompson uses a similar definition in The Folktale when he describes myth as “a tale laid in a world supposed to have preceded the present order” (9). Myths acquaint us with sanctified figures and “semi-divine heroes”; they are the foundation for the source of all things, often through the aid of these figures (Thompson 9). “Myths are intimately connected with religious beliefs and practices of the people” (Thompson 9). Mythology is the focus
of the second half of this work, and it is through the mythology surrounding Frau Holle that we can begin to further understand her origins and conclude that it was the mythology that influenced the fairy tale.

Myths and folktales are closely related. Myths and folk tales are different genres of a traditional story, subcategories of the traditional prose narrative (Bascom 7). Folktales can exist at any time and any place, but myths are meant to have existed prior to the present moment. This thesis will find that it was the figure Frau Holle who first appeared in the mythology of the Germanic people. It was during the upheavals of the 15th and 16th centuries when much of people’s lives were consumed by religion that this prominent figure began to emerge, eventually finding sustained popularity in the fairy tale.6

Functions of Folklore

Folk and fairy tales play important roles in the maintenance of society. Folktales have multiple functions and serve as guides to everyday life. “By offering make-believe solutions to real-life problems it [the fairy tale] functions in a time-honored fairy-tale tradition” (Ashliman 50). Society is not stagnant in its development; society is under constant change. It is exactly what people do with the folklore that makes it important. People take folklore and use it to respond to the rules that society places on them, responding to societal pressures from institutions.

Folk tales also function to “preserve and promote cultural and personal values” (Ashliman 4) by providing examples through fairy tale characters. As Ashliman explains,

6 As it will be shown in this thesis, Frau Holle contributed to Germanic culture at that time, proven by Martin Luther’s mentioning of her in his writings.
“in traditional fairy tales morals typically center around the preservation of existing values and the maintenance of social stability” (Ashliman 4). Folklore also relates to anxieties that people have about life. A folktale allows the audience to recognize their own every day anxieties and stressors, but the tale packages these into a stable beginning, middle and end. Resolution—unlike real life—is guaranteed. It is through this imaginary, make believe world that people can escape from every day life. It is important to point out that fairy tales serve contradictory purposes. They both allow us to escape and offer guides for everyday life. Escape can offer a reflective process in dealing with problems in our lives. It is that escape that guides us, allowing our imagination to release the anxieties of life. In showing how one might deal with adversity, they also serve as guides.

Most importantly, for a folk or fairy tale to survive, it must satisfy its audience. Tales offer advice through examples, and “offer story tellers and their audiences a socially acceptable platform for the expression of otherwise unspeakable fears and taboos” (Ashliman 50). Thus readers can place themselves into the fairy tale as one (or more) of the characters. Fairy tales play an active role in influencing societal views, and how people perceive one another. The messages in fairy tales influence different people in different ways and it is important that the reader be able to identify with a figure in the fairy tale. If readers can see themselves in a character or perhaps in some way see their own personal situation reflected in what is happening, the tale is more likely to survive.

Fairy Tale Themes

Thematic relevancy is a critical aspect of an enduring fairy tale. Like the functions a fairy tale serves in society, fairy tale themes are an equally important source of their
value. Fairy tales should be entertaining and relevant to the experiences of their audience. The audience’s ability to relate to what is happening in the fairy tale is what will sustain and retain the tale. For instance, “casting the heroine as ordinary or even disadvantaged makes it easier for their listeners to identify with them” (Ashliman 45), making them more relatable to the reader. Events such as sibling rivalry and parent-child conflict, which cause dissidence, are present across cultures. Children and adults alike can relate to such themes and thus perpetuate the fairy tale across generations.

Consequences and punishments in fairy tales also parallel the audience’s real lives. “Perhaps the greatest overall theme treated in fairy tales is the restoration of justice. [...] Fairy tales evolved in cultures where injustice—by modern standards—prevailed for most.” (Ashliman 47-48). This evokes in the reader a sense of compassion which helps him/her identify with the heroine and want to see the heroine overcome the unjust circumstances. The human struggle is a universal phenomenon, and people generally want to see the less-fortunate prosper over oppression. The personal struggle and the personal “injustices that are exposed and corrected in fairy tales” (Ashliman 48) are what drive them forward.

Thompson notes that “… in addition to the intrinsic interest which every story has as a means of entertainment or for giving aesthetic pleasure, it presents a challenging problem in social history and at the same time furnishes help toward the solution of that very problem” (428). For example, Cinderella is about class relations. Because of her status within her family and society, Cinderella was not invited to the ball. Her story demonstrates how social classes interact. The justice that is restored at the end of the tale
(social equality for Cinderella) helps to furnish a solution to the problem of social class relations.

Just as struggles can be seen in Cinderella, the struggle for justice and equity is visible in tales such as Little Red Riding Hood and Beauty and the Beast. Frau Holle, the subject of this thesis, also demonstrates aspects of fairness and duty, as I will explain in Chapter Two.

Folklore Scholarship: A Background

Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm

No discussion of fairy tales can be complete without referring to the most famous duo in history, Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm. The Grimm brothers, who published the Kinder- und Haus Märchen (KHM) in 1812, are widely accepted as the “founders of the science of folklore” (Handoo 34). The brothers believed that collecting oral traditions was critical to the “history of literature as a whole” (Michaelis-Jena 51) and felt that the tales “were a strong and vital part of mankind’s half-forgotten past.” (Ibid 51). In their interviews with informants, they systematically recorded the names of their informants, mainly peasant women in Hessen, listed variants to the tales, and made “comparisons with analogues found in literature and in the folklore of other countries” (Ashliman 131). The brothers were less interested in the interpretation of the stories than they were in the study of “origins,” and “their observation that numerous elements in their tales were very ancient led them to the conclusion that many folktales, magic tales in particular, were

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7 For the remainder of this thesis, I will be shortening the title of the Kinder- und Hausmärchen to KHM, which is “widely known and translated as Grimm’s Fairy Tales” (Encyclopedia Americana 495).
8 A particularly good storyteller, Dorthea Wild, would later become Wilhelm’s wife (Michaelis-Jena 48).
9 Hessen, one of Germany’s 16 states, is located in the central western part of the country.
surviving in fragments of primeval myth” (Ashliman 131). After four years of collecting tales, the brothers sent a manuscript to Ludwig Achim von Arnim and Clemens Brentano, who had been collecting folktales to include as an addition to the already published Des Knaben Wunderhorn. The addition never came to fruition (Ashliman 25). When the expanded addition of Des Knaben Wunderhorn did not materialize, the Grimm brothers “... published their own collection of 86 tales, titled Kinder- und Hausmärchen (Children’s and Household Tales)” (Ashliman 25). When the KHM were published again in 1819, Wilhelm had to a large extent revised most of the tales, “creating what would become an international standard for printed fairy tales” (Ashliman 25). Most modern editions and translations are based on the final KHM version published by the Grimms, printed in 1857, that contains 200 stories as well as 10 children’s legends (Ashliman 27). The Grimms also published a collection of sagas entitled Deutsche Sagen (German Sagas) (Ashliman 27).

The significance that their work had during their lifetime was great. They helped pave the way for folk and fairy tale scholarship, influencing these fields with their research that contributed extensively to what we know of it today. We know that the tales they collected were important to the people of that time period; we can also imagine that they collected tales that were told more than once. While we cannot know to what

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10 The Boy's Magic Horn is a collection of German folk poetry published between 1805-1808 (Kennedy and Bourne, "Arnim, Achim (Joachim) (Ludwig) von").
11 "The Grimms’ Kinder- und Hausmärchen with time has become the most widely read, the most frequently imitated, and the most influential book ever created in the German language” (Ashliman 27). It is one of the most complete folktale collections ever assembled in any language.
extent they may have embellished the tales, we do know that they were fastidious in their attention to the story teller(s) and to variations in the tales themselves (see Ashliman).\textsuperscript{12}

The Grimms were significant contributors to the fields of historical linguistics and comparative philology. Their extensive work on the 33-volume \textit{Deutsches Wörterbuch}, set a new standard for dictionaries and is still considered the standard reference for German etymology. The dictionary was such a comprehensive work that by the end of their lifetime only volumes “A” through “F” were completed. It was not until 1960 that the dictionary was completed.\textsuperscript{13}

In addition to the work that the Grimm brothers did together, each of them also pursued separate interests. Jacob is remembered as one of the founders of historical linguistics and the science of Germanic philology through his studies in the field of linguistics and his extensive work on Germanic grammar. His three-volume \textit{Deutsche Grammatik (German Grammar)} was published in 1819. The sound changes that characterize the First Germanic Sound Shift, which in the first millennium BC separated the Germanic language families from the rest of the Indo-European languages, are known as “Grimm’s Law” after the renowned linguist.\textsuperscript{14} In 1835 Jacob published \textit{Deutsche Mythologie (German Mythology)} and in 1848 \textit{Geschichte der deutschen Sprache (History of the German Language)} which examines linguistic elements of the German language including derivation, composition and syntax, and other elements of philology.

\textsuperscript{12} The Grimms were insistent that the tales they collected be pure and free of embellishment (Michaelis-Jena 53).

\textsuperscript{13} The remaining parts of the \textit{Deutsches Wörterbuch} “were published by several generations of scholars over a 100 year span” (Grimm Brothers’ Home Page).

\textsuperscript{14} “It [Grimm’s Law] shows that a process—the regular shifting of consonants in groups—took place once in the development of English and the other Low German languages and twice in German and other High German languages” ("Grimm’s Law").
Wilhelm (whose primary interest was in folk narrative) continued to make changes to the subsequent editions of the *KHM*. Although his individual works aren’t nearly as famous as those of his older brother, he did contribute, along with the *KHM*, to three different works spanning 1811, 1821 and 1829 respectively. These were titled *Altdänische Heldenlieder, Balladen und Märchen* (*Old Danish Heroic Songs, Ballads and Fairytales*), *Über deutsche Runen* (*On German Runes*) and lastly *Die deutsche Heldensage* (*The German Heroic Saga*).

Antti Aarne and Stith Thompson

After the groundbreaking scholarship of the Grimm brothers, the nineteenth century witnessed the appearance of various schools of folklore interpretation. The studies of cultural anthropologist James G. Frazer led him to believe that fairy tales, nursery rhymes and the like “were remnants of ancient narratives that once accompanied and explained fertility rites, a view not far removed from the one held by the Grimms” (Ashliman 137).

Followers of the psychological school of interpretation of folk takes can choose to analyze either the psychological motivation of the characters in the tale or the psychology behind the story tellers’ creative processes (Ashliman 140). The various tales lend themselves to many different interpretations. Texts can be interpreted symbolically, and the stories may be examined as expressions of hidden layers of unconscious wishes and fears. Twentieth-century scholars who made extensive use of Freudian or Jungian psychology as a basis for fairy tale interpretation include Bruno Bettelheim and Alan Dundes.
One of the most influential scholars who contributed to the development of the study of folklore is Antti Aarne, who in 1910 published an *Index of Folktale Types*. An associate of Aarne’s, American folklorist Stith Thompson, issued an expanded English-language version of the index in 1928, compiling a formal classification system for the folktale. The Aarne-Thompson index divides tales into types, ranging from numbers 1 to 2,499. The most important type of tale for the purpose of this thesis is the magic tale, assigned numbers 300-749.

