



Enchanted Narratives: How Fairy Tale Productions Shape Pop Culture in Germany & America



Anne Hoffman. Taryn Miko. Sean Effron. Lynn Tan.

School of Global and Cultural Studies, Marian University Indianapolis

ABSTRACT & INTRODUCTION

Germans want to include and remember their cultural identity and heritage, which is why there has been a substantial surge in Grimm's fairy tale adaptations made during the 20th century (Langenbach, 2020). In contrast, the United States, with its diverse cultural landscape, has embraced fairy tales from various origins, leading to a rich tapestry of adaptations that reflect the nation's multicultural heritage. Since the turn of the century, both countries have been nostalgic in certain ways, especially in fairy tales and their educational pieces (Wilcox, 2023).



Figure One: A Fairytale Wedding (Reddit)

AMERICAN ENTERTAINMENT

- Recent surge in adaptations for adults
 - Once upon a Time & Grimm* (Schwabe, 2016).
- Family adaptations with imaginary settings.
- Films containing intertwined stories from uncommon sources-antagonist.
 - Maleficent*.
- Desire for known fate of characters (Wilcox, 2023).
- Family friendly.

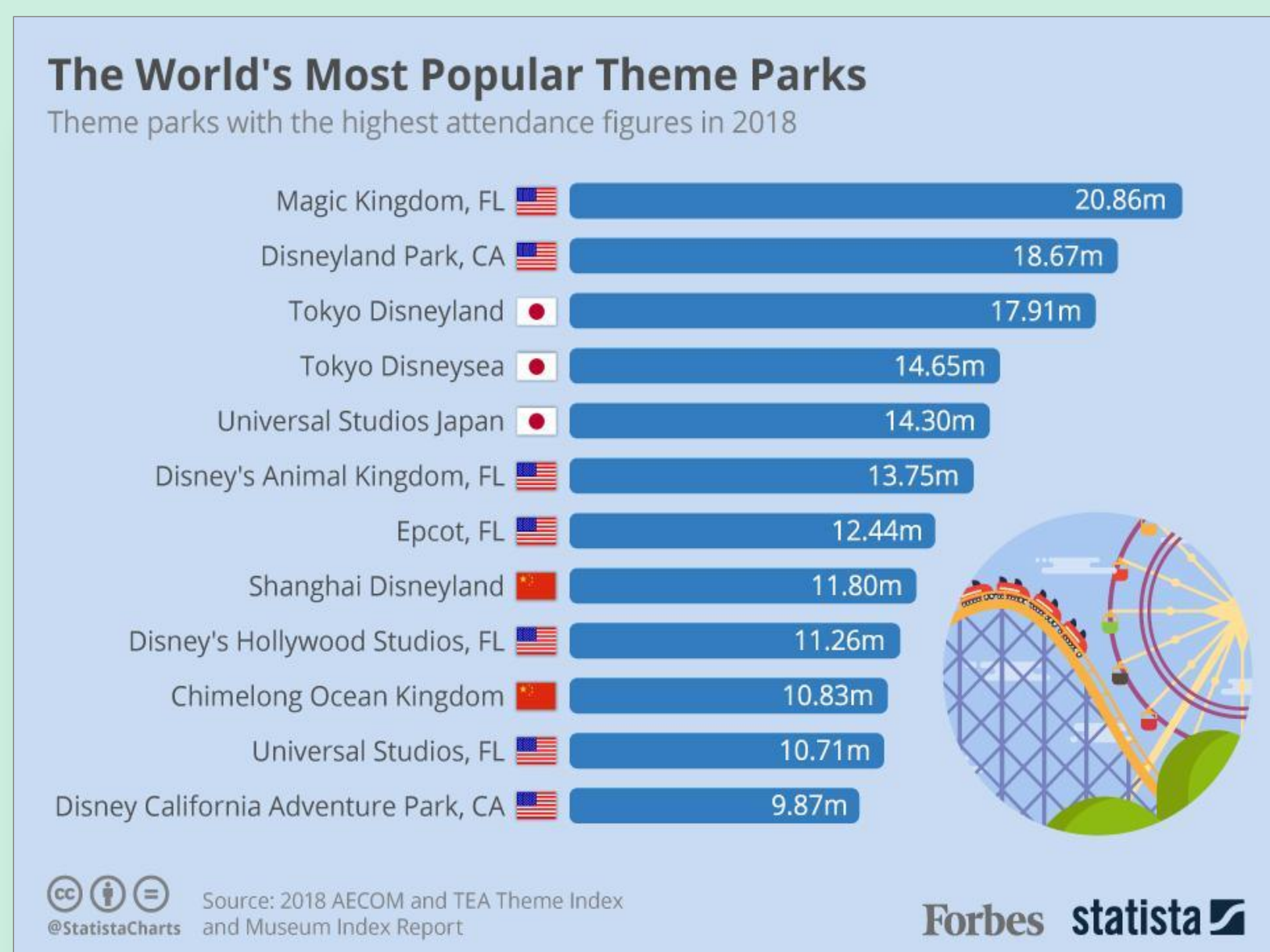


Figure Two: Popular Theme Parks (Statista)

