RESEARCH ARTICLE

HIDDEN TRANSCRIPTS AND GENDERED CONSTRUCTIONS OF THE MAGICAL WORLD

RIMA BHATTACHARYA

PhD Research scholar, The Department of Humanities and Social Science
Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur

RIMA BHATTACHARYA

ABSTRACT

This paper after a brief discussion on the birth and discovery of the concept of 'childhood' which gradually came to be identified as a state of 'natural innocence' that was potentially corruptible, would move on to explore the magical and the miraculous in these tales (specifically Cinderella and Sleeping Beauty. The essay would offers a critical and historical overview of the genre of the fairy tale, stitching together an array of research threads on the subject that shed light on the genre in various aspects, such as the genre's relation to myth, the role of women in this genre traditionally identified through its male practitioners such as Perrault and the Grimms, the respectively gendered expectations of heroes and heroines in such tales, and the significance of illustrations in published collections. The paper would contribute to the existing literature by reworking on that literature so as to pursue, in greater depth, some of the promising and fertile lines of critical enquiry regarding this genre especially on the score of gender politics which may include: the history of 19th century women writers overshadowed by the Grimms, the symbolism of precious minerals and materials, the emotional and psychological phenomenon of isolation, revisionist tales by non-Anglophone women writers, and cultural repercussions of matrimonial advertisements that echo the Cinderella motif. In a whole the paper is mainly an attempt to examine the part played by these classical fairy tales in socializing children and introducing them to the world of adults, with the aid of some maxims and mythic messages that are embedded within the plots and illustrations of these tales.

Key Words: Myth, fairy tales, gender politics, illustration, Cinderella, Sleeping Beauty.

INTRODUCTION

"The fairy tales of my childhood have a meaning deeper than the truths taught by life"
- Schiller, *Wallenstein* (qtd. in Tatar 1987, 39)

It was only with the invention of childhood that children's literature came into being. Philip Aries at the end of his long and painstaking work on the subject writes in his book *Centuries of Childhood*: "In the Middle Ages, at the beginning of modern times, and for a long time after that in the lower class, children were mixed with adults as soon as they were considered capable of doing without their mothers or nannies, not long after a tardy weaning. They immediately went straight into the great community of men, sharing in the work and the play of their companions, old and young alike" (Aries 1965). Aries is here describing a world that lived with the most rudimentary conception of maturity as a physical matter. If there were stages in the growth of children, they were simply before and after infancy. This is easily seen in medieval and early Renaissance depictions of the Seven Ages of Man and in the portraits of royal and noble children in that period (Sale 1978, 26). Childhood was simply an unimportant phase of which there was no need to keep any record; in the second case, that of the dead child it was thought that the little thing which has disappeared so soon in life was not worthy of remembrance. There were far too many children whose survival was problematical. The general feeling was that one had several children in order to keep just a few. Since children were either nursing infants or small adults, families did not have the importance they later came to have in a more bourgeois society. Following this, Aries has offered a great deal of evidence concerning clothing, games, the construction of domestic dwellings and, above all, schools to show how "the child" was brought into existence during the seventeenth century and, at most levels of society, during the eighteenth and nineteenth century. If, with this in mind, one thinks of the relation between parents and children as seen in fairy tales, one may be less surprised at how straightforward, unanguished, and even businesslike they usually seem.

Although children's literature of which fairy tale is just a part is intended primarily for children, it is more accurate to view such texts as having dual audiences of children and adults. Adults, particularly parents, teachers, and librarians, often function as gatekeepers who identify appropriate texts for children. Since children's literature has been marketed and purchased by adults who, in turn, present it to children, authors and publishers have attempted to produce children's texts that appeal to the desires of the actual adult purchaser, if not the child reader of the text. In the picture book and chapter book genres especially, an adult reads to a child or children in a group. It is only with the advent of the paperback book that adolescents, and in some cases younger children, have been able to select their books independent of adult supervision or funds. A children's book reflects the ideologies of the culture in which it was written and embodies that period's assumptions about children and appropriate behavior. Consequently, children's literature more often embodies adult concerns and concepts of childhood rather than topics children might choose for themselves. This gap between children's and adult's attitudes toward children's literature is often revealed when critics try to decode or demythologize the inherent myths underling a fairy tale text.

The origin of fairy tales or the so-called art of 'spinning' tales has a long history. For the 2,500 years before the 19th century, hand spinning in Western Europe, whether with a drop spindle or with a spinning wheel had been carried on exclusively by women. In the German tradition, Jacob Grimm asserted that "the spindle is an essential characteristic of wise women" (qtd. in Bottigheimer 1982, 143). The spindle is, as the tales themselves demonstrate, not only the identifying mark of wise women, but of all women, and especially–in Germany from the Middle Ages to the 19th century–of diligent, well-ordered womanhood. According to Bottigheimer German folk tales were assumed to have originated in or to have passed through in many cases the *Spinnstube*, for it was there that women gathered in the evening and told tales to keep themselves and their company awake as they spun. And it was from informants privy to this oral tradition that Wilhelm and Jacob Grimm gathered many of their folk tales. Thus, one can assume a personal relationship between the tales and spinners themselves. In the 1980s, feminists

such as Heide Gottner-Abendroth, Sonja Ruttner-Cova, and Gertrude Jungblut reappropriated the genre of fairy tales from its male collectors and editors by looking to the fairy tale for evidence of prehistoric matriarchal myths ("Feminist Fairy-Tale Scholarship" 2000, 28). According to Rowe, often the fairy tale becomes a coded text in which the female voice, despite the attempt by men to control it, not only continues to speak, but speaks a secret subversive language (Rowe 2010, 57).

Fairy tales are often "deemed of marginal cultural importance and dismissed as unworthy of critical attention" (Tatar 1999, xi). Teachers have reported that fairy tales are not an integral part of children's culture, and, therefore, their messages are of little consequence (Westland 1993). This dismissive attitude underestimates the pervasive power of the tales. Fairy tales are sites for the construction of appropriate gendered behavior. According to Parsons, although fairy tales are certainly not solely responsible for the acculturation of children, they are an integral part of the complex layering of cultural stories and influences that affirm and perpetuate cultural norms (Parsons 2004, 135). Taxel (1992) argues that there is a "selective tradition in children's literature favoring the perspective and world view of the dominant social groups" (8).

Research since the early 1970s has shown that children's literature contains explicit and implicit messages about dominant power structures in society, especially those concerning gender (Weitzman et al. 1972). Fairy tales written during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were intended to teach girls and young women how to become domesticated, respectable and attractive to a marriage partner and to teach boys and girls appropriate gendered values and attitudes (See Zipes 1983).