Magic tales can be “sinister and inexplicable” or “wish fulfilling and emancipating” (Ashliman 38). Some magic tales of this type well known in the United States include type 410, known as *Sleeping Beauty*, type 333, known as *Little Red Riding Hood* and also type 425C, known as *Beauty and the Beast*. In magic tales, the world is a place of fantasy and in many respects resembles that of a past era. That is, these fairy tales give us the feeling that what is happening in them is not happening in current time (Ashliman 38). “Numerous accounts mention a realm inhabited by fairies or other such hidden people and imbued with supernatural powers” (Ashliman 38). Furthermore, this other world can be described as being in the “… sky, underground, under water or mysteriously integrated into our own world in a manner intangible and invisible to most humans” (Ashliman 38). Ashliman notes that “fairy tales [of this category] give their characters, and vicariously the readers, access to this alternate parallel world, a place where magic abounds” (38). Magic tales in particular give the reader the opportunity to use their imagination.

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15 *Verzeichnis der Märchentypen*
Vladimir Propp

Another prominent scholar of fairy tales was Vladimir Propp, whose work was concentrated on Russian fairy tales. His major work, entitled *Morphology of the Folktale*, shows that all of the fairy tales he examined share the same structural features.¹⁶ “If folklore research today is assessed in terms of progress toward maturity in method and in approach toward a mature system of theory, Propp’s work offered the most important advance in method in the history of folklore before the 1940’s” (Jacobs 195). Propp’s research on fairy tales shows that “each type of oral literature has its identifiable elements, that they display some variability, and that they arrange a frame which can be depicted” (Jacobs 196). Propp’s study aimed at separating the component parts of fairy tales by special methods, essentially breaking the story down into several parts, then comparing the stories to one another (19). Although his research focused on Russian fairy tales, his work can also be invaluable to those who work on fairy tales outside of the Russian collection.

Fairy Tale Structure

Fairy tales are not only formulaic in their functions, they are also patterned in their structures. In *Morphology of the Folktale*, Propp states that “a tale usually begins with some sort of initial situation” (25). This is the point in the fairy tale where the hero or heroine is introduced to the reader along with the enumeration of the other characters present in the tale (Propp 25-26). It is after the initial situation that the tale begins its

¹⁶ An analysis and explanation of some of Propp’s work follows under the “Fairy Tale Structure” section of the current chapter.
transformation. Propp outlines 31 “functions”\(^\text{17}\) (26-65) that are the backbone and structure of fairy tales. One can analyze fairy tales according to their functions, though not each of the 31 functions is present in every tale.

The extensive research that Propp did on Russian fairy tales produced a stable structure of characteristics that can be applied to fairy tales. Propp specifically states that there are four important characteristics of the fairy tale: “1) Every fairy tale has a set of stable, constant functions that are performed by the characters; the character performing the function may vary across fairytales, but the function itself remains stable. 2) The number of functions known to the fairy tale is limited. 3) The sequence of functions is always identical. 4) All fairy tales are one type in regard to their structure” (21-23). The main point of his analysis is that when any number of the functions is present, they always follow a particular order. For example, at the beginning of every tale, the characters are introduced. The reader also receives background information about the characters’ lives that is important for understanding the situation in which we find the fairy tale hero or heroine. Next are the actions, or the events that happen in the story that follow the same pattern across fairy tales. In the end, each of these “functions” is connected to the next in a specific order. It is the sequence in which they occur that is of importance.

\(^{17}\) “Function is understood as an act of a character, defined from the point of view of its significance for the course of the action” (Propp 21). For instance, he describes Function I as: “One of the members of a family absents himself from home,” Function II as: “An interdiction is addressed to the hero,” and Function III as: “The interdiction is violated” (Propp 26-27). An example of Function I is one of the children of a household going for a walk. An example of Function II is a mother telling her child not to stray off the path, or she will get lost. An example of Function III is the little girl strays off the path.
Steven Jones also notes a pattern common to fairy tales: separation, initiation and return (152). As with Propp’s functions, these three events are not evident in every fairy tale, but do appear in a large number of tales. The separation phase is characterized by the departure—either voluntary or forced—of the hero or heroine from home. For example, in *Snow White* the evil stepmother forces Snow White into a departure by ordering one of her huntsmen to take her into the woods and kill her. After the departure, another figure may enter the picture: “A large series of stories throughout the European and western Asiatic area confront the hero with some type of supernatural adversary” (Thompson 23). In magic tales, the protagonist is usually aided by some sort of mysterious or supernatural being, and with the help of this magic, the protagonist finds his/her way. The significance of the departure stage for the character is that this begins the protagonist’s journey through the world.

The next phase is the initiation phase. Typically this stage is filled with obstacles that the protagonist must overcome. The tasks are usually daunting. It may not always be a physical task; it may in some cases be more of an emotional trial. In *Cinderella*, for example, although she is invited to the ball and her stepmother acknowledges this, she is given numerous tasks to do that day, in an attempt to keep Cinderella from attending the ball. This is the initiation (or hazing) portion of the Cinderella tale. It is through this initiation that the heroine is tested and succeeds in overcoming the adversity that presents itself.

The final phase is the return of the protagonist to society. “A return is generally accomplished by means of the same forms as an arrival” (Propp 55). However, the return
is typically not to the exact circumstances that the hero or heroine left. Having gone through the initiation phase, protagonists always return with a higher worth than when they left. This means that when the hero or heroine returns, he/she is valued more, and is treated better than he/she had been before. In Cinderella, she returns to her duties after the ball, but her status is raised when the prince makes sure that Cinderella has the opportunity to try on the glass slipper and that her foot is “just right.” The rise in social status is a result of the positive outcome of the initiation process. As the heroes and heroines return to the society which they left, they are held in higher regard after having gone through a coming-of-age adventure. Insight can be gained by analyzing the tale of Frau Holle along structural and functional lines, as will be explained in the next chapter.
Chapter 2

FRAU HOLLE THE TALE

This particular tale originated out of the oral tradition, and was then transcribed to become part of the most well known collection of fairytales in the world. This chapter focuses on the functions and symbolism of Frau Holle. The key is to focus on the processes that are happening within the fairy tale, to become aware of their development and to recognize the messages that are being sent to the reader. Understanding the possible functions of this tale gives insight into the popularity and endurance of this tale and to the figure Frau Holle.

The focus of the analysis in this chapter will be on the maturation process that each girl embarks on and the extent to which it is successful or not. After presenting the tale, I will describe each girl’s character at the beginning of the story, which will also entail a discussion of the mother-daughter relationship. I will then proceed through each stage of the plot, noting how successfully each girl navigates the obstacles, represented by items like the spindle, the well, the oven and the apple tree, showing how all of these indicate that the “good” girl in the story is a heroine. I will also discuss what these obstacles represent on a figurative, or symbolic, level. All of this will serve as a prelude to the girls’ encounter with Frau Holle: it is her influence on the girls that will provide insight into who Frau Holle is and how she functions in the fairy tale.

Frau Holle—the Märchen

Frau Holle is a fairy tale included by the Grimm brothers in their KHM. In this collection, this tale appears as number 24. In Aarne-Thompson’s The Types of the Folk-
tale; a classification and bibliography, commonly referred to as the Tale Type Index, *Frau Holle* is identified as tale type number 480 referred to as *The Kind and the Unkind Girls* (Aarne and Thompson 164-167). Wilhelm Grimm recorded *Frau Holle* from his primary source, Dorothea (Dortchen) Wild, at the Wilds’ house in Cassel, Germany on the 13th of October, 1811.18 The Grimms’ commentary of the tale indicates that this tale originated in Germany—in particular in Hessen and Westphalia (Grimm, *KHM* 40). Sonja Rüttner-Cova attests to the most likely place of origin of *Frau Holle* as she explains that Jacob “establishes that the constellation of tales and myths surrounding Holla was most widespread among the German tribes of the Hessians and Thuringians”(Rüttner-Cova 70-71).19 For the English version of the tale, I turn to Ashliman for his translation20 (I have included the German original in the Appendix):

A widow had two daughters, the one was beautiful and industrious, the other ugly and lazy. She greatly favored the ugly, lazy girl, because she was her own daughter. And the other one had to do all the work, and be the Cinderella of the house. Every day the poor girl had to sit by a well, next to the highway, and spin so much that her fingers bled. Now it happened that one day the reel was completely bloody, so she dipped it in the well, to wash it off, but it dropped out of her hand and fell in. She cried, ran to her stepmother, and told her of the mishap. She scolded her so sharply, and was so merciless that she said, "Since

18 “1812 nr. 24: von Dortchen Wild in Kassel am 13. Oktober 1811 im Garten” (Bolte and Polívka, 207). This citation was taken from Wilhelm Grimm’s personal notes in his own copy of the 1812 edition centered underneath the final line of the published text.
19 “Jacob Grimm stellt fest, dass der Märchen- und Mythenkreis um Holla unter den deutschen Stämmen der Hessen und Thüringer am weitesten verbreitet war.”
20 From D.L. Ashliman’s homepage (http://www.pitt.edu/~dash/grimmo24.html).
you have let the reel fall in, you must fetch it out again." Then the girl went back
to the well, and did not know what to do. Terrified, she jumped into the well to
get the reel. She lost her senses. And when she awoke and came to herself again,
she was in a beautiful meadow where the sun was shining, and there were many
thousands of flowers. She walked across this meadow and came to an oven full of
bread. The bread called out, "Oh, take me out. Take me out, or I'll burn. I've been
thoroughly baked for a long time." So she stepped up to it, and with a baker's peel
took everything out, one loaf after the other. After that she walked further and
came to a tree laden with apples. "Shake me. Shake me. We apples are all ripe."
cried the tree. So she shook the tree until the apples fell as though it were raining
apples. When none were left in the tree, she gathered them into a pile, and then
continued on her way. Finally she came to a small house. An old woman was
peering out from inside. She had very large teeth, which frightened the girl, and
she wanted to run away. But the old woman called out to her, "Don't be afraid,
dear child. Stay here with me, and if you do my housework in an orderly fashion,
it will go well with you. Only you must take care to make my bed well and shake
it diligently until the feathers fly, then it will snow in the world.21 I am Frau
Holle." Because the old woman spoke so kindly to her, the girl took heart, agreed,
and started in her service. The girl took care of everything to Frau Holle's
satisfaction and always shook her featherbed vigorously until the feathers flew
about like snowflakes. Therefore she had a good life with her: no angry words and

21 Therefore in Hessen whenever it snows they say that Frau Holle is making her bed.
boiled or roast meat every day. Now after she had been with Frau Holle for a

time, she became sad. At first she did not know what the matter with her was, but

at last she determined that it was homesickness. Even though she was many

thousands of times better off here than at home, still she had a yearning to return.

Finally she said to the old woman, "I have such a longing for home, and even

though I am very well off here, I cannot stay longer. I must go up again to my

own people."

Frau Holle said, "I am pleased that you long for your home again, and

because you have served me so faithfully, I will take you back myself." With that

she took her by the hand and led her to a large gate. The gate was opened, and

while the girl was standing under it, an immense rain of gold fell, and all the gold

stuck to her, so that she was completely covered with it. "This is yours because

you have been so industrious," said Frau Holle, and at the same time she gave her

back the reel which had fallen into the well. With that the gate was closed and the

girl found herself above on earth, not far from her mother's house. And as she

entered the yard the rooster, sitting on the well, cried:

Cock-a-doodle-doo, our golden girl is here anew.

Then she went inside to her mother, and as she arrived all covered with

gold, she was well received, both by her mother and her sister. The girl told all

that had happened to her, and when the mother heard how she had come to the

great wealth, she wanted to achieve the same fortune for the other, the ugly and

lazy daughter. She made her go and sit by the well and spin. And to make her reel
bloody, the lazy girl pricked her fingers and shoved her hand into a thorn bush. Then she threw the reel into the well, and jumped in herself. Like the other girl, she too came to the beautiful meadow and walked along the same path. When she came to the oven, the bread cried again, "Oh, take me out. Take me out, or else I'll burn. I've been thoroughly baked for a long time." But the lazy girl answered, "As if I would want to get all dirty," and walked away. Soon she came to the apple tree. It cried out, "Oh, shake me. Shake me. We apples are all ripe." But she answered, "Oh yes, one could fall on my head," and with that she walked on.