REFLECTION / FRANCISCAN CONNECTION

Fairy tales were observed as a symbol of childhood, heritage, conflict, and hope. Every country has its own version of a fairy tale. The enduring usage of these stories really shows the power that a metaphor and symbol can hold. In light of such potential, it's important to remember the Franciscan value of **dignity of the individual**. Fairy tales are just fairy tales, but it's what humans do that turn stories into reality.

AMERICAN SOCIAL CONFLICTS

- Traditional fairy tale adaptations depict passive, helpless princesses waiting to be rescued by princes, and perpetuate harmful gender stereotypes.
- They often lacked diversity and rarely represented characters from diverse backgrounds.
- Today, they have been seeking to rewrite fairy tales that are more inclusive and include a much larger narrative of many different cultures and backgrounds.

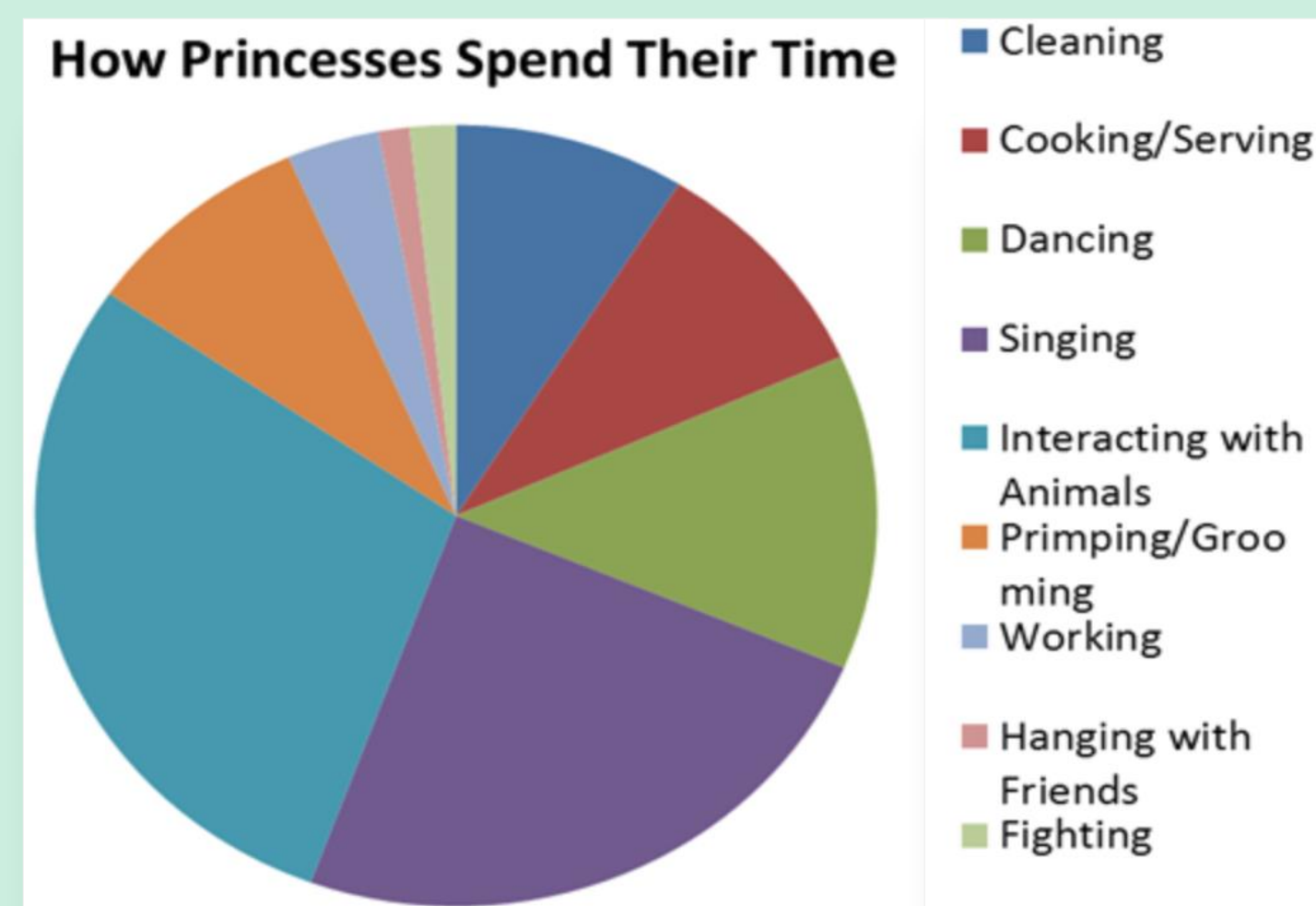


Figure Three: Graph by Jolene Ewert, (Montana State University)