Children's media have been found to be powerfully responsive to social change. Research by Pescosolido, Grauerholz, and Milkie (1997) found that during periods of intense racial conflict and significant political gains by African Americans, black characters virtually disappeared from children's book. They suggested that children's media both reflect and are shaped by shifting social and power relations among groups (Baker-sperry and

Grauerholz 2003, 714). However the traditional norm of depicting white princesses was disrupted by Shearer's (1990) *Snow-White* that sets the tale in Africa and Snow-white as an African princess, and *Cinderella and the Glass Slipper* (Shearer 1992), by the same author, where Cinderella is illustrated as a beautiful African American (Hurley 2005, 229). In fact most children's literature prior to the twentieth century embodied a white ideology that was reflected in both the text and illustrations. From the 1920s on, there have been attempts to provide a more multicultural approach to children's literature. W. E. B. Du Bois's *The Brownies Book* (1920–1921) was the first African-American children's magazine. It featured stories, poems, and informational essays by authors such as Langston Hughes and Jessie Fauset. Over time publishers became more concerned with multiculturalism and issues of diversity. Notable African-American writers–such as Arna Bontemps, Lucille Clifton, Mildred Taylor, Virginia Hamilton, and John Steptoe–and Asian-American writers–including Laurence Yep, Allen Say, and Ken Mochizuki–have forever changed the once all-white world of children's literature.

Cinderella, the Sleeping Beauty, and Snow White are mythic figures who have replaced the old Greek and Norse gods, goddesses, and heroes for most children. Among other things, the tales present a picture of sexual roles, behavior, and psychology, and a way of predicting outcome or fate according to sex, which is important because of the intense interest that children take in "endings"; they always want to know how things will "turn out" (Lieberman 1972, 384). Fairy stories provide children with a concentrated early introduction to the archetype of the suffering heroine. *Cinderella* and the other stories of this type show children that the girl who is singled out for rejection and bad treatment, and who submits to her lot, weeping but never running away, has a special compensatory destiny awaiting her (Lieberman 1972, 390). Fairy tales have been called historical documents (Darnton 1999), cultural barometers (Paul 1998), and cultural artifacts (Gilbert 1992). Each term alludes to the fact that fairy tales are culturally specific and evolve according to the shifting values of a society.

Our attitude towards fairy tales is ambivalent. "Don't tell me any fairy tales," we say,

RIMA BHATTACHARYA

in the derogatory sense. Here, the term is only a politer expression for cleverly contrived lies. On the other hand when we admire something especially beautiful, the phrase "like a fairy tale" almost spontaneously comes to mind. Here, it does not mean unreal in the sense of untrue, but in the sense of unearthly and divine. Thus, even in everyday usage our language suggests both rejection of and fascination by, the fairy tale.

Unfolding the myth of *Cinderella* and other tales

The evolution of the fairy tale as a literary genre is marked by a process of dialectical appropriation involving duplication and revision that set the cultural conditions for its mythicization, institutionalization, and expansion as a mass-mediated form through radio, film and television. Fairy tales were first told by gifted tellers and were based on rituals intended to endow meaning to the daily lives of the members of a tribe. As oral folk tales they were intended to explain natural occurrences such as the change of the seasons and shifts in the weather or to celebrate the rites of harvesting, hunting, marriage, and conquest.

It is difficult to provide an exact definition of the term 'myth'. Mircea Eliade, one of the great scholars of religion and myth believed that "myth narrates a sacred history; it relates an event that took place in primordial time, the fabled time of the beginnings. In other words myth tells us how through the deeds of supernatural beings, a reality came into existence, be it the whole of reality, the cosmos, or only a fragment of reality–an island, a species of plant, a particular kind of human behavior, an institution" (Zipes 1994, 1). Since myth narrates the deeds of supernatural beings, it sets examples for human beings that enable them to codify and order their live.

One can also say that the myth consists in overturning culture into nature. The social, the cultural and aesthetic consequences are presented as being a 'matter of course'. According to the scholar Eliade, myth preceded the folk and fairy tales and it had a more sacred function in communities and societies than the secular narratives. But then gradually these myths were absorbed and incorporated by the writers of classical fairy tales. The classical fairy tales makes it

appear that human beings are all part of a universal community with shared norms and values; that they are all striving for the same happiness; that there are certain dreams and wishes which are irrefutable; that a particular type of behavior will produce guaranteed results like living happily ever after with lots of gold, and a charming prince in a marvelous castle.

The twentieth century public has long been acquainted with the tales of Charles Perrault, a learned man of bourgeosie origin who as a member of both the French Academy and the Petite Academy, worked closely for twenty years with Louis XIV's minister of culture Colbert (Hannon 1998, 11). Therefore most of the literary historians tend to agree that the point of origin of literary fairy tales for children is with Charles Perrault's *Contes du temps passé* (1697). But there is another point of view as well. Perrault never intended his book to be read by children but was more concerned with demonstrating how French folklore could be adapted to the tastes of French high culture and used as a new genre of art within the French civilizing process (Zipes 1994, 17). Perrault was not alone in this mission. It was a group of writers, particularly aristocratic women, who gathered in salons during seventeenth century and created the conditions for the rise of fairy tales. Writers like Madame D' Aulnoy, Mademoiselle L' Heritier, Mademoiselle de La Force and many others expanded upon oral and literary tales. The genre of fairy tales served as a compensation for the increasing pressure on women in late seventeenth century France to retreat from the public sphere. The vogue of fairy tales enabled these women to assert and demonstrate their own vision of women's role in literary culture and society at large. The fairy tale form was particularly well-suited to this task because of its ambivalent marginality. It was at once a genre that women could appropriate without threatening male literary figures and a form that enabled them to defend and perpetuate their own locus of cultural authority (Seifert 1996, 9). In fact the very first tale narrative was published in 1690s by the most prolific practitioner of the genre, the *salonniere* Marie-Catherine d' Aulnoy. When Aulnoy published "*I'lle de la felicite*" as an embedded narrative in her best-selling novel *Histoire d'*

Hypolite, Comte de Duglas, she inaugurated the aristocratic vogue of fairy tale writing which was to last well into the eighteenth century (Hannon 1998, 12). Anne. E. Duggan in her book *Salonnieres, Furies, and Fairies: The Politics of Gender and Cultural Change* talks about the response of Perrault to the active presence and participation of aristocratic women within the public sphere. According to him they were threats to social and political order (Duggan 2005, 12). These women were not however the initiators of the literary fairy tale in Europe. Two Italian writers, Giovanni Francesco Straporola and Giambattista Basile had already set an example for what the French were accomplishing.