When she came to Frau Holle's house, she was not afraid, because she had already heard about her large teeth, and she immediately began to work for her. On the first day she forced herself, was industrious, and obeyed Frau Holle, when she said something to her, because she was thinking about all the gold that she would give her. But on the second day she already began to be lazy, on the third day even more so, and then she didn't even want to get up in the morning. She did not make the bed for Frau Holle, the way she was supposed to, and she did not shake it until the feathers flew. Frau Holle soon became tired of this and dismissed her of her duties. This was just what the lazy girl wanted, for she thought that she would now get the rain of gold. Frau Holle led her too to the gate. She stood beneath it, but instead of gold, a large kettle full of pitch spilled over her. "That is the reward for your services," said Frau Holle, and closed the gate. Then the lazy girl went home, entirely covered with pitch. As soon as the rooster on the well saw her, he cried out:
Cock-a-doodle-doo, our dirty girl is here anew.

And the pitch stuck fast to her, and did not come off as long as she lived.

The Maturation Process

As stated in Chapter One, unless a fairy tale is entertaining it won’t survive. However, the entertainment factor alone is not enough. Fairy tales must provide useful information in order to endure. In doing so the fairy tale ensures its life across generations. Diann Rusch-Feja conducted a study specifically about the KHM titled The Portrayal of the Maturation Process of Girl Figures in Selected Tales of the Brothers Grimm. Her study is “based on the premise that precisely those tales with heroines as the main figures have functioned as vehicles for transmitting cultural and, in some cases, even ritual information on the maturation process of young girls” (Rusch-Feja 5-6). It is a fact that “these tales have enjoyed particular popularity not only because of the symbolic depiction of universal aspects of the maturation process and the appeal of this topic and these figures to the listener, but also because in many cultures direct communication of certain aspects of female maturation was or is now taboo” (Rusch-Feja 6). Discussions of breasts becoming mature, or menstruation, sex/fertility, and other coming-of-age changes were most likely not easily discussed; fairy tales can function, then, as tales of instruction and a description of a girl’s journey to womanhood.

For further analysis of Frau Holle, it is important to understand what we mean by maturation. “Maturation can be defined as the developmental process from childhood to adulthood” (Rusch-Feja 15) and as the emergence of personal and behavioral
characteristics through growth processes ("Maturation"). Maturation does not occur at only one point in a person’s life, but is ongoing, characterized by many phases; the maturation process is also contingent on the opportunities and constraints of social structure and culture (Elder 2). For this thesis, only the maturation points within this tale, namely childhood through puberty, will be examined. As the story begins, we can assume that the girls are young in age, due to the use of the German word Mädchen, which means girl.

**Structure of Frau Holle**

In contrast to some tales in which compulsory labor is regarded as a subordinate part of the story, there exist tales in which the "performance of tasks or the accomplishment of a quest and overcoming of obstacles is the most important event" of the story (Thompson 105). Such is the case for the tale of Frau Holle. The critical aspect of this tale is the contrast between the two girls. The tale can be divided into two parts: the actions of the kind girl and the actions of the unkind girl (Jones 149). What starts the movement of the story is the separation event in which the heroine leaves home. This happens when she jumps into the well to retrieve her spindle. By jumping into the well, the heroine begins her journey (Jones 150). The second phase, the initiation, is the heroine’s tests before she reaches Frau Holle’s house. The heroine first encounters an oven and then an apple tree which asks for her help and she willingly obliges. The next test is arguably the most important one, which is the “heroine’s performance of various

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22 www.dictionary.com
23 The girl who gets rewarded has helpful, kind, cooperative and generous qualities that are intrinsic to her character, versus her self-centered stepsister who has qualities such as laziness and selfishness.
tasks” for Frau Holle (Jones 150). The final stage of the heroine’s journey (the return event—as she prepares to return to society) concerns the reward given to her for the completion of her tasks, and her return home (Jones 150-151). Once the heroine expresses her desire to return home, Frau Holle is pleased that she wants to do so. Frau Holle tells the girl that she will take her home herself. Then as the heroine is standing under the gate, Frau Holle showers her in gold as her reward for being so diligent.

The second half of the story is the heroine’s stepsister’s journey to duplicate her accomplishments (Jones 151). The stepsister serves as the antagonist. “It follows a pattern of matching episodes: the heroine’s departure, encounters, tasks and reward episodes of the first half are duplicated by the antagonist’s,” making a whole (Jones 152). The stepsister follows the path that the protagonist did, however she does not comply with the requests for help from the oven or apple tree.

Key elements of a successful tale include an ability both to entertain and to provide an example of life’s lessons. *Frau Holle* contrasts obedience and diligence with disobedience and laziness and kindness and unkindness, with each girl exemplifying one of the two extremes. This dual aspect of bad and good allows the tale to thrive and to continue to be relevant today.

**The Girls’ Relationship to the Mother Figure**

As the story opens, we see the girls’ relationship to the mother figure. Stith Thompson classifies *Frau Holle* (Aa-Th Tale Type 480) as a “complex tale” (*The Folktale* 182), which he defines as follows: “in nearly all complicated fairy tales there is some kind of conflict” (*The Folktale* 23). The heroine has a difficult relationship with her
stepmother. This relationship is rather typical, according to Torborg Lundell (Mothers, 28). The mother acquires her negative character traits by favoring her own daughter—who does not conform to either the socially accepted ideal of physical beauty nor behavior for a young woman—over her step daughter (Lundell, Mothers 28).

The mother mistreats the heroine, who has only “good” qualities; the kind girl is accommodating, dutiful and angelic (Lundell, Mothers 28). The fact that the mother is unjust in the way that she treats her stepdaughter versus how helpful she is to her own daughter is a sign of her wickedness, because the lazy daughter does not deserve help (Lundell, Mothers 28). The unequal treatment of the two girls by the mother figure in the story is seen by the reader as unjust, and will not be righted until Frau Holle intervenes to fill the role of a proper mother: one who judges the daughters only after evidence of character, thus making the tale an example of the popular theme of justice versus injustice.

Leaving Home, Embarking on the Quest

The journey that each girl undertakes has both literal and figurative dimensions, evident in the four challenges central to the story: the spindle, the well, the oven, and the apple tree, all of which are rich with symbolic meaning. When each of the girls meets challenges, as in real life, she is either ready to face those challenges or not. Moreover, “the well and hearth/oven are sacred places of Holle” (Rüttner-Cova 46), 24 which cues the reader into understanding that this tale is about an encounter with Frau Holle.

24 “Brunnen und Herd/Backöfen sind heilige Orte der Holle, deren Wirkungskraft unsere junge Frau wahrnimmt und sich einverleibt.”
The Spindle

The movement of the plot begins with the spindle. The spindle is the reason why the industrious girl goes to the well in the first place. She had been spinning so diligently that her fingers began to bleed, covering the spindle with blood. She takes it to the well to wash it, and inadvertently drops it in. The blood can be a symbol of the girl getting her first menstrual cycle, as the spindle was stained. This is a biological symbol of being brought into womanhood, signifying the beginning of her maturation.

The spindle also has great symbolic value. Ruth B. Bottigheimer states that "in the German tradition, Jacob Grimm asserted that the spindle was an essential characteristic of wise women" (Fairy Tales 143). It carries with it a status that was highly desirable and the mark of a "good woman" both historically and, arguably, still today. In previous centuries, spinning was regarded as one of the most sacred acts. Spinning was an activity for a woman that was crucial to the livelihood of her family. As tales indicate, the spindle is not only a sign of "wise women," but of all women, and in particular, the untiring, hard-working women from German-speaking lands of the Middle Ages to the 19th century (Bottigheimer, Fairy Tales 143). Spinning was a task that could earn women money, which was of great significance because it provided means for the household. The heroine’s decision to jump into the dark well indicates the importance of the item.

The spindle and spinning were deeply significant in the culture of the German-speaking lands of the Middle Ages given that they linked women to the ruling goddess.

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25 In Germania, Publius Cornelius Tacitus explains the Germans’ view of women: "...they believe that there resides in women an element of holiness and a gift of prophecy..." (108).
"The goddess as an eternal spinner bestows life and ends it. The spindle was the insignia of the housewife, and would go with her to the grave. [...] In the old German rulebooks the spindle was also a symbol of the law" (Rüttner-Cova 75).26 "The place where girls and women gather to spin may become the site of the enactment of the female mysteries” (Motz 12).

The spindle, then, is meaningful on several levels; it represents a “good woman,” an industrious woman, and one who takes care of and provides for her family. Additionally, it shows that a girl/woman who can spin belongs socially to a larger group (e.g., the nation, the state, and the community). Not only is it evidence of her “goodness,” and a means to her livelihood, but it is a statement of her status as moving forward to womanhood.

The Well

The second object encountered on the journey through the underworld is the well. When she tells her stepmother that she has dropped her spindle into the well, she gets a rather stern response, and so she feels as though she has no choice but to jump into the well. The well is what leads each girl into Frau Holle’s realm.

Symbolically, the well can suggest various things. “The journey through the well symbolizes a time of separation, of isolation from outside influences, but something unknown intrudes, summoning us to the quest. The journey through the well as a journey into other-worldliness awakens in us ideas and fantasies, universally human urges that

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26 "Die Göttin als ewige Spinnerin teilt leben zu und löst leben auf. Die Spindel war Rangabzeichen der Hausfrau und würde ihr mit ins Grab gehen. [...] In den alten deutschen Rechtsbüchern ist die Spindel auch ein Rechtssymbol."
belong among the timeless needs” (Rüttner-Cova 35). The journey into an unknown world will test all of her previous experiences and knowledge.

The well and the water inside of it are particularly meaningful symbols for children.

The well, with its deep-set surface reminiscent of a watery mirror, is a frequently occurring symbol of the magical realm or land of souls. It is often equipped with feminine and motherly qualities, and is distinctly associated with birth. A popular belief says that small children come from the well. In Germany, these are the so-called Hollen ponds or Holle wells where the stork gets the children. (von Beit 36)

Thus, the well is also the source of new life, as well as the threshold between the earth and the underworld. It may be inhabited by well-spirits and well-gods. Of particular import here is that “the well as a sacred place of Holle is symbolic of the cycle of coming into being and passing away” (Rüttner-Cova 37).

It is clear that the well is connected closely to Frau Holle and in the story it foreshadows the eventual meeting. The purposeful jump into the well to retrieve her spindle is the first step toward the rebirth of the unfortunate but industrious “good girl”; at the end of the story we will see her success at her rebirth—riches and reward.

27 “Die Brunnenfahrt symbolisiert eine Zeit der Abgeschiedenheit, der Isolierung von Umwelteinflüssen, doch drängt Unbekanntes an, das zur Suche auffordert. Die Brunnenfahrt als Jenseitsreise weckt in uns Vorstellungen und Phantasien, die als allgemein menschliche Strebungen zu dem zeitlosen Bedürfnissen gehören.”

28 “Der Brunnen mit seinem tiefliegenden, wie ein dunkles Auge wirkenden Wasserspiegel ist ebenfalls ein häufig vorkommendes Symbol des magischen Reiches oder Seelenlandes. Er wird oft mit weiblich-mütterlichen Qualitäten ausgestattet, und deutlich hängen mit ihm Geburtsvorstellungen zusammen. Ein weit verbreiteter Glaube sagt aus, daß die kleinen Kinder aus einem Brunnen kommen. Es sind dies in Deutschland die sogenannten Hollenteich oder Hollenbrunnen, aus denen der Storch die Kinder holt.”

