

# North American Fairy Tales

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## **Rationalism**

One upon a time, people were ignorant and superstitious. A priest ruled their souls by telling them stories that fanned their superstition into hatred and their fear into subservience. And, with the help of the priest's stories, an emperor ruled their bodies by cruel power. A few knights fought the priest and emperor during those dark ages, but they were all killed. Then came Science, the greatest knight ever known. He slaughtered the priest and strangled the emperor. He put his Rationality in the place of their subjective stories and seated Democracy on the emperor's throne.

Then progress began – and was without end.

Rationality and Democracy brought total freedom. They strangled inquisitions and ignorant village elders, replacing them with freedom, equality and the computer. They attacked the oppression of peasants, blacks and women and supported any minority fighting for its rights.

Meanwhile, Science worked great wonders – banishing smallpox, polio, false teeth, gangrene and near universal poverty. An in their place he graciously gave a cornucopia without limit: cars, jet planes, stereos, flush toilets, television, inexpensive books. To make pain unnecessary, he created Valium and self-esteem psychologists (whom he allowed to wear white coats). He also provided a Six-Shooter of Power to obliterate remaining powers. Admittedly, Scientific Rationality has not solved the problems of pollution and war, but in time he will offer a technological solution to them too – as he has to all problems.

Scientific Rationality banished all rivals to never-never land by demanding their scientific credentials and proof, which of course they did not claim to have. And therefore, Story, God, Value, Horror over Sin, Goodness and Beauty all slowly smothered to death. Scientific Rationality sensibly replaced them with a utilitarian understanding of feelings and rights.

So people were free at last – free to pursue their right to life, liberty and of course feelings. The focus on rights and feelings justified resentment and free love while Utilitarianism shone on success, power and money. Combined, those things were what life is about. So that people could live in the fullness of Rationality, they were given many models of true life – like on the cover of People magazine.

And they lived happily ever after.

## **Romanticism**

Once upon a time, there was a great serpent who lived in a box can. He was a nice serpent as long as he stayed in his box, but one day some Greeks let him out. Right away, the serpent, whose name was Reason, started killing reality in order to squeeze it into tightly sealed boxes, which of course was where he felt most comfortable. He was always a terrible tyrant, but he got worse during the Enlightenment when he merged with science. Science gave him power.

The power to destroy. Empowered by science, Reason formed huge nation-states and immense corporations that funded enormous armies. They forced people to live in square, numbered houses in cities that had straight, numbered streets. There people worked on straight assembly lines that squeezed everything into boxes with straight sides. The kids went to schools with straight hallways and numbered classrooms where they sat in straight lines to learn straight thoughts served from boxes by straight teachers. After school, they marched in straight ROTC lines.

Violence was OK. How else could you make things fit into the boxes made by Fortune 500 companies? Natural curves had to be chopped off children, redwoods shortened, and whales killed for parts that could be sold in boxes. Anyone and anything that wouldn't or couldn't be made to fit the boxes was burned, and the smoke was vomited into the skies till the smell of earth-murder overwhelmed joy, and darkness covered the face of the deep.

Naturally, the people in boxes soon lost contact with reality and had to use a lot of corporate deodorant to cover the smell of the rot from their amputated souls. Most everyone died, though out of habit most kept moving inside their boxes.

A few heroic misfits survived, and after peeling away layers of reason and convention, they found their feelings and their true selves. Replacing their boxes with self-determination and self-expression, they slowly learned how to go their own way and feel deeply and freely. Fed up with the hollowness of the daily grind, they moved to the woods, danced barefoot in the grass, and earned only enough for basic needs. "Tune in, turn on, drop out." They were joined by all those fed up with the rat race and all those following their hearts, and together they formed a counterculture, nonviolent and kind and free, where everyone loved everyone.

Kids didn't have to go to schools with straight rows but stayed home where they learned only what interested them naturally. Instead of learning how to make machines that killed, they learned how to let things grow, how to express their feelings in poetry and painting and music. They spontaneously questioned authority, fought for their rights, and didn't hurt others, for people are naturally good when not corrupted by civilization.