By the beginning of the nineteenth century when the Brothers Grimm set about to celebrate German culture through their country's folk tales, the literary fairy tale had long since been institutionalized. The Brothers Grimm then along with Hans Christian Anderson, Ludwig Bechstein, and a host of Victorian writers from George Macdonald to Oscar Wilde, assumed different ideological and aesthetic positions within this institutionalization (Zipes 1994, 12). Even the Grimm Brothers did not initially write for children: it was only after they saw the success of Edgar Taylor's English translation of their tales that they became aware of their possible appeal for children, which impelled Wilhelm to re-edit the tales they had collected—mostly from educated middle class Germans, contrary to the myth surrounding the Grimm Brothers. Thus the 1812 edition includes important distinctions from, for instance, the 1857 version.

However in Germany the popularity of the Brothers Grimm overshadowed the contribution of many women writers. These women writers have always been excluded from critical discussions and their contributions have never been acknowledged. In fact the book *The Queen's Mirror: Fairy Tales by German Women, 1780–1900* begins with the first known fairy tale written in Germany by a woman and moves on through each decade until 1900. The first author, according to this book was Catherine the Great, Empress of Russia. Her purpose was to instruct her grandsons in how to become ideal rulers. In doing so, she relied on a old European genre, the *Speculum*, *Spiegel* or Mirror: a hand book

for etiquette, mores and appropriate training for one's vocation. Between 1790 and 1810 women writers like Sophie Albrecht, Benedikte Naubert, Caroline Auguste Fischer, Frederike Helene Unger, Karoline de le Motte-Fouque, Johanna Eleonore von Wallenrodt all published fairy tales or fairy tale collections. All these publications preceded the appearance of the Grimm's two-volume collection in 1812/ 1815 (Jarvis, Shawn C. and Jeannine Blackwell 2001, 3).

From Perrault to the Grimms to Walt Disney, male authors of fairy tales have created female characters who have been sleeping through their lives. These are mostly vain representations of real women who are cloistered and trapped. They are commonly flat, one dimensional characters who come to life on account of a male character. Yet if one could look closely, it could eventually be revealed that fairy tales actually have a history filled with women authors who created rich archetypal themes in their works. This history has drawn contemporary women poets, such as Anne Sexton, Sylvia Plath, Olga Broumas, Sara De Ford, and Sara Henderson Hay, to explore and recreate the fairy tales. They have stretched the original boundaries of the tales, giving them a feminist appearance by highlighting many of the perverse misogynistic views with which the source texts were imbued. In a way all of them have tried to reclaim a literary history that once belonged to women authors whose contributions were mostly overshadowed by male compilers and editors. Women authors were responsible for very early fairy tales, accounting for nearly two-thirds of written selections historically composed in the seventeenth century. Elizabeth Wanning Harries explains much of this history in *Twice upon a Time: Women Writers and the History of the Fairy Tale.* These tales by the women authors were called 'conteuses' and they were quite different from the other better known fairy stories. For instance, they were never meant for children as they were mostly based on French salon conversations, events told for and by adults. Often the contents of such tales dealt with the struggles associated with transformations and commented on women's life and placement in the seventeenth century society. Although the plot of the male author's fairy tales were virtually the same as the

RIMA BHATTACHARYA

earlier versions written by women, the imagery, contents and finally the endings, were altered by male authors to reflect a less socially discursive attitude.

The eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries witnessed a further end to the stories written by the conteuses. According to Harries, "Stories suitable to be read in girl's school or about girls were thought at the time to be particularly moral…the fairy tale became a civilizing instrument, designed to produce women who conformed to a restrictive set of gender norms" (Harries 87). Anne Sexton tries to reclaim a part of this history in her book of modern poetic fairy tale renderings, *Transformations*. Sexton discovered a number of ideas under the surface themes of the tales. In Sexton's fairy tale poems she is the primary story teller, a modern day conteuse, driven to recreate the archetypes and to retell these fairy tales using her personal struggle with acts of volition, such as incest, alcoholism, the association of dual personalities, and a split from the human spirit.

Perrault's *Cinderella* a tale in which a girl is easily transformed from a condition of rags to riches with the help of magic propagates some strong mythic statements. *Cinderella* is one of the best-known fairytale. It is quite an old story and when first written down in China during the ninth century A.D, it already had a history. The unrivaled tiny foot size as a mark of extraordinary virtue, distinction and beauty, and the slipper made of precious material are facets which point to an Eastern, if not necessarily Chinese origin. No other fairytale renders so well as the *Cinderella* stories the inner experiences of the young child in the throes of sibling rivalry (Bettelheim 1989, 236). Cinderella is pushed and degraded by her stepsisters; her interests are sacrificed to theirs by her stepmother; she is expected to do the dirtiest work, and although she performs it well, she receives no credit for it. This is exactly how a child feels when devastated by the miseries of sibling rivalry. As with all of Perrault's stories, the trouble with his *Cinderella* is that he took fairytale material from either Basile's or some other version and freed it from all contents he considered vulgar, and refined its other features to make the product suitable to be told at court. Being an author of great skill and taste, he invented details

and changed others to make the story conform to his aesthetic concepts. It was for example, his invention that the fateful slipper was made of glass. Unlike the other versions in the Perrault's *Cinderella*, not the dead mother but a fairy godmother comes to her rescue. The fairy godmother in order to help Cinderella and uplift her status converts a pumpkin into a coach and mice and lizards into horses and footmen respectively. Marc Soriano sees in these details not only Perrault's mockery of the hearer who takes the story seriously, but also the irony with which he treats his subject. When Marc Soriano studied Perrault's fairy tales, it was not to find in them an expression of popular culture. He demonstrated the myth of the archetype that was transmitted unchanged from generation to generation. He transformed the tales into historical objects by showing how each change in a fairy tale corresponded to something in the social life of the time (Dosse 1994, 148).