29 “... der Brunnen als heiliger Ort der Holle ist Symbol für den Kreislauf von Werden und Vergehen.”
The Oven

When the industrious girl finds herself in the underworld, she begins along the path that will eventually lead her to Frau Holle. She goes out in pursuit of her lost spindle, not yet knowing what she will encounter. Along the way, she meets an oven full of bread that pleads for her to take it out before it burns. The oven is intriguing to the young girl, and since she is diligent and responsible, she answers the oven’s plea and continues on her way.

Symbolically, the oven can be experienced “as a mother symbol, as the place where life originates. Our young fairy-tale woman follows the spindle through Holle’s realm and discovers the lot of her gender role: from spring to summer, from love’s awakening to fertility and ripeness, the cyclical path leads into the following phase of life” (Rüttner-Cova 46). By complying with the oven’s request, the good girl is showing how she can be trusted to complete a task. Additionally, the oven full of baking bread can also symbolize pregnancy—especially following, as it does, the symbol of menstruation.

The Apple Tree

The last object that the girl meets along her path to Frau Holle is the apple tree. Just as the oven made its plea, so does the apple tree. The full apple tree indicates the fall harvest season. It is important to tend and harvest the crop in order for the next season to be equally plentiful. The apple tree calls to the girl to shake it before all of the apples rot, testing her willingness to accept the journey to womanhood. The good girl complies with

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30 "Der Ofen wird als Muttersymbol, als Ort, wo leben entsteht, erlebt. Unsere junge Märchenfrau folgt der Spindel durch Holles Reich und erfährt das Los ihrer Geschlechtsrolle: vom Frühling zum Sommer, vom Liebeserwachen zu Furchtbarkeit und Reife, so führt und der zyklische Weg in die folgende Lebensphase.”
31 A “bun in the oven” is a slang term for describing someone being pregnant.
the apple tree's request, in accordance with her character and industrious nature. Rusch-Feja notes that the sensitivity and the sense of responsibility that the heroine demonstrates are positive qualities (26) that make her truly the heroine, the sole figure in the fairy tale with positive qualities (excluding Frau Holle). “These actions are symbolic of her motivation to accept responsibility and of ‘maturation’…” (Rusch-Feja 26).

The apple tree is significant in Germanic mythology. There it is the goddess Idun who guards the apple tree which is used to give the gods eternal youth (Davidson 30). Also, the world tree Yggdrasil is at the center of the universe that has roots extending into the realm of the Aesir gods, the frost-giants and the realm of the dead (Davidson 26). Because of its tall vertical shape, it symbolizes an upward surge, like the ladder or the mountain, and is looked upon as a link between the world of Heaven and that of Hell (the roots reach into the underworld of Hell; the trunk is the earthly link to the spreading foliage of Heaven) (Sill 204). Gertrude Sill notes that the tree in general represents the cosmos with its cyclical processes and its regenerative blooming (204). Here we see that the process of regenerative blooming echoes that of the rebirth and maturation of the good girl.

The tree’s ability to bear fruit also indicates its symbolic meaning (Sill 204). The apple fruit itself is a symbol of love and fertility, and is found in many traditions. “The apple plays an important role in many wedding traditions. It is also commonly used in the oracle of love. As young girls we peeled an apple on New Year’s Eve, [we] threw the peel over our right shoulder onto the ground. From the shape it landed in we then learned
the first letter of our future husband’s first name” (Rüttner-Cova 49).32

Eugen Drewermann and Ingritt Neuhaus also note the seasonal implications of the tale’s symbols: “... when Frau Holle’s feather bed is shaken out […] it is snowing on the Earth […]—that is, it becomes winter on Earth; the apple tree that wants to be harvested is certainly also to be understood as the symbol of a season, namely autumn, while the oven with the bread points to summer” (Drewermann and Neuhaus 25).33 Finally, the apple tree represents Frau Holle herself and her ability to give life (love) through the seasons; the fact that the apple tree encountered by the girls is full of fruit in need of plucking suggests again a test to ascertain if they are “ready” to accept their impending womanhood and the responsibilities incumbent therein.

Thus, there is more to each of these objects than their literal interpretation. Perhaps the oven full of bread and the heavy-laden apple tree are also meant to indicate passage of time of the girls’ journey. Clearly the girl is going through a rite of passage (namely the maturation process) on this journey which culminates in a rebirth; and clearly Frau Holle is the author of these processes.

Service to Frau Holle

As important as all of those tests are, their most important task is their service for Frau Holle. The industrious and kind girl’s first encounter with a positive female figure is

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33 “Am eindeutigsten ist das beim Aufschütteln der Federn des Bettlagers der Frau Holle: Es schneit auf Erden, während das geschieht—, das heißt, es wird auf Erden Winter; der Apfelbaum, der abgeerntet werden will, ist dann mit Sicherheit ebenfalls als das Symbol einer Jahreszeit, nämlich des Herbstes, zu verstehen, während der Backofen mit dem Brot auf den Sommer hinweist.”
with Frau Holle. Prior to meeting Frau Holle, the heroine’s only interactions have been with her unkind stepmother and equally negative stepsister. Frau Holle instructs her in how to shake her feather bed just right, so that the feathers fly, and teaches her how to accomplish other household duties. She is in service to Frau Holle for an indeterminate amount of time, that is to say, until she learns the tasks that are required of her in order to become an active member of society. After dutifully completing all the tasks that Frau Holle has for her, she tells Frau Holle that she is homesick. Frau Holle’s pleasure at this can be interpreted as her acknowledgment that the girl has performed the tasks to her satisfaction. The girl is ready to take what she has learned and apply it to her real life. The gold that Frau Holle rewards the industrious girl with facilitates her happy return to society. “Gold, both the metal and the color, appear in countless fairy tales, often symbolizing a positive quality…” (Ashliman 9). This is a sign that the girl has completed all of the tasks that she was assigned by Frau Holle; in short, she has matured.

As the good girl returns home, her retrieved spindle and the gold she has earned are outward signs of her beauty and newfound maturity. The industrious girl was always described as beautiful, but her beauty seems even more powerful due to the maturation process. Rusch-Feja notes that “…beauty is one of the major characteristics of the maturing or mature girl” (27).

The Ugly/Lazy Girl

It is now the stepsister’s turn to embark on the same quest, but with quite different results. To start with, in contrast to the good girl, the lazy girl sticks her finger into a thorn bush to make it bleed. That she must prick her finger to get blood demonstrates that
one can not command maturation (Mother Nature/Frau Holle) into action but rather must wait to be chosen. After covering the flax with blood, she drops the spindle into the well and jumps right in after it, seemingly without any careful consideration. She refuses to tend to the oven and refuses to shake the apple tree. In contrast to the good girl, the lazy girl is of service to Frau Holle for only a small amount of time. The lazy girl is deceptive in nature, evident in the ways in which she tries to fool Frau Holle. She tries to maneuver around the obstacles instead of persevering through them like the heroine. This shows that the lazy girl lacks depth and discipline and shows that she is only thinking about the reward. When she tells Frau Holle that she is ready to go home, Frau Holle shows her to the gate, and, as the judge of the lazy girl’s actions, covers her with pitch. At the end of the tale we see the lazy girl return to society without having gained any experience or knowledge. Instead of maturing and achieving the same destiny as her sister, she is marked with pitch for the rest of her life, carrying with her a scarlet letter of sorts, forced to suffer the consequences of her actions.

**Conclusion**

The industrious/good girl was clearly at the correct age for maturing,\(^{34}\) from the sign of her first menstruation, to her coming of age during her time in service with Frau Holle. However, the lazy/ugly girl was not at the correct age, even though she wanted so much to be like her sister that she tried to go through the maturation process just the

\(^{34}\) "...the maturation of the girl to woman is not developed into its fulfillment in marriage. Hence, there is a tendency apparent within the oral tradition to use the tale of the “Kind and the Unkind Girls” (AaTh 480) as an introduction to the tale of the substituted bride or to others in which the more complete maturation of the girls to women in marriage and the explicit destruction of the threatening evil is portrayed" (Rusch-Feja 180-181).
same.\textsuperscript{35} The fact that the stepsister thought she could force maturation through deception is evidence of her lack of readiness for maturity. Furthermore, as proof of this being a process of maturation, Steven Swann Jones notes that “the plot of the tale thus serves to illustrate the heroine’s developments from being an immature juvenile who lacks autonomy, authority and self-assurance to a mature woman who is admired, respected and emulated” (153). The separation from home along with the challenges that they face are indicative of rebirth and coming of age. It is the return of the girls into a different social status that can clearly be seen through their outward appearances (Jones 152).

In this tale, the heroine is not just thinking of herself but she is demonstrating how to love one’s fellow creatures. She is learning and showing how to think of the well-being of others (Jones 158). In giving to others, she is then rewarded. “The antagonist, in contrast, thinks only of herself and does not learn…” to demonstrate how to love others (Jones 158). It is clear that the actions demonstrated by the lazy girl are indicative of her inner character. The tale shows that “good returns good and evil returns evil, which verifies that the heroine is living in a just and meaningful world” (Jones 158). The heroine demonstrates a sense of humility and is subsequently blessed with gold as an outward sign of her good nature and worth. Her stepsister’s inability to show the same characteristics are seen through her own outward appearance, culminating at the end of the tale in a demonstration of justice (Jones 159). There is a satisfying sense of justice at

\textsuperscript{35} Just as the lazy girl is the anti-heroine to the industrious girl, the Step-Mother is the anti-heroine to Frau Holle. The step-mother shows a lack of maturity by forcing the young girl to begin a process that she is not yet ready for. Also, the Step-Mother is punished by her real daughter not becoming beautiful and laden with gold.
the end of the tale, as readers see that good prevails over evil and is ultimately richly rewarded.

It is noteworthy that the good girl exhibits all the qualities of a fairy tale hero. “Fairy tale protagonists typically have the least-favored position in a family: youngest son, youngest daughter, or stepchild” (Ashliman 45). Heroes in fairy tales stand out because of their ability to rise up from adversity and respond to challenges and emerge victorious. It is easy for the reader to identify with the hero because people see the resiliency and steadfast drive that the hero possesses, qualities that they also desire to have. The main character in this fairy tale does not go off and marry the man of her dreams. Instead she shows courage and other noble qualities. Unlike many of the popular fairy tales that American audiences are familiar with, *Frau Holle* stands out because of the lack of a male figure coming to rescue the “princess.” There is no one present to save the day or awaken her from a slumber. This is a major difference from the most well-known fairy tales of the Grimm brothers in the United States.  

This chapter has identified aspects of a specific fairy tale by bringing different analyses into focus. I have shown that this is a tale of maturation. When the good girl starts out on her journey, she is unsure of herself. During her journey through the underworld into Frau Holle’s realm we see the initial signs of maturation. By the end of each girl’s stay at Frau Holle’s house, it becomes clear that on one hand this is a tale of

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36 In his thesis, Warren Eldon Thornock researched the popularity of a select number of fairy tales by the brothers Grimm in both Germany and the United States. His study attempted to determine reasons why some of the fairy tales in the Grimm collection are rarely mentioned and almost unknown to children in the United States, while they are at the same time favorites in Germany. His study found that the difference between the German and American children who were given a questionnaire was the greatest with *Frau Holle*. In Germany it was the third most popular tale (at the time of the study in 1971) and in America its popularity was number 21 out of 27 (48).
rebirth and becoming a more valued member of society, and on the other hand, a tale of consequences and justice.