GERMAN HERITAGE PRESERVATION

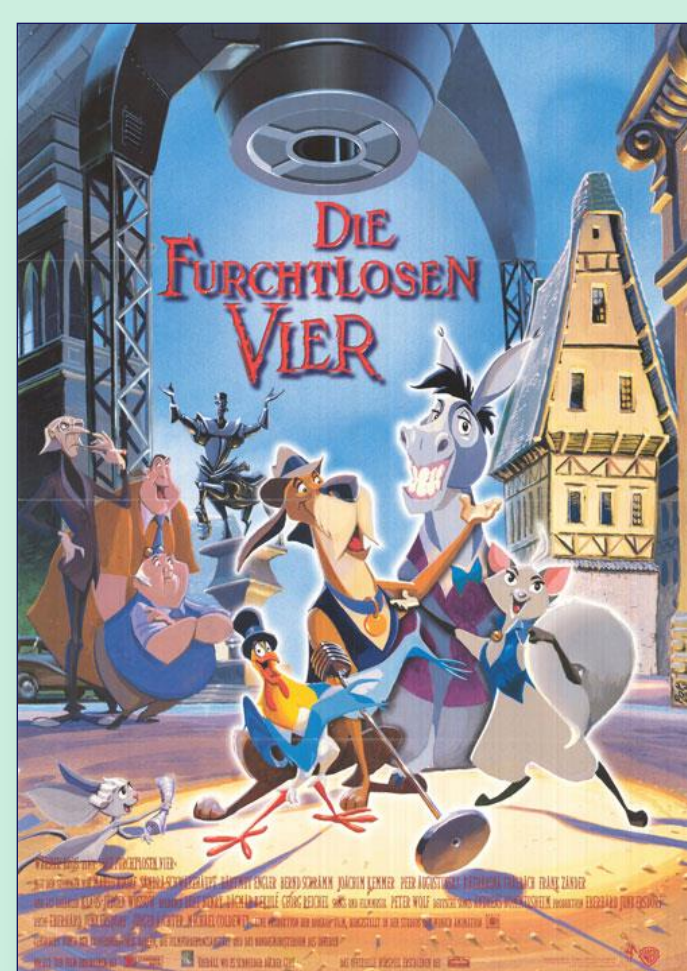


Figure Four: The Fearless Four (Warner Bros.)



Figure Five: Town Musicians (Dreamstime)

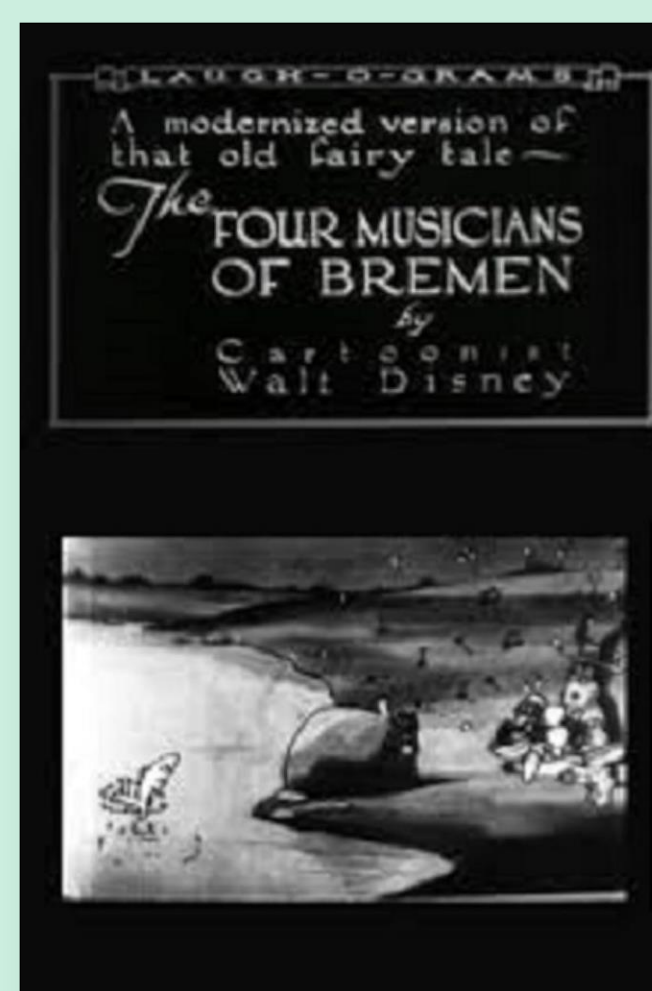


Figure Six: The Four Musicians (IMDb)