In an investigation of ten randomly selected French versions of the story of *Cinderella*, it was discovered that the little words *beau* and *belle* "beautiful" appear in each; *bon* "good", on the other hand, appears only in two. Well-known titles of French fairy tales suggest that such a preference for the esthetic might be a peculiarity of the French: "*La Belle au bois dormant*" [*Sleeping Beauty*], "*La Belle et la bete*" [*Beauty and the beast].* Anyone turning to Italian fairy tales, however would soon come upon such expressions as *una bella ragazza* "a beautiful girl". And if a special "sense of beauty" has been attributed to the ancient Greeks, one is easily able to find it as well in the Greek fairy tales collected in the nineteenth and twentieth century (Luthi 1987, 1). Receptivity to the beautiful, a tendency to see and evaluate on the basis of esthetic considerations, is a general characteristic of the fairytale. A high premium is placed on feminine beauty, and beauty is equated with virtue in the majority of tales in the canon. Women are positioned as the object of men's gaze, and beauty determines a woman's value (See Trousdale 1995). In stories with a male protagonist, the helper often gives him strength, knowledge, or courage, while female protagonists are most frequently given beauty (Tatar 1987). The beauty-contest is a constant and primary device in many of the stories.

RIMA BHATTACHARYA

Where there are several daughters in a family, or several unrelated girls in a story, the prettiest is invariably singled out and designated for reward, or first for punishment and later for reward.

Beautiful girls are never ignored; they may be oppressed at first by wicked figures, as the jealous Queen persecutes Snow-White, but ultimately they are chosen for reward. This pattern, and the concomitant one of reward distribution, probably acts to promote jealousy and divisiveness among girls. The stories reflect an intensely competitive spirit: they are frequently about contests, for which there can be only one winner because there is only one prize. If a child identifies with the beauty, she may learn to be suspicious of ugly girls, who are portrayed as cruel, sly, and unscrupulous in these stories; if she identifies with the plain girls, she may learn to be suspicious and jealous of pretty girls, beauty being a gift of fate, not something that can be attained (Leiberman 1972, 385). In 1983, Ellen Cronan drew on the metaphor of the magic mirror when she published her feminist thought "Through the Looking Glass: When Women Tell Fairy Tales". The same metaphor was also used by Gilbert and Gubar in their influential work of 1979, *The Madwoman in the Attic*. For them the mirror was the patriarchal tale itself, which holds up before women the male's projection of female identity.

In fairy tales it is primary figures with human form that receive the designation "beautiful". That both the European and oriental Fairy tales happily reach for cosmic metaphors to designate human beauty, that a comparison with the sun or the moon, with gold or with silver, should be used to make clear the beauty of a person, not only demonstrates the status and something of the character of such beauty, it demonstrates in addition specific basic tendencies of the fairy tale-its universalism, its propensity for antipodean values and extremes, for the bringing together of the human and the otherworldly. The beauty of a fairytale is abstract. The listener must fall back on his imagination and color in the outline to suit himself. The heroine is the central embodiment of beauty. But even though beauty appears in feminine trappings, one notices scarcely a hint of the erotic. Beauty spellbinds and attracts with magic powers.

The socially constructed notion that physical attractiveness is one of women's most important assets, and something all women should strive to achieve and maintain, is of particular interest to feminist scholars. However a paradox of the feminine beauty ideal is that in a patriarchal system, those women who seek or gain power through their attractiveness are often those who are most dependent on men's resources (Baker-sperry and Grauerholz 2003, 712). The study of beauty's significance in children's fairy tales can provide insight into the dynamic relationship between gender, power, and culture, as well as the cultural and social significance of beauty to women's lives. Freedman notes that "women are aware that beauty counts heavily with men and they therefore work hard to achieve it" (Freedman 1986, 11). Since the heroines are chosen for their beauty (en soi), not for anything they do (pour soi), they seem to exist passively until they are seen by the hero, or described to him. They wait, are chosen, and are rewarded. Although beauty is often rewarded in Grimms' tales, it is also a source of danger. Often in the stories one would find a strong link between beauty and jealousy (Baker-sperry and Grauerholz 2003, 719).

Furthermore, beauty is often associated with being white, economically privileged, and virtuous. The problem of pervasive, internalized privileging of whiteness has been intensified by the Disney representation of fairy tale princesses which consistently reinforce an ideology of white supremacy. Sometimes in 2003 a book was released known as *Disney's (2003) Princess: The Essential Guide.* The cover included illustrations of six princesses, all from fairy tales that have appeared in various classic collections. The presentation was visually striking. For a child African heritage, not one of these Disneyfield princesses came close to resembling her as the complexion of the entire lot was white (Hurley 2005, 223). In *Snow-White* (Grimm Brothers 1945), translated by Lucas, Crane, and Edwards, the poisonous apple is described as "beautiful to look upon, being white with red cheeks, so that anyone who should see it must long for it" (173). Snow-White is consistently described as having "skin as white as snow, lips as red as blood, and hair as black as ebony" (Grimm Brothers, 1945,

RIMA BHATTACHARYA

1949, 1963). When Sleeping Beauty is in her state of rest, her skin is referred to as still "white and beautiful" (13).

In fact the black and white color symbolism in the Disney film versions is pervasive and powerful. For example, *Snow-White* (Disney 1937) features a wicked queen dressed in black who lives in a black castle that has black rats, a dangerous black forest containing black bats, and black owls (Hurley 2005, 225).

Heroes succeed because they act, not because they are. They are judged not by their appearance or inherent sweet nature but by their ability to overcome obstacles, even if these obstacles are defects in their own characters. Heroines are not allowed any defects, nor are they required to develop, since they are already perfect. The only tests of most heroines require nothing beyond what they are born with: a beautiful face, tiny feet, or a pleasing temperament. At least that is what we learn from the translations of the Grimm tales, and especially from Walt Disney (Stone 1975, 45)**.** The heroine of the story is a moral beauty as well. Objects and nature never occur in the fairy tales for their own sake. Objects stand in relationship to figures, mortal or otherworldly. Gold is for fairytale the expression of the highest degree of beauty. Whether it is also the sign of a higher world is a question of interpretation and subject to debate. Its unmistakable connection with the sun, however, is suggestive of such an interpretation. The fascination with gold goes so far that the beautiful in the fairytale, male as well as female, often have golden hair. In the Grimm's version of *Cinderella*, the hazel tree scatters gold and silver on the body of Cinderella, to form her attire. The fairy tales speak less often of glass and crystals than of gold and silver, but these materials are also appropriate for the expression of the stylistic bent of the fairytale. The breakable and yet seldom broken glass is in its way as extreme an example of the material substance as gold. The "glass slippers" of Cinderella are indispensable to the world of the fairy tales.