For a tale to have survived as long as *Frau Holle* has indicates that it fits all the functions of a good story, as mentioned in Chapter One. More than that, it also has a marvelous figure at its center. In the next chapter, the figure of Frau Holle will be discussed. She is well known for many things, and therefore has multiple existences. She continues her duty of punishing and rewarding well outside of the printed text. As will be shown, her roots lie in Germanic mythology and her symbolism lies deep in the heart of Germany.
Chapter 3

FRAU HOLLE IN GERMANIC MYTHOLOGY

Frau Holle is not only a character in a fairy tale, but she also exists in German culture. Fairy tale figures are often just that: fairy tale figures. Frau Holle appears not only on the written page, but also exists beyond the printed lines of a text. It is my objective to point out that the figure Frau Holle survives outside of the fairy tale. The character in the fairy tale has a mythological model. It is important to understand that the origins of Frau Holle are in mythology. The fairy tale had been transmitted orally, as stated in Chapter One, and by the time the fairy tale had become more popular through the work of the Grimm brothers, her mythological past had faded. The argument that I intend to put forward is that the Frau Holle of the fairy tale and the Frau Holle of mythology, if not identical, are connected.

I will explain in this chapter that the figure of Frau Holle can be traced back to Germanic mythology. The character of Frau Holle appears in many traditions, and of all the goddesses in Germanic myth, she is the one who has survived in tradition since the early centuries. In my opinion, there is no other figure in the fairy tale world that lives on in the culture like Frau Holle.

The objective of this chapter is to examine the figure of Frau Holle on several different levels. It is important to understand the names and origins of Frau Holle, where she appears outside of the fairytale, and in which regions she is best remembered. Her

37 An Amazon search done on the 29th of May, 2009 with Frau Holle as the subject uncovered 54 DVDs, 17 VHS tapes, 173 books, 46 items in the category of music, 16 MP3 downloads, 10 kitchen and household items, two games, two toys and one interactive software CD-ROM (www.amazon.de).
physical appearance is another point of interest, as it provides a greater sense of her being. The greatest impact that Frau Holle has on folklore and mythology is in the traditions associated with her. It is during the midwinter season that her celebrations take place. In old traditions she was most often associated with spinning. She is also closely related to the weather—specifically the dark and cold weather during the mid-winter season—and her ability to effect snowfall on the earth. Her mythological roots are also easily seen in ritualized traditions such as the tradition of the Twelve Nights and the Wild Hunt, which will be examined at the end of the chapter. Lastly, the relationship that Frau Holle has with other gods and goddesses in Germanic mythology, mainly Odin and Freyja, will be explored. Known throughout Germany, but especially in Hessen and Thuringia, Frau Holle has a reputation of being both kind and punitive. Her duality as explained in the chapter is significant to her popularity and diversity.

Background to Frau Holle: Names and Origins

Names

In his Deutsche Mythologie, Jacob Grimm says that the traditions surrounding Frau Holle “seem to be more widespread among the Hessians and Thuringians than any other tribe ... (221). Noting the different spellings of her name, he continues with the possibilities, including “…frau Holda (Hulda, Holle39, Hulle, frau Holl)…” (Mythologie 221). However, there is also another variant to the name of Frau Holle: in some areas

38 "Diese überlieferungen scheinen unter keinem deutschen stamm so verbreitet wie unter Hessen und Thüringern..."
39 "Holle from Hulda like Folle from Fulda" (Grimm, Mythologie footnote 2, 221).
40 “…frau Holda (Hulda, Holle, Hulle, frau Holl)...”
she goes by the name of Berchta (also known as Perchta) (Bächtold-Stäubli 1478). Grimm says, “A figure similar to Holda, or exactly the same but with varying names, appears in precisely those southern German areas where she is not found, in Swabia, in Alsace, in Switzerland, in Bavaria and Austria. She is called Frau Berchte...” (Grimm, Mythologie 226). Drewermann and Neuhaus make a similar claim:

Frau Holle is none other than the Germanic goddess Hulda (or Berchta). In her the figure of Mother Earth lives on, who can be found by descending through the well of the world into the underworld. As the Great Goddess she is also the queen of the heavens, whose bed-feathers fall to the earth as snow. In addition, she is the true mistress over life and death. (Drewermann and Neuhaus 27)

Her identity is similar to that of Holle, and she is associated with the Twelve Nights, the period between Christmas and New Years (Grimm, Mythologie 226).

Due to the multifaceted nature of this character, Frau Holle’s name has a degree of variance. It is important to understand more about the history of her name, and the tradition behind it.

41 “Perchta, auch Berchta...am ähnlichsten ist ihr Frau Holle (Holda oder Hulda), deren Gestalt ebenso reich und wandelbar ist.”
42 “Ein ähnliches wesen, wie Holda, oder ganz dasselbe, unter verschiedener benennung, erscheint gerade in den oberdeutschen gegenden, wo jene aufhört, in Schwaben, im Elsas, in der Schweiz, in Baiern und Österreich. Es heißt frau Berchte...”
43 “Die Frau Holle ist keine andere als die germanische Göttin Hulda (oder Berchta). In ihr lebt die Gestalt der Mutter Erde fort, zu der man gelangt, wenn man durch den Weltbrunnen in die Unterwelt hinabsteigt. Zugleich ist sie als die Große Göttin die Königin des Himmels, deren Bettfedern als Schnee zu Erde fallen. Zudem ist sie die eigentliche Herrin über Leben und Tod.”
44 Rütter-Cova says that “The variants in the sound of the name derive from linguistic differences among the Germanic peoples and clans and from differing stages of development. We can also encounter Holla as Frau Holda, [...] In southern Germany Berchta is more common, in central Germany the goddess was handed down more often as Holla” (70). “Die Varianten im Namenslaut gehen auf sprachliche Unterschiede zwischen den germanischen Völkern und Sippen und auf verschiedene Entwicklungsstufen zurück: Holla können wir auch als Frau Holda, Holda, Frau Holl, fraw Holt, Hulla, Hulda oder Huldre antreffen, Berchta ist sowohl Perchta, Perchtel als auch Peraha, Frau Berche und Bertha. Im Süden Deutschlands ist Berchta mehr verbreitet, in Mitteldeutschland ist die Göttin mehr als Holla überliefert.”
She tends to be called Frau Holda in central Germany and in some areas of Austria and in Siebenbürgen, and people elsewhere learned of her through the Grimm’s fairy tales. Frau Berchta is her counterpart in a large part of southern Germany and into Thuringia. Under the names of Frau Freen, Frien, Frick or Fru Gode or Fru Harke she appears in the northeast of Schleswig, in Pomerania and Mecklenburg down to the northern edge of the Harz Mountains, and under still other names elsewhere. She is also called the White Woman. (Meyer 424)

Despite the multiple variations in her name, “... she was always the same character” (Paetow 129). Making the case for Frau Holle’s Germanic origins is not as difficult as it may seem. She existed in the oral tradition as a goddess, and her traditions were later collected by the Grimm brothers as a part of the KHM. It is important to differentiate the two, because she was demoted from her goddess role in Germanic traditions after Christianity spread, turning her into the “other-world” character in the fairy tale. Small children can see themselves as the girls in the story, however there can be only one Frau Holle.

Origins

The earliest documented mention of Frau Holle was by the Burchard of Worms in the Decretorum libri XX (ca. 1000), where he mentions that she is a known figure


46 "Wohl wandelte sie im Volksmund durch viele Namen, immer aber blieb sie sich wesentreu."
(Ranke 160-161). Martin Luther mentions her in a number of writings in 1517 and again in the late 1520s (Wylie-Ernst 220-224) when writing on common superstitions regarding the mythological figure. “Martin Luther, the most prominent theologian of the era to have written on the subject, refers [...] to common superstitions about Hulda...” (Wylie-Ernst 220). His references to her are either metaphorical or folkloric in nature (Wylie-Ernst 222). Luther links purification rites and the conversion of hospitable gifts into gold and silver with three goddesses simultaneously: Herodias, Hulda and Venus (Wylie-Ernst 221).48 “The editors of Luther’s text define the figure of Frau Hulda as a “symbolic indication of a super-natural helper” (Wylie-Ernst 223). Martin Luther’s reference to her reveals the extent to which she belonged to the popular belief system (Wylie-Ernst 224).

Holle’s geographical origins lie in the heart of Germany. “Frau Holle is very well known in Hessen in particular, with the greatest degree of familiarity in precisely that Meissner region that is located within sight of Kassel, the place where the fairy tale was first written down” (Timm 326).49 In addition to this reference, Jacob Grimm states that “She loves dwelling in lakes and wells” (Deutsche Mythologie, 222).50 In the Meißner region there is a special place called the Frau Holle Teich, or Frau Holle Pond, where there is a statue dedicated to her. The Frau Holle Teich is found between the peaks of the Meißner Mountains, at an elevation of 620m. The pond, with many travelers flocking to

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47 “Frühe Zeugnisse. Die früheste Erwähnung der F.H. findet sich in den Dekretalien des Buchard von Worms (um 1000) in der Bemerkung, sie sei eine Gestalt...”
48 There are scholars who believe that Frau Holle is linked to the Virgin Mary (see Edgar A. List), however this argument is beyond the scope if this thesis.
49 “Und Frau Holle ist gerade in Hessen sehr bekannt, mit dem Bekanntheitsmaximum auf eben jenem Meißner, der in Sichtweite des ersten Aufzeichnungsортes des Märchens, Kassel, liegt.”
50 “Sie liebt den Aufenthalt in See und Brunnen.”
it, has been known by this name since 1724 and has stood as a memorial to the enduring saga of Frau Holle. Although it is small, it is the highest body of standing water in the Meißner Mountains.  

**Appearance**

There is a richness in descriptions of her not only in the fairytale itself, but also within folk belief and mythology. “Behind many local manifestations, we may recognize one basic form with vivid characteristics” (Motz 151). Those vivid characteristics are both positive and negative, depending on how she functions. Frau Holle’s administrations of justice as well as her punishments are present in the traditions that she is involved in.

“When sympathetic, she often appears as a beautiful young woman, swathed in white. When her role as judge of human beings requires that she punish or avenge, she, although quite often still associated with the color white, most often appears as an ugly somberly-clad hag or as a creature with animal characteristics” (Wylie-Ernst 137). She generally has a sharp nose, long teeth, and scraggly unkempt hair (Motz 156). Most often she wears either black or white. When being described in a positive light, mention of Frau Holle’s clothing is rarely made (Wylie-Ernst 139). Elsewhere, her clothing is described as being tattered and torn, grey and disheveled. Kurt Ranke, too, notes that “Frau Holle’s appearance is described in various ways in collections of legends” (160). Sometimes she is described as “…a beautiful, spectral figure in a long, white robe with a veil […]”

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52 “Das Aussehen der F.H. wird in den Sagensammlungen unterschiedlich geschildert.”
According to other legends, Frau Holle is a small, ugly woman with grey hair, burning eyes, a fiery mouth” (Ranke 160).\(^5^3\) Jacob Grimm adds: “He travelled with Holle,” is said of someone whose hair is messy and standing on end, and so children are frightened by her or her no less terrible followers (Mythologie, 223).\(^5^4\) This was seen in the fairy tale when the industrious girl first sees Frau Holle and is frightened. Her image in popular culture ranges from matronly or saintly to scary and frightening,\(^5^5\) representing either her punitive side or her rewarding side.

**Traditions**

Contemporary traditions are vital to an understanding of the importance and nature of the goddess, particularly her involvement in the lives of children, her ties to nature and the *Arbeitsverbot* (ban on work). To fully comprehend her importance, one must understand where her traditions are celebrated and what makes her so popular. Frau Holle is most active in the midwinter time, especially during the time immediately before and after Christmas. She is often active in the old tradition of spinning and also controls the snow. The *Kinderschreck* (bogeyman) aspect of her persona also furthers her duality with a scary side feared by children. In this way, her relationship to children is also multifaceted. Holle is an active participant in many traditions that will be explained here. As I said above, superstitious beliefs by people involving Holle were and still are mostly concentrated in Hessen, Westphalia, Saxony and Thuringia.

