

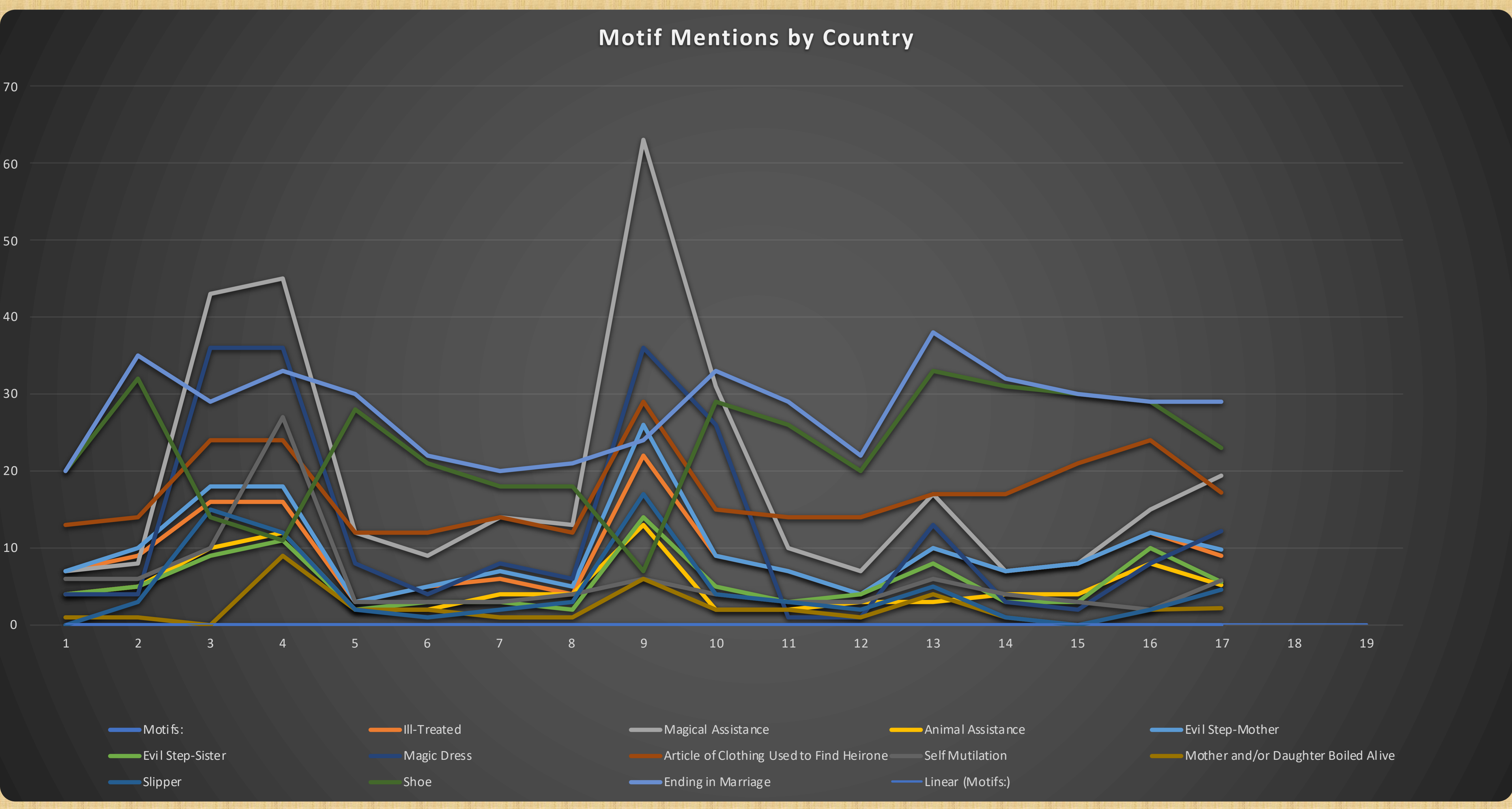
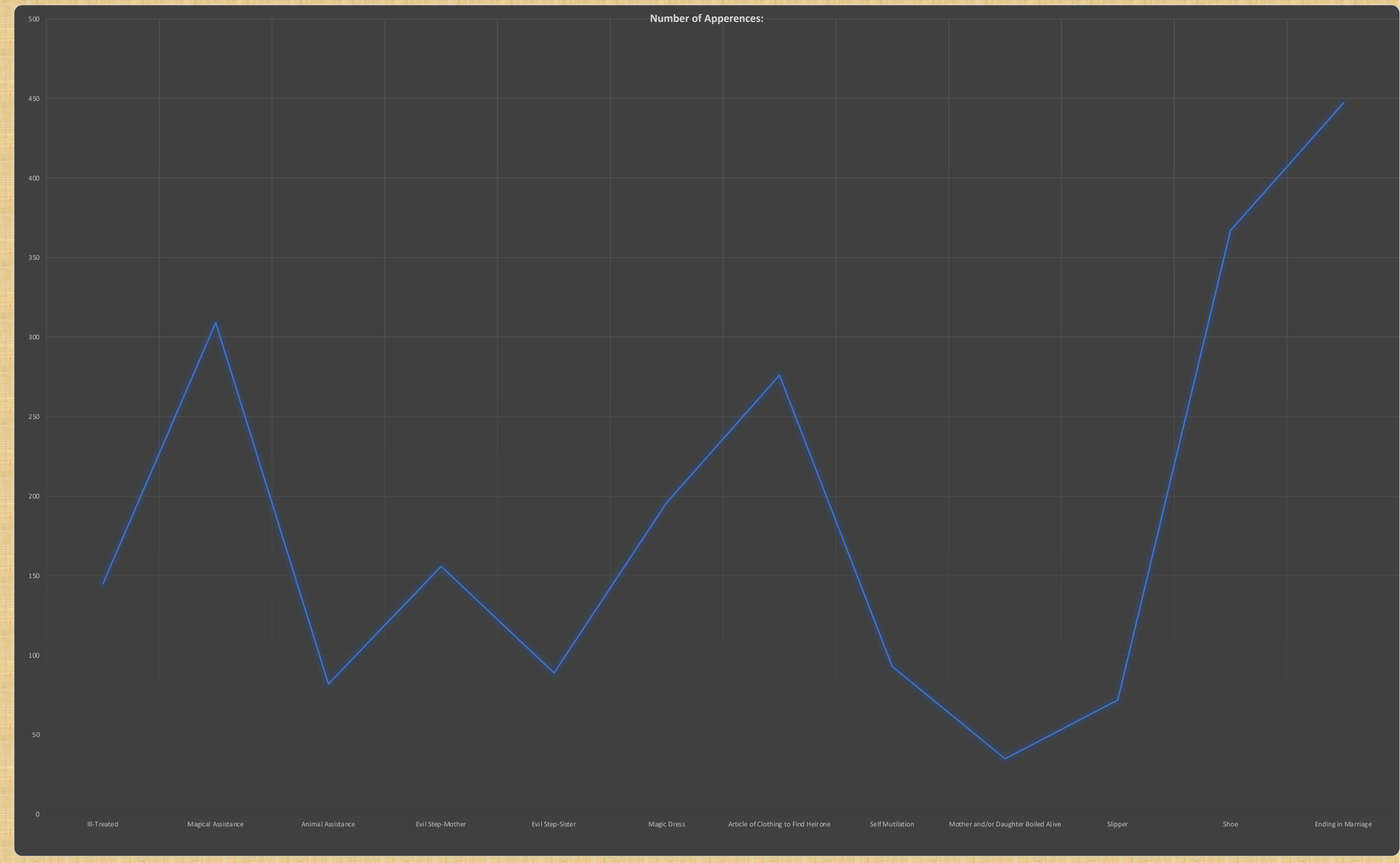
Quantifying Cinderella: Motifs as Datapoints to Show Cultural Influence in Storytelling