Gold symbolizes power, strength, and perfection. Precious metals, especially gold and silver have been known to take on greater symbolic meaning and cultural significance by various groups throughout history. The Egyptians considered gold to be the perfect metal, thus giving it the symbol of a perfect circle, sometimes reminiscent of the sun. Gold has long been considered a symbol of wealth, prestige and power. Ancient hieroglyphics describe gold as a brilliant and indestructible metal. Therefore if there was a need to portray any material or character of a fairy tale as valuable and perfect, the golden colour was used and the heroines of almost all the fairy tales had to be perfect in some way or the other. Similar to gold's comparison as a metal of the sun, silver is often considered to be the metal of the moon, with some believing that it has power over the emotions, mind, love and helps in the healing of the wearer. It is also believed that silver can help shield negativity by reflecting light from both the moon and sun, and ward off evil. Hence after being bestowed with a wonderful dress made out of gold and silver by the tree, Cinderella is able to spend a lovely evening at the ball with the prince avoiding any kind of interference from the sisters. The use of easily breakable yet never to broken glass is highly popular in fairy tales where the fragility of the glass is often compared to the fragile nature of a girl's honour that can be easily destroyed yet is purposely preserved for ages within the plot of a fairy tale only to be destroyed by some handsome prince who would come along one fine day. The identity and honour of the fairy tale heroine is almost always considered to be fragile and breakable by the male author and often in more than one ways her victimhood is exploited and fetishized.

The direct opposite of the beautiful, the ugly is in the fairytale first and foremost the foil of the beautiful. Through the effects of contrast, the beautiful becomes still more prominent, more clearly visible. The idea of the beautiful contains the idea of its polar opposite. The feminine beauty ideal operates indirectly as a means of social control insofar as women's concern with physical appearance absorbs resource (money, energy, time) that could otherwise be spent enhancing their social status. Women may voluntarily withdraw from occupations they fear will make them appear "unattractive." The competition women may feel towards other women over physical appearance may limit their ability to mobilize as a group. Karen Evans notes that in the traditional canon, a powerful

female is most often ugly if not evil (See Evans 1996). In 1970, Alison Lurie fueled feminist scholarship on fairy tales by publishing "Fairy Tale Liberation" in the *New York Review of Books*. This article and its 1971 sequel, "Witches and Fairies," argue that folktales and fairy tales can advance the cause of women's liberation because they depict strong females ("Feminist Fairy-Tale Scholarship" 2000, 15). Marcia Lieberman (1972) agrees that "women who are powerful and good are never human; those women who are human, and who have power or seek it, are nearly always portrayed as repulsive" (393). Feminists reclaim the powerful women in fairy tale, yet the traditional tales do equate feminine power with being unwomanly if not inhuman. They tell us that it is not natural for a woman to be active or powerful (Parsons 2004, 138). *Mother Holle* incorporates both the theme of beauty and ugliness. The story begins, "A widow had two daughters, one who was beautiful and industrious, the other ugly and lazy" (Grimm Brothers 1992, 88).

However as the scope of this paper permits it is also important to bring under discussion the opinions of the fairy tale critics of the modern age. Lieberman's article "Some Day My Prince Will Come" is now nearly forty years old, and feminist fairy tale theory has evolved since then under the influence of various theoretical perspectives, such as semiotics, psychoanalysis, Marxism, deconstruction theory and queer studies. Both critics and authors of fiction have shown that there are more sophisticated ways of dealing with fairy tales than the social-realistic and political approach that Lieberman represents. It is possible to draw other conclusions by drawing attention to their qualities as fantasies and by taking into account the genre's diversity and developmental history (Joosen 2011, 50).

The assumption that children automatically internalize the ideology offered in the fairy tale was countered in the 1970s and more recently by research that focuses on (female) reader response. Critics such as Kay Stone (1975), Madonna Kolbenschlag (1970), and Emma Brunt (1982) stress that not all generation of women respond to the fairy tale in the same way. Stone interviewed forty women of varying ages and backgrounds and found

that whereas many admitted of being influenced by their reading of fairy tales, there were also several others who claimed to be bored by passive fairy tale heroines. Kate Bernheimer invited various women authors to reflect on the influence that fairy tales have had on their self-image and their widely different answers suggests some of the multiplicity of ways fairy tales can mirror and form versions of the female self. Maria Tatar lends support to the same thought by referring back to Jean Jacques Rousseau to remind us of "a child's natural gift for subversion, for moving against every author's intentions "(Tatar 1992, 21).

It is also not right to say that all fairy tales comprises of mythic messages against the virtuous female characters or to believe that all the mythic messages are mostly patriarchal. According to Duggan one should not limit the scope of women writer's works to their situation in the world as a woman. Such limitations confine them to the particular, to a room of their own, thus legitimating their marginal status within French literary history. Without neglecting the position a woman writer takes as a woman, it is imperative to examine her position with respect to politics (a royalist, a feudalist, a republican), cultural change (reactionary or progressive), and social mores (conformist or critical) (Duggan 2005, 20). In this light one can study Madame D' Aulnoy who consciously composed tales with the intention of presenting a woman's viewpoint with regard to topics as tender love, fidelity, courtship, honor and arranged marriages. *The Ram* and *The Green Serpent* are D' Aulnoy's two most interesting commentaries on what manners a young woman should cultivate in determining her own destiny. The power in all her tales is held by fairies, wise or wicked women, who ultimately judge whether a young woman deserves to be rewarded.

When people think of fairy tales today, they usually think of classical fairy tales. Newly written fairy tales, especially those that are innovative and radical, are unusual, exceptional, strange and artificial because they do not conform to the patterns set by the classical fairy tales. People are safe with the familiar. They shun the new, the real innovations. Fairy tales were told and retold in many cultures before they were written down and they

have subsequently been written and rewritten by many authors for many reasons. Quite simply, there is no genuine or authentic version of a fairy tale. Jack Zipes (2001) discusses contamination: a term used by folklorists to describe foreign augmentation to what appears to be a pure narrative tradition. Contamination has traditionally had a negative connotation, but Zipes opens up the possibility that it has positive aspects as well. "Contamination can be an enrichment process; it can lead to the birth of something unique and genuine in its own right" (102). Therefore one could say, for better *and* for worse, all fairy tales are contaminated. Re-visions are one form of contamination (Parsons 2004, 138).