\(^5^3\) “Sie ist ein schönes, geisterhaftes Wesen in einem langen, weißen Gewand mit einem Schleier.[…] Nach Schilderungen in anderen Sagen ist F.H. eine kleine häßliche Frau mit grauen Haaren, glühenden Augen, einem feurigen Mund.”

\(^5^4\) “Er ist mit der Holle gefahren’ heißt es von einem, dessen haar sich unordentlich wirren und sträuben, und so werden die kinder mit ihr oder mit ihrem nicht weniger greulichen gefolge geschreckt.”

\(^5^5\) A Google image search of “Frau Holle” on August 10, 2009 returned approximately 144,000 images.
As discussed in the previous chapter regarding the symbolism of the well, it is believed that Frau Holle delivers newborns from the well (Timm 137). It is also said that when babies die before baptism, Frau Holle takes them and mothers them. She transforms them into happy children who help her with the plowing and watering of the soil (Rüttner-Cova 73). In folk belief it is said that all unbaptized babies return here to Holle, and she incorporates them into her entourage.

Lundell notes that Frau Holle is directly tied to nature (Fairy Tale Mothers 125). Holle is specifically and most importantly active in the midwinter season and is especially tied to the weather, and therefore is seen as the controlling goddess of snow. In the long and dreary nights of winter, when the days are long and grey, feelings of gloom are abundant. It is in this setting, when families are gathered by the fire, that stories of folk belief and mythology are told. When she shakes her pillows, it causes snow to fall, as we saw in the fairy tale. In Hessen even today people say that Frau Holle is making her feather bed when it snows. Throughout Germany, people are familiar with this folk belief surrounding Frau Holle. “Here [in Germany] every child knows if its snowing that Holle is shaking her pillows. The first snowfall of the year brings lots of joy and fun for the children. That this event is associated with Frau Holle increases her popularity with the children” (Rüttner-Cova 56). Nearly any folkloric reference in which Holle is listed

56 “...[dass Frau Holle] aus ihrem Brunnen die neugeborenen Kinder bringe...”
57 “Zu Holle, der Wasserfrau, kehren die Toten heim. Im Volksglauben heisst es, dass alle ungetauften Kinder zu Holle zurückkehren. Sie und die Verstorbenen gehören auch in Hollas Gefolge.”
58 KHM 24 Ausgabe letzter Hand 1857- “Darum sagt man in Hessen, wenn es schneit, die Frau Holle macht ihr Bett.”
will include at least one citation concerning the connection between snow and its production, and the proper making of her feather bed.

Her connection to the real world and to traditions of long ago reinforces her position as a goddess. Her traditions are not concentrated in a single area and are furthered by her ability to cross between the various environments of the natural world. Frau Holle is seen as an intermediary “between men and natural forces” (Bottigheimer, Submerged 144). The long nights of winter, the grey days with no sunlight, storms and snow flurries give the Winter Goddess mysterious traits. “As bride of the wind, the storm’s flashes of lightning reveal the storm woman’s flying and tangled strands of hair as the Holle braid” (Rüttner-Cova 103).60 This description of Frau Holle shows how the physical traits of the goddess are also intertwined with nature.

Frau Holle is also associated with the observance of a day of rest, when no work is to be done. “The ban on work ensures nature a day of rest; it fosters reflection and gratitude toward the eternally creative power. Love, gratitude and reverence toward the Magna Mater are expressed in the sanctification of the Sabbath, which we celebrated as Holle Day” (Rüttner-Cova 157-158).61 Consequently, the work that had to be done was to be completed on the days leading up to the day of rest. Most of the work that had to be done, among other household duties that housewives had to perform, was spinning; herein lies much of the real folk belief that surrounds Frau Holle.

Spinning was one of the ways that women could provide for their families. This

60 “Als Windsbraut werden in dem Zucken der Blitze im Sturm die fliegenden und wirren Haarsträhnen der Sturmfrau als Hollenzopf erblickt.”

feminine activity was considered one of women’s most important tasks. From youth to old age women would work in the spinning room, or Spinnstube, and an entire culture surrounded what went on inside. Frau Holle’s role in the Spinnstube is significant, for she is known as the patroness of spinners in Germany. “Holla is the mistress of the spinners. In the spinning rooms it is her rules that are adhered to and abided by. The goddess controls the observance of breaks from working on her holidays and on her holy Saturdays. She punishes the sinners and generously rewards the hardworking, poor spinners” (Rüttner-Cova 75). As the overseer of the spinning room, Frau Holle checks the diligence of the spinners that she rewards and punishes. If the required amount of flax isn’t spun, the spinner has to suffer the wrath of Frau Holle. One of the things that she does to punish the lazy is to take the flax that is not spun by the time the Arbeitsverbot (ban on working) arrives and spin it into a web that cannot be untangled (Rüttner-Cova 103). “This tangled yarn as well as Holle’s shaggy winter hair are called Holle braids. The common tradition of baking Christmas bread in the form of a braid can be traced to a pre-Christian offering to the dead in the Holla cult” (Rüttner-Cova 103).

Beyond the Spinnstube, Frau Holle is more generally a figure of reward and punishment to all children. Children were, and still are, threatened that if their toys are not picked up and if they don’t do what they are told, Frau Holle is going to come and punish them. Among folk belief, one of Frau Holla’s variants, Frau Berchta, is an

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63 “Eine ihrer Strafen ist die, dass sie das Gespinst der Faulen durcheinander bringt.”

64 “Diese verworrene Gespinst sowie Hollas struppiges Winterhaar heissen Hollenzopf. Der häufige Brauch an Weihnachten ein Weihnachtsbrot in der Form eines Zopfes, den Hollenzopf, zu backen, wird auf ein vorchristliches Totenopfer im Holla-Kult zurückgeführt.”
example of the harsher side of the figure. She appears as a bogeyman to naughty children to scare and punish them (Rumpf, *Spinnstubenfrauen*, 220).65

It must not be forgotten that while Frau Holle does have a negative side, she also has a very kind and warm side. Abiding by the simple tasks that she assigns will result in a great reward. “A child, for example, who has learned from fairy stories to believe, what at first seemed a repulsive, threatening figure can magically change into a most helpful friend…” (Bettelheim 50). Frightening and threatening, Frau Holle punishes when duties are not fulfilled.

It happened in the old days, and still today it is not forgotten in Hessen and in southern Hannover, that Frau Holle would come to the villages and houses during Christmas time. She handed out her gifts, the fruits of the earth and her garden, to the children. There were nuts and apples and sweet cakes aplenty. However, for bad children she had the switch. She would go from house to house, rewarding and punishing according to each child’s behavior. (Paetow 138)66

She is fair and just, and acts accordingly.

In the fairy tale, we saw how Frau Holle rewarded on merit and punished slothfulness. This is another manifestation of her role as judge. The power that she represents in the mythology connects her not only to children, but also to adults through

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65 “Diese Spinnstubenfrau Bercht, Berscht, Perchta oder Quatemberca, die nach dem Rechten sieht und die Faulen und Säumigen straft oder diejenigen, die das Arbeitsverbot an Feiertagen oder Festtagen mißachten, wird so zu einer Schreckgestalt und spielt schließlich mehr und mehr auch die Rolle eines Kinderschrecks.”

the *Spinnstube*.

The durability of the appellations, "Mother Goose," "Mother Bunch," "Frau Holle," and their pictorial representations suggest how deeply embedded in our cultural consciousness are the intricately woven threads that bind together the concept of wisdom presiding over the hearth, the art of spinning literally and figuratively, and the imaginative telling of cultural truths through fairy tales as powers vested in the hands, voices, and domestic province of women. (Rowe 68)

From Frau Holle we learn that all of our routines are a part of her endless teaching.

**Duality**

The dual aspects of the character and appearance of Frau Holle are part of the nature of the goddess, both within the fairy tale and outside of it. She rewards the diligent work done by the "good" girl, and punishes the laziness of the "bad" girl. It is the good and bad, rewarding and punishing sides of Frau Holle that make her character so diverse.

Frau Holle, too, has a witch aspect, a deadly side that she turns on the Pechmarie. In one variant the girl even passes through a gate of misfortune into a dwelling of fog with snakes and toads, or ends up in swamp water. Thus the archetype of the Great Mother appears again clearly as Mother of Death, a gigantic black-white woman with the double aspect characteristic of these phenomena. (von Beit 166)\(^{67}\)

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When what she asks for is done properly, she rewards those deeds with good fortune. However, she has an equally punitive side that emerges when what she asks is not completed. Her diversity allows her persona to be adaptable and be relevant in more than one area of tradition.

Mythology

Frau Holle’s involvement in tradition goes hand in hand with her history in Germanic mythology, particularly with notions of the underworld. Already mentioned is the time when Holle is most active, in mid-winter, and in particular the Twelve Nights. During this time, after Christmas up until Epiphany, Frau Holle is still closely associated with spinners, and continues on her path through the lands. On the calendar, the Twelve Nights fall between the 25th of December and the 6th of January, and the Twelfth Night is “the evening before the twelfth day (Epiphany) after Christmas...” (Livingstone, “Twelfth Night”). These days are the crossover between the old and new years, and these twelve days are therefore simply known as “between the years” or “zwischen den Jahren” (Rüttner-Cova 119). “According to folk belief, she appeared especially during the Twelve Nights surrounding the turn of the year, sometimes also on certain other days. In particular she checked whether the work in the spinning rooms had been diligent, and that now there was no spinning and certain simple holiday foods were

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68 I suggest that the stark contrast between the two girls in the fairy tale represents and is a manifestation of Frau Holle’s own duality.
69 “Epiphany occurs on the 6th of January, marking the end of the Christmas season. It is one of the three principal festival days of the Christian Church. Epiphany commemorates the first manifestation of the Lord Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, in the persons of the Magi, and the manifestations of his divinity, as it occurred at his baptism in the Jordan River and at his first miracle at Cana in Galilee” (Encyclopedia Britannica, 648).
If a spinner is lazy, she ignites her distaff or soils it (Grimm, *Mythologie* 223).

It is during the Twelve Nights that the Wild Hunt takes place. Rüttner-Cova’s extensive work on Holle’s presence during the Twelve Nights describes her involvement with rich detail. She notes that during this time, Frau Holle is underway with her wild horde. As the bride of the wind she romps through the air, drives through fireplaces, shakes houses and trees and provokes all kinds of fantasies with her wild doings (120).

The nights between 25 December and 6 January are called the “Twelve Nights” or “Twelfth Tide” (*Die zwölf Rauhnächte* or *Rauchnächte* or *die stillen zwölff Tage*), when it was, and in some cases still is, believed that spirits are at large taking part in their “Wild Hunt” (*Wilde Jagd*) when they can haunt the living. The German name [*Rauchnächte*] comes from the custom of burning incense on the altars in church and also in homes and stables to drive out the spirits. (Russ 32-33)

Frau Holle’s retreat from the scene coincides with the end of the midwinter and Christmas seasons.

Eugen Mogt points to Frau Holle as one of the leaders of the Wild Hunt along with its traditional Scandinavian leader Odin:

Like Wodan, she too rode through the air, most especially during the time when the souls of the dead were about, during the Twelve Nights. Throughout central

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70 "Nach dem Volksglauben erschien sie vor allem in den Zwölf Nächten beiderseits der Jahreswende, manchmal auch an gewissen anderen Tagen. Sie überprüfte dann speziell, ob in den Spinnstuben bis dahin fleißig gearbeitet worden war, jetzt aber Spinnruhe herrschte und bestimmte einfache Festspeisn gegessen wurden."