Naturally, straight civilization tried to repress these people because it was terrified by their spontaneity, especially about sex and drugs, but the beauty of their lives compared to the smell of souls rotting in boxes revealed the grandeur and intricacy of a universe yearning to be free.

They had little interest in politics, but their revolution spread from the bottom to the top till the serpent and his culture of boxes collapsed under the weight of its own hollowness. And free of reason and rules, government and clothes, everyone lived happily ever after.

## Consumerism

Once upon a time, people were lonely and bored. They were unfulfilled and empty, even though most of them did not realize that they possessed desires which were yet to be awakened. It was a dark and primitive time in which people suffered through life with only three channels on their TVs (which weren't even HD). They had phones that could only be used to talk to other people. And worst of all, they often had to wait hours, days, even weeks before they could get what they wanted.

It is difficult to understand how people survived the gnawing boredom of life in this age. They lived a bland life, with little variety in clothing styles, entertainment and routine. They were able to cope because their time was taken up by hours and hours of work making for themselves all the things they needed, without many of the miraculous time saving devices we take for granted. But they had also adapted to the monotony of their lives and the desire for something better had atrophied because they did not yet realize the abundance which could be theirs.

The future was always a frightful prospect because they had nothing to guarantee protection from the unknown (they considered it unwise to think about it or at least they projected their thoughts into a vague afterlife promised by their elders). Their meager supply of provisions would not last for an indefinite future, which caused much anxiety (whenever they had rest from work long enough to think about it).

Then one day a rumor was heard. No one knew for sure where the rumor came from, but local legend claimed it came from a faraway land called Madison Avenue. The rumor promised that soon a great prophet would come, who would rescue the people from their boredom, toil and monotony by giving everything they would ever want and need, all for easy monthly payments.

And then he came. The people actually were able to hear him long before they could see him clearly. The cry of "Oxi-Clean" could be heard piercing through the air as his smiling (with gentle whitening), bearded (groomed with triple-action, rotating heads) face came into view. The reality of his presence far outshined the rumors that preceded him. He brought with him an abundance of colorful clothes, tools and nifty (mostly fruit shaped) gadgets. The people were in awe of all the brightness of the flashing screens and constant rhythmic pulse of the 5.1 dolby surround sound systems. And in giving these gifts, the prophet (who called himself "Hi, I'm Billy Mays") promised much more to come in an inexhaustible supply of new and improved gifts to fulfill all their hearts desires.

And so the people experienced for the first time both the awakening of true desire and the thrill of instant gratification of that desire.

And if it were not enough to bring so many fabulous gifts and awaken desire, the prophet ensured their future gratification by forging an alliance between the people and his allies from distant kingdoms called "Amazon," "Home Shopping Network" and "The Mall."

From that glorious day, all the people of the land have been utterly fulfilled – moving from one experience of obtaining their deepest desire to the next. There was a new toy available every day, each one more new and improved than the last. There was no sadness over the breakdown or obsolescence of their toys because a newer model was sure to appear even before they knew the old one was obsolete.

And so all the people lived in this new paradise on earth – surrounded by endless multimedia, virtual-reality entertainment choices (all in custom, fashion-conscious colors,

and brand-name logo marketing tie-ins). Their lives were made simple through convenient labor saving devices (all remotely controlled through their fruit-shaped devices, which all treasured, and many had surgically implanted). There was no hardship or pain that could not be ignored or cured with a new toy. And in the rare case where people could not ignore their problems, a quick call to tech support would solve that as well.

There was no longer any anxiety about the future because there was an endless supply of goods and services to solve every problem (including the cost of all the goods and services). And so everyone lived happily ever after, secure in their buying power and the hope of new upgrades and next week's model as they experienced continual novelty and thrill after thrill for all eternity.

## **Pride**

Once upon a time, in an enchanted forest lived a butterfly named ego. She was a beautiful butterfly with large wings speckled with bright colors. This was all the more apparent because she lived among a colony of moths. The moths had wings of very similar size and shape as ego's wings, but they were all bland grey and brown colors. Therefore the moths all looked up to her and constantly told her how beautiful she was. As a matter of fact, she was rarely called by her real name, but was usually referred to as "the one with the colorful wings". She would often fly over the pond in the middle of the forest on a sunny day so that she could admire the brightness of her colors reflected off the calm waters. This always brought her delight and she even began to refer to herself as "the one with the colorful wings".