The classical fairytale makes it appear that all men are part of a universal community with shared values and norms; that they are all striving for the same happiness, that there are certain dreams and wishes which are irrefutable and that a particular type of behavior will produce guaranteed results. The fairytale is a myth. The classical fairytale has undergone a process of mythicization. Any fairytale in order to become natural and eternal for a society must become a myth. Only innovative fairy tales are anti-mythical, resists the tide of mythicization, comment on the fairytale as myth. The classical myths have also become ideologically mythicized, de-historicized, de-politicized to represent and maintain the hegemonic interests of the bourgeoisie. Classical myths and fairy tales are contemporary myths that pervade the daily lives of men in the manner described by Roland Barthes in *Mythologies* and in *Image- Music- Text*[1] (Zipes 2002, 148).

The fairy tale, which has become the mythified classical fairy tale, is petrified in its restored constellation. What belonged to archaic societies, what belonged to pagan tribes and communities was passed down by word of mouth as a good only to be hardened into script, Christian and patriarchal. In *Gyn / Ecology* (1990) Mary Daly states that "patriarchy perpetuates its deception through myth" and makes the following comparison: "The child who is fed tales such as *Snow White* is not told that the tale itself is a poisonous apple" (44). The fairy tale has undergone a motivated process of revision, reordering, and refinement. All the tools of modern industrial society have made their mark on

the fairy tale to make it classical ultimately in the name of the bourgeoisie which refuses to be named, denies involvement. The fairytale must appear harmless, natural, eternal, ahistorical (Zipes 2002, 150). According to Zipes the myth within any fairy tale acts to deny its historical and systematic development. It takes material that already has a signification and reworks it parasitically to make it suitable for communication in an ideological mode that appears nonideological (Zipes 1994, 6). For instance, the story of *The Sleeping Beauty* is frozen. It appears to have always been there, and with each rising sun she, will always be there, flat on her back, with a prince hovering over her, kissing her or about to kiss her[2]. This tale has a long history and is found in written accounts as early as the fourteenth century, in Catalan (Goldberg 2000, 467). Better known are the versions in Giambattista Basile's *Penatmerone,* Charles Perrault's *Histoires ou contes du temps passé,* and the Grimm brothers' *Kinder- und Hausmärchen*. Older versions, such as Basile's, often have Beauty raped by her "rescuer" and only awaken at the birth of her children. Some, such as Perrault, have her awaken at the instant of her prince's proximity (Lash 2008, 68). Disney was a mythomaniac in the broadest sense of the word, and in his hands, *Sleeping Beauty* conveyed numerous seemingly innocent and neutral messages as maxims.

Bruno Bettelheim, well-known psychoanalytical child psychologist, offers an analysis of the tale in his 1976 *The Uses of Enchantment.* His analysis spans both the features of time, and especially the symbolic coming of age encoded in the story's plot features. He primarily sees the tale as a parable of adolescence, whose purpose is to reassure young audiences that their own adolescent periods of lethargy will pass in time. He also draws a very clear correlation between Beauty's infamous finger prick and resultant bleeding and the onset of female menses (Bettelheim 1989, 232).

The formulaic "once upon a time" stereotypically associated with the fairy tale often seem to suggest that the genre is largely about temporal displacement from the present to the mythical past or to an imaginative time not governed by the laws of everyday life ("Children,

RIMA BHATTACHARYA

War, and the Imaginative Space of Fairy Tales" 2000, 362). Max Lüthi, in *The European Folktale: Form and Nature,* differs from Bettelheim in that he focuses primarily on the time and timelessness in the tale. If the fairy tale is in fact "timeless," that timelessness derives largely from its structural disinterest in time. According to Max Lüthi, the folktale's characteristic one-dimensionality and depthlessness result in part from the genre's "indifference to the passage of time" (Luthi 1981, 19), and "the insignificance of the passage of time" is an "essential characteristic of the folktale" (Luthi 1981, 20). "Time," Lüthi argues, "is a function of psychological experience," and "since the characters of the folktale are only figures who carry forward the plot and have no inner life, folktales must also lack the experience of time" (Luthi 1981, 21). He finds fault in the Grimm and Perrault versions of the tale, both of which go into great detail about the antiquated state of beauty and the castle, arguing that these literary minutiae destroy the central timelessness of the tale, and the message that the passage of time is not to be feared. As do most analyses of *Sleeping Beauty*, he sees the sleep and awakening as a coming of age and a maturation process. Further, he makes the interesting point that because of the nature of time in the tale, the rescuing Prince is special only in his timing (Lash 2008, 69). Lüthi further admits, that: "Apparently the only way that folktales can express spiritual otherness is through geographical separation" (Luthi 1981, 9). He admits furthermore that the folktale "expresses inner distance through visible separation" (Luthi 1981, 9). Noting the prevalence of isolation in folktales, Lüthi observes that "the characters of the folktale are thus separated from familiar people and familiar places and go out into the world as isolated individuals" (Luthi 1981, 38). Clearly, then, the fundamental themes of separation and exile in fairy tales are spatially conceived and spatially driven. It is also important to analyze the spatial delineation of gender identities. The question of chastity was highly important for a young girl. Having identified women with the body and by extension sexuality, seventeenth century male fairy tale writers of France proceeded to envelop her in the silence of chastity, while enclosing her, as if for safe measure, in secret interior spaces (Hannon 1998, 36).

For instance the fairy tale "*Rapunzel*" originated many centuries earlier in Mediterranean Europe and can be traced back to the ancient Greek folktale "*Anthousa the Fair with Golden Hair*." In fact the rudiments of this so-called puberty tale stretch all the way back to the days before recorded history as long before it had been a common practice among tribal societies to confine a young girl of Rapunzel's age inside a "puberty hut" during the time of her mensuration. In their constructions these structures often took the shape of a tower. Most of the ancient cultures practiced some manner of isolation of a young girl, separating her from the community at the first onset of her menses. Her responsibility is then mostly placed in the hands of the elder women of the tribe, who then prepare her for womanhood. Rapunzel's confinement within a tower also takes place at the age of puberty with her guardian being an old woman. Like *Rapunzel*, *Sleeping Beauty* is also considered to be a puberty-tale, with the young princess finding herself confined at the age of puberty but instead of having an awareness of her surroundings as Rapunzel did, the princess undergoes a long sleep cast on her by mystical means. However one does not have to look back at the ancient tribal societies to seek out examples of confinement. It was and in fact even today is a common practice in some remote areas of our society. There is practically no end to the pathological discourse surrounding a girl's puberty age and the physical and psychological restrictions that are imposed on a girl at that age by her immediate family circle and the society. The arrangement of such confinements are undoubtedly made for the same reasons that Foucault mentions in his work "the great confinement" in which he gives a detailed description of the manner in which certain members of the society like madmen, prostitutes, vagrants and blasphemers were confined in order to separate them completely from the society. In Foucault's discussion of the mid-seventeenth century society, these confined sections of the society had no other option than to take the responsibility of their conditions on themselves, but the pathological condition of a girl arriving at her age of puberty is totally out of her control, yet she has to pay the same price of confinement.