- The Grimm Fairy Tales represent a major component of German national identity and were compiled with that intent.
- In this endeavor they "wanted to remind the Volk of their common identity but also reach the ruling elite" (Norberg, 2022).
- These fairy tales are now seen as a 'sanitary' image of German national identity, not tied to militarism or ethno-nationalism but rather to linguistics.
- Despite this modern German interpretations of these fairy tales may feature "a number of changes which serve the individualization of characters and at the same time their integration into a more complex social structure" (Wölfel, 2015).

GERMAN CULTURAL IDENTITY

- German Fairy Tale films during the split between East and West were dominated by the Eastern Bloc, with explicitly Marxist morals applied (Blessing 2010).
- After the 2006 World Cup (Wölfel, 2015) a new sense of a positive German identity, and sense of nation, inspired a push for new German Fairy Tale films.
- Between 2008 and 2015, under the Rundfunk Brandenburg Berlin, and with the efforts of several production companies under the ARD, 34 one hour-long fairy tale films were produced and aired on television (Wölfel, 2015).
- This represents a major change in German sense of self: National narratives of morality and ideals can allow a positive sense of what is "German, representing a subtle revitalization of senses of nationalism in Germany.



Figure Seven: Fairy Tale Route Germany (Märchenstrasse)

CONCLUSION

American and German pop culture & the whimsical nature of fairy tales through retellings.

US entertainment to frame "life" in a specific way:

- Optimistic journey of self-discovery.
- Archetypes (stereotypes and bias).

German Grimm fairy tales are an iconic element of an old cultural legacy. These stories can be wielded as a tool to further one's own agendas by marketing morals and ideals in a familiar packaging.

LITERATURE CITED

- Wilcox, Brandy E. *Of Walt and Wald: Power and Gender in East German and US-American Fairy-Tale Film Adaptations*. The University of Wisconsin - Madison, United States -- Wisconsin, 2023. *ProQuest*.
- Zipes, Jack. "Two Hundred Years after Once Upon a Time: The Legacy of the Brothers Grimm and Their Tales in Germany." *Grimm Legacies: The Magic Spell of the Grimms' Folk and Fairy Tales*. Princeton University Press, 2015, pp. 109-30. *JSTOR*.
- ZIPES, JACK. "The Grimms and the German Obsession with Fairy Tales." *Fairy Tales and Society: Illusion, Allusion, and Paradigm*, edited by RUTH B. BOTTIGHEIMER, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1986, pp. 271-86. *JSTOR*.
- Zipes, Jack. "EPILOGUE: A Curious Legacy-Ernest Bloch's Enlightened View of the Fairy Tale and Utopian Longing, or Why the Grimms' Tales Will Always Be Relevant." *Grimm Legacies: The Magic Spell of the Grimms' Folk and Fairy Tales*. Princeton University Press, 2015, pp. 187-96. *JSTOR*.
- Statista Research. (2023, January 5). *EU film industry: Market share by country of origin*. Statista.
- "All in One Stroke": *Grimms' Fairy Tales and the TV ... - Centaur*. centaur.reading.ac.uk/40874/2/4%20-%20Woelfel.pdf. Accessed 3 Nov. 2023.
- "The Brothers Grimm and the Making of German Nationalism: Fifteen Eighty Four." *Cambridge University Press - The Official Blog of Cambridge University Press*, 31 Mar. 202.
- The Meaning of Fairy Tale within the Evolution of Culture - Phworks*. wsufairytales.phworks.com/w/feetch/7584834/25.2.zipes.pdf. Accessed 3 Nov. 2023.
- "The World's Most Popular Theme Parks." *Forbes*, 23 May 2019, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/niallmcCarthy/2019/05/23/the-worlds-most-popular-theme-parks-in-2018-infographic/?sh=6049290c577a>. Accessed 6 Nov. 2023.
- "Grimm's Fairy Tale Route in Germany." *Deutsche Märchenstraße*, <https://www.deutsche-maerchenstrasse.com/en/route/our-route>.
- "Most Common Costume Types Historically Worn by Americans." *maxcandocia.com*, 2018, <https://maxcandocia.com/article/2018/Oct/20/costumes-of-halloween/>.
- "Angry Frog." *imgflip.com*, <https://imgflip.com/v/2fqlbs>.
- No specific creator. "United Photo." *Pinterest*, <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/546554104749433360/>.



Figure Eight: Angry Frog (imgflip)