And then one bright spring morning, through the trees in the thickest part of the enchanted forest, something caught ego's eye because it stood out with its brightness. She approached with some caution, but soon the caution gave way to joy as she saw for the first time a butterfly like herself. The thrill of recognition was mutual, and they flitted and fluttered as only butterflies can do in their rejoicing over each other's brightness. For a time, ego took equal pleasure in her own beauty and brightness and in the brightness of her new found friend. She even suggested that they return to the moth colony so that all could rejoice in both of the "ones with the colorful wings."

As they were flitting and fluttering toward the moth colony, they happened to fly over the pond in the forest. As ego looked down (as she always did when flying over the pond), she noticed that her wings were particularly dull and bland, especially compared with the bright and colorful wings of her companion. She was confused and disheartened and barely flitted for the rest of their trip. She thought, "What could have happened to my bright and colorful wings to make them look so lifeless and dull?"

Then as they were almost to the edge of the colony, she remembered that they lived in an enchanted forest. In a flash it became clear to her – when she rejoiced in the brightness of the other butterfly, some of her own brightness was magically transferred to her companion. At once she resolved to turn the tables and reverse the magic.

Before anyone in the colony noticed, she splashed muddy water on the other butterfly. This had the desired effect in that the other butterfly looked pale and brown (as well as having difficulty in flying because her wings were wet). Therefore the moths continued to pay her great compliments and she seemed to shine brighter everyday. Whenever a moth would notice the color in the other butterfly's wings, ego was sure to draw attention to the muddy splotches and not the color. So ego magically took all the brightness away from her former friend and grew brighter and brighter.

She spend the rest of her days shining and admiring her bright colorful wings and basking in the constant attention of her admirers. And if ever any other color was seen in the forest, ego was quick to splash it with mud and steal its brightness for her own. And so she lived happily ever after – the only "one with the colorful wings" and admired by all (especially herself as she flew over the pond).

## **Hedonism**

Once upon a time there was a kingdom called Puritania. The citizens of Puritania were always miserable, yet seemed to delight in being miserable. They made up more and more rules, laws and regulations to protect themselves from happiness.

They had rules about what you had to wear (never fashionable, always uncomfortable, and they put buckles on hats for some odd reason). They had rules about what you could and could not do (hard work was always mandatory and other activities were only allowed up to the point where they became fun). And they even had rules about what you could and could not see (everything that was ‘worldly’ was forbidden to look at, though that term was never defined). They always wrote stricter and stricter laws to protect themselves from pleasure of any kind. They seemed especially afraid of some enemy they called “the monster lust”, which (guessing from the laws and rules they made) attacked people in their eyes, their taste buds, their bellies, and a little lower than their bellies in what the citizens of Puritania called the “no-touch zone”.

Their zeal for rule-making was only matched by their zeal for rule keeping and enforcing of rules. Not only did they have elaborate police and judicial systems, but they actively promoted the public opinion against all things forbidden. The schools spent most of the curriculum teaching rules, enforced by strict teachers with ‘rulers’, humorless principles with ‘offices’ and overbearing parents with an instrument of torture called ‘the switch’ or ‘the rod’, which was claimed to prevent child-spoiling.

The school system was supplemented with the national folklore which spoke of the “Rider of the Clouds” who would instantly punish with lightning bolts and boils anyone who broke even the smallest rule. Once a week, all the citizens gathered in rows and dutifully listened to the official spokesman – called “the Pope” – or one of his duly appointed delegates. He would tell of all the horrible things that would instantly happen if anyone broke the rules, fell victim to the monster “lust” or (Cloud-Rider forbid) touched the no-touch zone.

Therefore, everyone was afraid of the Rider of the Clouds, the Pope, the police, and all forms of authority. In this totalitarian state, the chief occupation of rule-making and enforcing was eclipsed by the national pastime of being a busybody, spying on one’s neighbor, and turning them in to the police or Pope (but only after taking it upon themselves to talk about them behind their backs and punish them privately first).