Sleeping Beauty is not only about female and male stereotypes and male hegemony; it is also about death, our fear of death, and our wish for immortality. Sleeping Beauty is resurrected. She triumphs over death. As the eternal brier rose, she rises from the dead to love and fulfill her desires. The revival or resurrection of Sleeping Beauty, a symbolical figure of hope against the forces of death, cannot exist in the classical version today, for its sexist closure, its pristine heterosexual and patriarchal resolution is a coffin of another kind. The resurrection must take its place outside the mythic framework in such recreations as Yolen's *Sleeping Ugly*, or Martin Waddell's *The Tough Princess*. These tales question the illusion of happiness and universality in the classical tales and make us realize how far we have yet to go to bring the anticipatory illuminations of concrete utopia to fulfillment. They do not deceive with their symbols and metaphors but illuminate. Anne Rice, in the act of turning *Sleeping Beauty* into a work of erotica, literalizes the sexuality implicit in the tale. In 1983, Anne Rice, under the pseudonym A. N. Roquelaure, published the first of a series of erotic novels about Sleeping Beauty. Her 1983 *The Claiming of Sleeping Beauty* was followed by *Beauty's Punishment* in 1984 and *Beauty's Release* in 1985. The back cover of the first book in the trilogy, *The Claiming of Sleeping Beauty,* states: "Anne Rice's retelling of the Beauty story probes the unspoken implications of this lush, suggestive tale by exploring its undeniable connection to sexual desire" (Lash 2008, 71).

Carolina Fernández Rodriguez, in a 2002 essay titled "The Deconstruction of the Male-Rescuer Archetype in Contemporary Feminist Revisions of 'The Sleeping Beauty,'" examines how feminist writers question the role of male rescuer. Looking at revisions of fairy tales by well-known feminists like Anne Sexton, as well as by lesser-known Spanish and Latin American women such as Luisa Valenzuela, Rodriguez has analyzed the changes that the male rescuer has undergone in recent versions of the tale. She points out a dramatic shift in the nature and function of the rescuer, and outlines ways in which feminist revisions "demythologize the traditional hero" and "offer different alternatives to it" (52). Rodriguez has mainly suggested three alternatives to the

traditional male rescuer in case the victim under spell is a female: first female cooperation, which plays out in mother-daughter relationships, or simply relationship between two women who have no kinship; second, self-liberation; and third homosexual relationships. There also exist texts where the victim is male like in Ann Downer's "*Somnus's Fair Maid*" (1994). In these cases the rescuing function is performed by the female character (Rodriguez 2002, 57). In 1979, the feminist literary scholar Carolyn G. Heilbrun proposed that "myth, tale, and tragedy must be transformed by bold acts of reinterpretation in order to enter the experience of the emerging female self" (Heilbrun 1993, 150). Heilbrun argues that "what woman must learn to assume is that she is not confined to the role of the princess; that the hero, who wakens Sleeping Beauty with a kiss, is that part of herself that awakens conventional girlhood to the possibility of life and action" (Heilbrun 1993, 150).

But to recall the utopian impulse of fairytale narrative, to keep the utopian impulse of the socio-cultural act alive, it is not only necessary to demythicize the classical fairy tales but also to expose the mythic connotations of fairytale illustrations. Therefore, in analyzing *Sleeping Beauty*, it is not only the printed text that must be considered but the pictures and images. There were many gifted artist like George Cruinkshank, Ludwig Grimm, Gustav Dore, Richard Doyle and others, who came to dedicate their skills to the development of fairytale illustrations. In other words, the production of fairytale illustrations was, at first, exclusively in the hands of men commissioned by publishers to design illustrations for particular books. Fairytale illustration and production were established and designed in accordance with male fantasies. Imaginative fairytale projection served the underlying desires and ideas of a patriarchal culture. The source of emission of a fairytale illustration was constituted by: the artist, the author/ editor, the technician, the book designer and last but not the least, the publisher. Depending on the publisher's policy and the type of publication, the illustration could have different functions[3] as: 1) Decoration; 2) analogue to the text; 3) commentary on the text (Zipes 2002, 158).

The connotative aspects of *The Sleeping Beauty* and *Cinderella* illustrations are most intriguing since they demonstrate how little its ideological mythic message has changed from the nineteenth century to the present. If one studies three recent *Sleeping Beauty* books by a group of unusually gifted writers and illustrators, one shall see how astonishing little has been altered since the early nineteenth century with regard to the socio-political gesture of text and image. The three books are *The Sleeping Beauty* retold and illustrated by Trina Schart Hyman, *The Sleeping Beauty* retold and illustrated by Mercer Mayer, and *The Sleeping Beauty* retold by Jane Yolen and illustrated by Ruth Sanderson.

As myths, fairytale illustrations are statements of fact, of naturalness, of maxims. Hyman's *Sleeping Beauty* is the only book with a cover that depicts the prince [4]. He is sitting on the ledge of a wide arch window with vines and flowers on its borders and peering into the distance, where there is a road leading to sunlit mountains. The rugged-looking prince definitely has a goal in mind. One can tell this by his determined look. If one flips the book to the back, one can immediately see what his goal is. He stands there holding his prize, a beautiful, young, smiling princess, in his powerful arms. It is as if the girl were swept off her feet. This scene seemingly takes place before the same wide arch window trimmed by the same vines and flowers, but this time there is a castle in the background with a path leading to it. The meaning of the narrative has been framed and formalized from the moment we look at the prince looking into the distance. The goal of every prince (every man) is fulfilled by a beautiful, long-haired young woman, with a fair complexion, especially if she is connected to a castle, money and power. The sleeping beauty's meaning in life is introduced to us on the cover.