71 "... faulen spinnerinnen zündet sie den rocken an oder besudelt ihn."
Germany she appears at the head of the specters from the underworld as Frau Holde or Holle, who tangles the yarn of lazy spinners and punishes them, rewards good children, punishes bad, and who lives in mountains and ponds or lakes like the dead. (88)

As Holle rides through the land of the people at the turn of the year it is believed that she brings fertility to the farmer’s crops. “Many superstitions have arisen as to how one can best protect oneself from these spirits, mostly involving smoke (hence the name Rauhnächte or Rauchnächte [Smoke Nights]), loud noises, making signs of the cross or wearing grotesque costumes. In some districts houses were kept locked during the ‘Wild Hunt’ and no unnecessary work was done” (Russ 33). It was thought that the noise frightened away evil spirits at this time, and in return for their good behavior, the children are given sweets, fruits, nuts or money.

Kveldulf Hagen Gundarsson describes the Wild Hunt in detail. He says that “when the winter winds blow and the Yule fires are lit, from the north of Scandinavia down to Switzerland, it is best to stay indoors, safely shut away from the dark forest paths and the wild heaths.” There is a “rustling through the tops of the trees,” and the sounds of barking dogs fill the air. Then “the host of wild souls sweep down, fire flashing from the eyes of the black hounds and from the hooves of the black horses” (Gundarsson). This is the Wild Hunt of Germanic folklore.

72 “Wie Wodan, fuhr auch sie durch die Lüfte und ganz besonders in der Zeit, da die Seelen der Toten ihr Wesen trieben, während der Zwölfnächte. So begegnet sie in ganz Mitteldeutschland an der Spitze der Holden d.h. der Unterirdischen als Frau Holde oder Holle, die faulen Spinnerinnen das Garn verwirrt und sie bestraft, die gute Kinder belohnt, böse bestraft, die wie die Abgeschiedenen in Bergen und Teichen oder Seen wohnt.”
The Wild Hunt is known by many names—Wutan’s or Wult’s Army in the southern part of Germany, the family of Harlequin in France, the Oskorei in Norway, Odensjakt in Denmark and Sweden—but the basic description is always much the same. The identity of the leader of the Wild Hunt varies; however, it is often identified with a historical or legendary figure. Gundarsson describes a variant of the legend of the Wild Hunt which is associated with the female Perchte/Holda/Holle (in Germany) or Frien/Freki/Frik/Freja (in Sweden and northern Germany). Unlike a majority of the Scandinavian stories where Odin leads the Wild Hunt, in Germany Perchte or Holda leads a train of souls. In any case, the furious host is always a peril—sometimes fatal—to the human being who gets in its way.

But along with the evil spirits, the Nordic Julburschen [Yule lads], the deities Wodan or Berchtold also come to visit with the furious host whose soft rustling heralds a good year, but whose raging heralds war. [...] But just before the holiday, when the spindle must rest, the diligent spinners spun the entire night through, the All Night Spin, until all distaffs were empty, and they set the table with abundant food. For now the goddess Berchta came with the Schrätlein or Holda to oversee the spinning and punish the lazy, and then refresh themselves with the food. It is possible that the Anglo-Saxons called Christmas Modraniht—the Night of the Mother—after the visit of these maternal deities, since it would

73 Gundarsson notes: "A variant form of the legend is that associated with the female Perchte/Holda/Holle (in Germany) or Frien/Freki/Frik/Freja (Sweden, Northern Germany). Like the masculine figures [Wodan, Odin or Wod] discussed above, Perchte or Holda leads a train of souls" (no page numbers given). It should be mentioned that Odin and Wodan and variations thereof are one in the same Germanic god.
be difficult to see it as the mother night of all the coming nights of the New Year. (Meyer 328)

The duality of Holle was present in the folk belief of women especially. Since the women were the spinners, it was their responsibility to observe the spinning ban, and to make sure that their work was done on time. The women knew that they needed to spin all of their flax in order to please Frau Holle. The fear of punishment may have motivated the women to spin all of their flax, but they also knew that Frau Holle would give a generous reward for being diligent and industrious.

**Relationship to other Mythological Figures**

There is a connection between many of the mythological figures that have been discussed in this work and Frau Holle. The similarities between Frau Holle and other major figures in Germanic mythology should not be overlooked. Frau Holle is linked with many of the most forceful figures of Germanic mythology, including Odin, with whom she is associated during the Wild Hunt. Also, Frau Holle is known for protecting animals, with cats being her favorite. This is where Frau Holle’s similarity to Freyja is evident (Bächtold-Stäubli 1483). In the *Prose Edda: Tales From Norse Mythology*, Snorri Sturluson calls Freyja “… the most renowned of the goddesses [in Norse...
mythology]" (53) and furthering the connection between Freyja and Frau Holle, he says that “when she [Freyja] goes on a journey she sits in a chariot drawn by two cats” (53). Frau Holle is also known for her protection of animals, particularly cats. In this respect, Frau Holle bears a resemblance to the goddess Freyja. Along with her similarity as patroness of cats, Frau Holle also resembles Freyja in her role as the controller of the snow. “...[A]nd just as our ancestors saw the goddess Freya as creator of the glistening snow, so Frau Holle appears in folk legend as the celestial weather woman and snow fairy” (Paetow 129). Between the connection with the animals and the myths surrounding the weather, it can be said that there are also parallels between Freyja in Norse mythology and Frau Holle in Germanic mythology. “Nineteenth-century research on myth generally establishes that the Germanic goddesses Freyja, Frouwa, Holla and Berchta usually differ only in name” (Rüttner-Cova 70).

In addition to Frau Holle’s similarity to Freyja, there are also parallels between Frau Holle and the Germanic gods Odin and Thor. Her ability to affect the weather and make it snow upon the earth is similar to Thor’s ability to affect the rain. “She causes the snow as Donar does the rain” (Grimm, Mythologie 222). Hedwig von Beit also mentions her similarity to the goddess Frigg: “So, for example, in Frau Holle [...], it is the spindle that pulls the girl down into the well to Frau Holle, who is one manifestation

77 "...und so wie unseren Vorfahren die Göttin Freya als Erzeugerin des glänzenden Schnees galt, also erscheint Frau Holle auch überirdisch als Wetterfrau und Schneeffee in der Volkssage."
78 "Die Mythenforschung des 19. Jahrhunderts weist allgemein nach, dass sich die germanischen Göttinnen Freyja, Frouwa, Holla und Berchta meist nur vom Namen her unterschieden."
79 "Sie erregt den Schnee wie Donar den Regen."
of the Germanic first mother Frigg” (126). This shows a link between Frau Holle’s mythological origins and the fairy tale.

Much of what has already been said of Frau Holle, for example, that she is the life-giving and life-taking shepherd of souls, and that the souls of unbaptized babies go to her for nurturing and upbringing is also mentioned by Grimm. He notes: “According to widespread folk belief, the souls of children who died unbaptized were taken up into the raging host; since they weren’t Christian, they remained pagan and fell to the pagan gods Wuotan or Hulda” (Mythologie, 223).81 Frau Holle’s multiple existences, within the fairy tale and outside of it, further her popularity, and her connection to very popular gods in Norse belief enhances her image in Germanic mythology.

In this thesis, the central figure is Frau Holle. Through her association with folklore and mythology, the figure was first legitimized in the eyes of the people of the land, coming from the oral tradition and finally resulting in the mass production of her life on paper. For many centuries Frau Holle was a figure of the sagas, and similar views came from folk belief, before she was integrated into the structure of the fairy tale Aarne-Thompson 480. “Folktales are not mere creatures of chance. They exist in time and space, and they are affected by the nature of the land where they are current, by the linguistic and social contacts of its people, and by the lapse of the years and their accompanying historic changes” (Thompson 113). From her mythological origins, Frau Holle clearly plays a major role in folk belief and tradition. Frau Holle did not suddenly

80 “So wird z.B. in Frau Holle (KHM Bd. I Nr. 24) das Mädchen gerade von der Spindel gleichsam in den Brunnen hinabgezogen zu Frau Holle, die eine Erscheinungsform der germanischen Urgemutter Frigg ist.”
81 “In das wütende heer wurden aber nach dem weit verbreiteten volksglauben die seelen der ungetauft sterbenden kinder aufgenommen, da sie keine Christen wurden, blieben sie heidnisch und fielen heidnischen göttern zu, Wuotan oder Hulda.”
appear to fill the void of a mother figure in folk belief. Her figure has a long and rich existence prior to the fairy tale and continues in the popular tradition outside of the fairy tale.

The question that now needs to be addressed is this: how much of her rich origins in myth and legend is evident in her role in the fairy tale? There are many instances where the figure in the fairy tale parallels the mythological figure. First, there is the matter of her appearance. In mythology she is often described in great detail: an ugly hag with tattered clothing, long teeth, burning eyes and unkempt hair—all in keeping with her frightening or punitive function. More rarely, she is a “beautiful, spectral figure in a long, white robe with a veil” (Ranke 150), but her clothing is usually not mentioned when she is being described in a positive light (Wylie-Ernst 139). In the fairy tale, however, we learn only that she is old and has long teeth. The good girl is initially frightened of her, but quickly discovers her kindness and generosity. The storyteller was thus very selective in the way that she described Frau Holle to the Grimms: Frau Holle was only merely frightening, but very kind—though not at all beautiful. This is a much tamer Frau Holle than the one in mythology—just ugly enough to instill a little fear, but still endowed with magical powers to reward and punish. Thus, the fearsomeness of her visage in the fairy tale does not signify her punitive function as neatly as it can in mythology—although it certainly does for the lazy girl.

In general, though, the duality in her appearance is a function of the duality of the role she plays, as punisher or rewarder. Just as diligent spinners are rewarded when their distaff of flax is spun by the designated time in mythology, so the good girl in the tale is
diligent in spinning and ultimately rewarded. Conversely, the lazy girl is punished for her disobedient ways, which parallels the mythological threat that Frau Holle poses to those who disobey the Arbeitsverbot. It is Frau Holle’s duality—her constant ability to see things in black and white, right and wrong and just and unjust—that makes her a useful figure in both the myth and fairy tale. The aspect of fear is, however, represented to a much lesser degree in the fairy tale, where the harshness of the mythological figure and the rigidness of her character do not come through as strongly.

Further, the image of the full, ripe apple tree in the fairy tale is a manifestation of Frau Holle’s influence in mythology on the crops, and more importantly, fertility. Perhaps the most important link between the fairy tale figure and the mythological figure is her influence on the seasons. The girls each receive specific instructions from Frau Holle in the fairy tale on how to properly shake her feather pillows until the feathers fly. It is at this point in the fairy tale where the Grimm brothers make an explicit remark about the figure in popular tradition. In Hessen it is said that when it is snowing, Frau Holle is shaking her feather bed. This is a prominent reference to the mythological figure as the maker of snow. Also important here is the aspect of Frau Holle inviting each of the girls into her home, thus taking each of the girls into her care. This echoes her welcome of unbaptized babies into her entourage in mythological tradition.

What keeps Frau Holle at the center of the Germanic culture is the “dynamic cross influences between literary and oral traditions...” (Wylie-Ernst 281). Crossing over from the fairy tale, Frau Holle has a life of her own and is active within the German culture. The most important point is that she is still known today. She hasn’t become an irrelevant
part of the past. As shown throughout this chapter, her popularity has been maintained for centuries. From the *Frau Holle Teich* to controlling the snow and to her association with the Twelve Nights, she transcends and merges the gap between the fantasy world and society.
Chapter 4

CONCLUSION

Once upon a time there was a mythological figure known variously as Frau Holda, Hulda, Hulle, Holl or Holle; whom in Germany they eventually came to call Frau Holle. She was and is still well known as the maker of snow, for when it snows it is oft said that Frau Holle is shaking her feather pillows. Frau Holle is mainly known through the folk tale of the same name, *Frau Holle*, which is a story of two girls (one industrious, one lazy) who embark on identical but separate journeys to maturity; one girl is ultimately successful the other is not. Frau Holle's mythical roots can be seen in the folk tale. This thesis has endeavored to provide an analysis of Frau Holle as a tale which serves to teach its readers something as well as to link the folktale to the mythological figure.