For a long time, the kingdom of Puritania lived in this misery. Then a great knight rode into town on a great white steed with brightly colored robes (and no buckles on his hat). He introduced himself as the Duke of Hefner, who had come from the kingdom of Gratification. All the citizens were surprised how he was able to enter their land, because Puritania zealously guarded the border to Gratification with high walls and armed guards.

The Duke of Hefner told how he was born and raised in Puritania. For a long time he had believed in the Rider of the Clouds and feared the Pope. But one day, while working in the field near the border wall (which guarded from invasion from Gratification), he glanced up from his work to see the monster “lust” coming at him disguised as an angel of light (he knew it was lust because in school he had been taught about lust’s primary disguise). He ran away as fast as he could, and in his fright, he tripped and fell over in an awkward position. Instantly, his fear of the monster lust was overshadowed by his fear of an impending lightning bolt because in his awkward fall, he had accidentally touched a certain zone.

The citizens of Puritania gasped in horror as the Duke of Hefner related this part of the story. They asked in great wonder how he had survived not only the monster, but the lightning bolt as well. A great murmur, swelling to an uproar, moved through the crowd as he continued the tale. Not only did the lightning bolt never come, he did not break out in boils or sores, and he actually felt a pleasurable sensation he had never felt before.

As he was wondering to himself what this must mean, he was shaken back to consciousness by the presence of the beautiful angel waiting nearby. The Duke of Hefner related that the angel was not a monster in disguise, but truly an angel sent to rescue him from the tyranny of “The Pope” and his minions. She helped him escape the kingdom by a dark and secret path.

In his exile, he concluded (aided by the angel lust) that the “Rider of the Clouds” was only a myth, made up by the Pope, who used the story to keep the people as his slaves and hoard all the pleasure for himself. And he had now returned to the kingdom of his birth to free the citizens from their enslavement to authority and the tyranny of rules.

Instantly the crowd was up in arms. The police cruelly persecuted the Duke of Hefner, they tore his fashionable robes, cut his horses hair, braided it with buckles and sent him back over the wall and out of the Kingdom of Puritania.

They thought that this episode was over for good (after an extra-long gathering in rows to warn against the monster lust and his false messengers). But that very night, a few bold warriors dared to put the official story to the test. They decided that they would break the rules in secret to see if the Rider of the Clouds would truly punish them instantly. In each case, the punishment never arrived.

Thus started the rebellion. These first brave heroes began the dangerous task of recruiting others to the resistance. They were often caught, and turned in. They were labeled as freaks, ostracized from society, locked in closets, and even arrested. But they were sustained by secret messages from the Duke of Hefner (which were delivered in plain brown wrappers to keep them secret). They gathered in back allies to enjoy all the things that were forbidden, and took great joy in breaking every rule just because it was a rule. They were also greatly aided by the angel lust (who could easily fly over the wall and meet behind closed doors) who recruited more people for the resistance than any other.

Little by little, the resistance gained ground, especially as some of the Pope’s main lieutenants were caught receiving subversive message from the angel lust. Leaders of the resistance became increasingly bolder in their strategies. They first took the town of Leisure and then captured the fort of Entertainment (which was rarely used by Puritania because the weapons kept backfiring). From this fortress, the resistance gained more and more acceptance from the citizens of Puritania as more people experienced the fun of their lifestyle and doubted the punishment promised by the Pope. So the resistance moved from being a despised minority to being an ‘alternate lifestyle’ to controlling the entire kingdom.

At a grand party of state (the party was legendary), the Duke of Hefner was crowned king. The kingdom was renamed Epicuria and all the law books and rules were publicly burned and replaced with two fundamental laws, which governed all of life in Epicuria: 1) Thou shall not judge, and 2) If it feels good, do it. The “no-touch zone” was officially renamed the “anything goes” zone. People saw, tasted, smelt, heard and touched a plethora of wonderful things they had never experienced before. Buckles fell out of

fashion (as did clothes in general) and everyone lived happily ever after (with a smile on their face).