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Background:

Cinderella is considered the world's most popular fairytale. While the origins of the motifs are difficult to track down due to hundreds of years of oral retellings, they are the foundation of the tale itself. Different cultures write the rest of the tale, filling the void between motifs with their influences. The purpose of this project originally set out to try and see what exactly influenced the retellings of Cinderella, but as time went on, the project evolved into looking at how different countries had certain motifs included, and, more interestingly, what motifs were missing. The point of this project is a skeleton and a proof of concept that cultural influence can be seen through quantitative data.

Charles Perrault popularized the tale in 1697 and provided the influence for the Disney release in 1950. Perrault introduced numerous motifs of his own that shaped the fairytale. The glass slipper, the pumpkin for the carriage, and the Fairy Godmother were all additions that Perrault introduced in his version. The Brothers Grimm also help popularize the tale with their "collected" versions and the introduction of motifs. The step-sisters' mutilation in a golden slipper, a wishing tree, and justice for the wrongdoings of the step-sisters were all introduced in the 1812 publication of the Grimms' book. Just between these two stories, the presence and, again more interestingly, the absence of some of the motifs can be shown. Two neighboring countries separated by less than 150 years give us two vastly different tales.



Seeing that different motifs were common in certain areas of Europe and Scandinavia, while others tended to be left out allows one to see what aspects of culture are shown throughout the telling of a tale. These inclusions and, more importantly, the exclusions, help give insight to the culture that tale "originates" from. The differences seen throughout the span of the 30 years looked at here allows one to track cultural change and influence through the tale, also.

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