The inspiration for this thesis came from reading the fairy tale *Frau Holle*, as it is known in the Grimm brothers' *KHM*. It was the Grimm brothers who founded the science of folklore, and their stories have become the most widely read collection of fairy tales ever written. "Fairy tales, whether told orally or composed on paper, are characterized by fantasy and magic" (Ashliman 187) and are distinguished from mythology in that the latter “… is a sacred narrative explaining how the world and man came to be in their present form” (Dundes, *Sacred Narratives*, 1). The figure of Frau Holle probably originates from the Meißner region in Hessen and others from Thuringia. The mythology surrounding Frau Holle provides clues that suggest a close connection between Frau Holle and Berchta.
As the analysis of the fairytale shows, *Frau Holle* is rich in symbolic undertones. Looking at the fairy tale as a series of encounters, there are four objects (the spindle, well, oven, and apple tree) which serve to guide the girls along the path of maturation. Each of the challenges that the girls face provides an opportunity for them to encounter a magical object, and to either comply with or refuse what is asked of them. I found that the industrious girl in the fairy tale was on a journey of maturation, and because of her willingness to serve Frau Holle she was rewarded with gold. She demonstrates a sense of humility and kindness, and is subsequently blessed with gold as an outward sign of her good nature and worth. She then returns home a valuable member of society, having fully matured.

The lazy girl duplicated the industrious girl’s journey to maturation but was unsuccessful. By refusing to provide the needed assistance to the oven and apple tree and then by not helping Frau Holle, she is quite the opposite of the heroine. Instead of being showered with gold, Frau Holle takes her to the gate and showers her with pitch which stays on her forever as punishment for not completing the tasks diligently. Her character thus becomes visible in her outward appearance. It was shown that each of the girls was presented with exactly the same circumstances, and depending on the responses of each girl, the process of maturation was either successful or not. There is a satisfying sense of justice at the end of the tale, as readers see that good prevails over evil and is ultimately richly rewarded.

One might question the extent to which is the maturation process is the identifying mark of the two girls in the fairy tale. Could it simply be that each of the girls
is staying true to character? Is it really maturing when one is given a set of trials and is successful when one was already successful in the first place? The fairy tale presents us with two parallel experiences. Each of the girls had the same circumstances, outside of the industrious girl's mistreatment by her stepmother. It is also possible that despite her "good" girl nature, the industrious girl could have still completed all of her tasks, gotten a reward, and not matured at all. Similarly, if she was "good" from the beginning, how much can she be said to have matured? However, it is the presence of each of the challenges that are before her and what those mean symbolically for her that define the maturation. It is possible, though, that the lazy girl was lazy by nature, rather than out of immaturity.

The figure Frau Holle in the fairy tale played the role of judge, but can also be seen as a mother figure. The contrast between Frau Holle and the stepmother is similar to the contrast between the industrious girl and the lazy girl. In the fairy tale it is Frau Holle who distinguishes between good and bad actions, and decides what the appropriate compensation or consequence should be. This is where the connection begins with the mythological figure. It is Frau Holle's duality, the generous and punitive side of the mythological figure, which is represented in the fairy tale—albeit to a lesser degree than in the mythology.

The mythological figure Frau Holle existed in the oral tradition long before her characterization in the fairy tale. It was through the folk belief system and the traditions that surrounded her that Frau Holle gained her popularity. This mythological figure, who originated in Hessen and Thuringia, is the basis for the fairy tale. She played a major role
in folk belief, and was a prominent figure in the old Germanic culture. It is exactly her ability to transcend the written page that makes this figure so extraordinary. The mythological figure Frau Holle is firmly planted in the traditions of culture, allowing her to cross over from the mythological world to the written and mass-produced page of the fairy tale as the culture of myth receded, thus preserving the figure in people’s minds.

Recommendations for Future Research

The mythology surrounding Frau Holle is very intriguing. During my research I found quite a bit of information on the variant of Frau Holle named Berchta or Perchta. It is unclear to me at this time whether or not the figure Frau Holle and the figure Frau Berchta or Frau Perchta are the same entity. I believe it to be worthwhile to do an extensive study on these figures, by visiting the places where these figures are the most prominent. I have found some research that suggests that Frau Berchta and Perchta are the southern German and Austrian/Tyrolean variants of Frau Holle. Future research may shed further light on the mysteries surrounding these two figures. There are many rituals and festivals surrounding Frau Perchta, and in my opinion one of the only ways to find out more information about these mysterious figures is to go to the place where they are most prominent in the folk culture.

Additionally, there have been studies done specifically based upon the Tale Type Index, including Warren E. Roberts’ study, The Tale of the Kind and the Unkind Girls: AA-TH 480 and Related Tales. I think it would be a great contribution to the research and study of the fairy tale if a study were done on the tales most comparable to Frau Holle. The classification system according to Aarne and Thompson is already available (as
mentioned in Chapter One); however there are plenty of tales that are less similar to *Frau Holle*. I think it would be interesting to take the most similar stories and compare them to *Frau Holle*. In *The Folktale*, Stith Thompson mentions fairy tales from other countries that are “possibly to be considered a special variation of *Frau Holle* [the kind and the unkind girl story] …” (126). Those are the “Basque, French, Danish and Swedish” versions (126). It would be interesting to compare and contrast the appearance, traditions and the character of *Frau Holle* in these variants.

Fairy tales are inherent in our lives to the point where we may not even notice their effects on our everyday lives—mundane or otherwise. They provide us with examples of good and bad behavior, which contribute to our cultural background. Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm undoubtedly sensed the important function that folk and fairy tales had in society, given how meticulously they collected them. The lessons associated with *Frau Holle*, however, extend well beyond the fairy tale. We have seen her origins in Germanic mythology and how she permeates cultural traditions. This study is thus integral in understanding the link between the past and present that *Frau Holle* represents in her ongoing function in Germanic culture.
APPENDIX

The complete tale is reproduced below, as it exists in the 1857 version of the *KHM* (133-136).

Eine Witwe hatte zwei Töchter, davon war die eine schön und fleißig, die andere häßlich und faul. Sie hatte aber die häßliche und faule, weil sie ihre rechte Tochter war, viel lieber, und die andere mußte alle Arbeit tun und der Aschenputtel im Hause sein. Das arme Mädchen mußte sich täglich auf die große Straße bei einem Brunnen setzen und mußte so viel spinnen, daß ihm das Blut aus den Fingern sprang. Nun trug es sich zu, daß die Spule einmal ganz blutig war, da bückte es sich damit in den Brunnen und wollte sie abwaschen; sie sprang ihm aber aus der Hand und fiel hinab. Es weinte, lief zur Stiefmutter und erzählte ihr das Unglück. Sie schalt es aber so heftig und war so unbarmherzig, daß sie sprach: "Hast du die Spule hinunterfallen lassen, so hol sie auch wieder herauf." Da ging das Mädchen zu dem Brunnen zurück und wußte nicht, was es anfangen sollte; und in seiner Herzensangst sprang es in den Brunnen hinein, um die Spule zu holen. Es verlor die Besinnung, und als es erwachte und wieder zu sich selber kam, war es auf einer schönen Wiese, wo die Sonne schien und vieltausend Blumen standen. Auf dieser Wiese ging es fort und kam zu einem Backofen, der war voller Brot; das Brot aber rief: "Ach, zieh mich raus, zieh mich raus, sonst verbrenne ich: ich bin schon längst ausgebacken." Da trat es herzu und holte mit dem Brotschieber alles nacheinander heraus. Danach ging es weiter und kam zu einem Baum, der hing voll Äpfel, und rief ihm zu: "Ach, schüttel mich, schüttel mich, wir Äpfel sind alle miteinander reif." Da schüttelte es den Baum, daß die Äpfel fielen, als regneten sie, und schüttelte, bis keiner

Die Frau Holle sagte: „Es gefällt mir, daß du wieder nach Haus verlangst, und weil du mir so treu gedient hast, so will ich dich selbst wieder hinaufbringen.” Sie nahm es darauf bei der Hand und führte es vor ein großes Tor. Das Tor ward aufgetan, und wie das Mädchen gerade darunter stand, fiel ein gewaltiger Goldregen, und alles Gold blieb an ihm hängen, so daß es über und über davon bedeckt war. „Das sollst du haben, weil du so fleißig gewesen bist,” sprach die Frau Holle und gab ihm auch die Spule wieder, die
ihm in den Brunnen gefallen war. Darauf ward das Tor verschlossen, und das Mädchen befand sich oben auf der Welt, nicht weit von seiner Mutter Haus; und als es in den Hof kam, saß der Hahn auf dem Brunnen und rief:

"Kikeriki, Unsere goldene Jungfrau ist wieder hie."

Da ging es hinein zu seiner Mutter, und weil es so mit Gold bedeckt ankam, ward es von ihr und der Schwester gut aufgenommen. Das Mädchen erzählte alles, was ihm begegnet war, und als die Mutter hörte, wie es zu dem großen Reichtum gekommen war, wollte sie der andern, häßlichen und faulen Tochter gerne dasselbe Glück verschaffen. Sie mußte sich an den Brunnen setzen und spinnen; und damit ihre Spule blutig ward, stach sie sich in die Finger und stieß sich die Hand in die Dornhecke. Dann warf sie die Spule in den Brunnen und sprang selber hinein. Sie kam, wie die andere, auf die schöne Wiese und ging auf demselben Pfade weiter. Als sie zu dem Backofen gelangte, schrie das Brot wieder: "Ach, zieh mich raus, zieh mich raus, sonst verbrenn ich, ich bin schon längst ausgebacken." Die Faule aber antwortete: "Da hätt ich Lust, mich schmutzig zu machen," und ging fort. Bald kam sie zu dem Apfelbaum, der rief: "Ach, schüttel mich, schüttel mich, wir Äpfel sind alle miteinander reif." Sie antwortete aber: "Du kommst mir recht, es könnte mir einer auf den Kopf fallen," und ging damit weiter. Als sie vor der Frau Holle Haus kam, fürchtete sie sich nicht, weil sie von ihren großen Zähnen schon gehört hatte, und verdingte sich gleich zu ihr. Am ersten Tag tat sie sich Gewalt an, war fleißig und folgte der Frau Holle, wenn sie ihr etwas sagte, denn sie dachte an das viele Gold, das sie ihr schenken würde; am zweiten Tag aber fing sie schon an zu faulenzen,
am dritten noch mehr, da wollte sie morgens gar nicht aufstehen. Sie machte auch der Frau Holle das Bett nicht, wie sich's gebührte, und schüttelte es nicht, daß die Federn aufflogen. Das ward die Frau Holle bald müde und sagte ihr den Dienst auf. Die Faule war das wohl zufrieden und meinte, nun würde der Goldregen kommen; die Frau Holle führte sie auch zu dem Tor, als sie aber darunterstand, ward statt des Goldes ein großer Kessel voll Pech ausgeschüttet. "Das ist zur Belohnung deiner Dienste," sagte die Frau Holle und schloß das Tor zu. Da kam die Faule heim, aber sie war ganz mit Pech bedeckt, und der Hahn auf dem Brunnen, als er sie sah, rief:

"Kikeriki, Unsere schmutzige Jungfrau ist wieder hie."

Das Pech aber blieb fest an ihr hängen und wollte, solange sie lebte, nicht abgehen.
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