



Awakening the Moral Imagination through Fairy Tales and Stories with Dr. Vigen Guroian

Seminar 2 with Becky
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Outline:

The Ugly Duckling, Hans Christian Anderson

- Anderson was writing mostly his own stories.
- The Ugly Duckling is gone to teach a lesson, like to be against bullying.
 - Really this story is about beauty. It is about a character who is surrounded by and loves beauty. The love for that beauty transforms that character.
- This is a transformation story.
- He builds the theme that a love of beauty brings about a transformation itself, and maybe makes you beautiful.
- Beauty is mentioned more times than ugly.
- The opening of the story is an invitation to enter in to a beautiful surrounding.
- Anderson was a romantic. He much preferred nature as more beautiful than human artifacts.
- The ugly duckling flees the hen yard and does through a series of adventures, some threatening his own existence. He is always taken back to nature.
- This is a kind of song to beauty, not simply a story of a mistreated youth. The bullying hurts him.
- The ugly duckling's mother never called him ugly, she said he had good character.
- The duckling does become convinced that he is ugly after being called ugly many times.
- The Ugly Duckling encounters the swans:
 - He starts to circle a wheel in the water as if he is with them. He identifies them and they stir and move him.
 - He did not envy the swans.
 - The duckling had a "strange longing" that is moving him. This inspires him to go on, surviving the winter.
 - He is not oppressed, he wishes he could get out of his skin and join them.
 - The Ugly Duckling is not seeking death or choosing death, he wants to be with the swans.



- The duckling loves beauty.
- He does not feel sorry for himself. His love of beauty enables him to survive.