In contrast to Hyman, Mercer Mayer endeavors to question the mythic narrative of *Sleeping Beauty* by altering the classical Grimm text in an original manner. Mayer's illustrations remain traditional and re-posit the myth of male adventure and prowess in slightly different hue and form. The key scenes on the cover and repeated towards the end of the book represents a tender male hovering over a beautiful, long-haired princess dressed in jewels and a gold-trimmed green gown. His clothes are torn, for he has made his way through the thorn bushes, and the jeweled handle of his sword protruding from his halter has strong sexual connotations [5](Zipes 2002, 162). However overt sexual references, if they even find their way into original collections, rarely appear in children's books. Translations of the Grimms, for example, usually omit the fact that Rapunzel's initial encounter with the prince resulted in twins. The Grimms' "other" *Cinderella*, "*All-Kinds-of-Fur*", is usually left out altogether, since the heroine is forced to leave home to avoid her father's threats of an incestuous marriage. A "Disney version" of this tale is difficult to imagine, for Disney found even the more passive Grimm version of *Cinderella* unsuitable for children and used the more innocuous Perrault version instead (Stone 1975, 46).

Other sexual references are more subtle. One must look closely to discover that it is at puberty that Rapunzel is locked in a tower, Snow White is sent out to be murdered, and Sleeping Beauty put to sleep. Such heroines have their freedom severely restricted at a time in life when heroes are discovering full independence and increased power. Restrictions on girls at puberty, in contrast to the increased freedom their brothers enjoy, possibly explain the intensely sympathetic reaction many women have to such passive heroines in fairy tales. Among the classic English tales of romance, "*Cinderella*," "*Sleeping Beauty in the Wood*," "*Snow-Drop*," "*The Tale of the Kind and the Unkind Girls*," "*Beauty and the Beast*," and "*The Frog-Prince*" focus on the crucial period of adolescence, dramatizing archetypal female dilemmas and socially acceptable resolutions. Confronted by the trauma of blossoming sexuality, for instance, the young girl subliminally responds to fairy tale projections of adolescent conflicts. She often achieves comforting release from anxieties by subconsciously perceiving in symbolic tales the commonness of her existential dilemma (Rowe 2010, 240). Moreover, the equal-handed justice and optimistic endings instill confidence that obstacles can be conquered as she progresses from childhood to maturity. More than alleviating psychic fears associated with the rite of passage, however, tales also prescribe approved cultural paradigms which

ease the female's assimilation into the adult community. J. L. Fischer argues cogently for the complex interaction of psychological, sociological, and structuralist interpretations of tales and formulates a functional approach: "For a tale to persist, therefore, some sort of balance must be achieved between two sets of demands: one, the demands of the individual for personal pleasure and the reduction of his anxiety, and the other, the demands of other members of the society that the individual pursue his personal goals only in ways which will also contribute to, or at least not greatly harm, the welfare of the society" (Fischer 1963, 259).

The twin purposes of instruction and delight have long been accepted as the primary goals of children's literature and specially that of fairy tales. John Newbery, a London bookseller, published at least thirty children's books and is recognized as the first British publisher to make children's books a permanent and profitable branch of the book trade. Newbery's *A Little Pretty Pocket-Book* (1744) is the first significant commercial children's book published in English. Greatly influenced by John Locke's *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* (1693), the frontispiece of *A Little Pretty Pocket-Book* features the motto "*Delectando Momenus*: Instruction with Delight," which Newbery borrowed directly from Locke. Locke modified the concept from Horace's *Ars poetica* (*On the Art of Poetry*). While Locke rejected fairy tales, he felt fables, because they often were coupled with a moral, were appropriate texts for children. He specifically recommended both *Reynard the Fox* (1481) and *Aesop's Fables* (1484). However critics and researchers later have revealed the fact that there is a whole body of moral system working behind the myths that combine to form a fairy tale. Another major educational theorist to have a profound influence on children's literature and fairy tales was Jean-Jacques Rousseau, whose *Émile* (1762) was published in France and quickly translated into English. In *Émile* Rousseau rejected the Puritan concept of original sin and maintained that children were born innocent but were later corrupted by society. Ironically for a text that was to inspire the publication of many

children's books, Rousseau thought children should learn by doing rather than by reading.

Sexuality is also portrayed as harmful to the heroine herself. There are many symbolic hints that women should not become too familiar with their own bodies. Bluebeard's wives are murdered for looking into forbidden rooms, and Sleeping Beauty is punished with near death from a sharp object for doing so. Other heroines are threatened with death for breaking a tabu against looking into a fireplace in versions of "*The Kind and the Unkind Girls*", and little girls are murdered by their stepmothers for breaking jugs in several versions of "*The Juniper Tree*" (Stone 1975, 48). The feminist Francine Prose, states that the tale's "elements (the pricked finger, the drop of blood, the long swoon, the Prince who slashes through the bramble hedge to deliver the saving kiss) are so naively transparent, their sexual content so naked, that we may be reminded of those textbook-Freudian dreams in which the dreamer's teeth fall out, or trains disappear into tunnels....embarrassing to observe one's mysterious and fascinating subconscious surfacing in narratives so predictable, so banal" (Prose 1998, 293). However, Prose also sees the story as a paradigm of cultural programming, a primer in female passivity (Lash 2008, 70). Prose claims that sometimes embedded in tales are "secrets judged not merely too dangerous to admit, but too anarchic and subversive to permit oneself to think" (Prose 1998, 295).

Again one cannot fail to get the message from the cover of Ruth Sanderson's illustrated *The Sleeping Beauty*. Even though her technique is flawless, the results are disappointing. Another arched rock window trimmed with vines and flowers. In contrast to Hyman's cover, the handsome young prince here is dressed in medieval costumes hovering over a sleeping long-haired fair princess [6]. She has used the Pre-Raphaelites as models and designed a book with Renaissance flavor and taste, but her technique and her compositions are imitative and only serve to repeat what one has always known to be true about sleeping princess; they will never wake up to face reality unless wakened by a valorous, handsome prince (Zipes 2002, 163).

In the various versions of the tale and illustration of *Cinderella* one comes across similar mythic messages and maxims. The importance of the first three major literary *Cinderellas*–Giambattista Basile, Charles Perrault, and the Brothers Grimm–consists in the manner in which they continue to transmit residues and traces of the matrilineal tradition, while also reformulating how oral symbolic motifs and topoi could be used to represent social experience. By virtue of what Cinderella represents to contemporary women, the character of Cinderella passed from her fairytale origins to mythical proportions. Cinderella has escaped the bounds of her own story. Cinderella defines girls' first choice for a romantic partner, the strictures of friendship and obedience that girls are trained to uphold, unconditional family love and, not least, ideals of personal appearance and deportment. Cinderella demonstrates the potential of even the least socially advantaged female to achieve public success, the ability of the meek to triumph over the (female) competition, the trick of appearing to be what one is not. These are important techniques in the battle for male approval. If one has impressed Cinderella into service as a myth, it is because of the need to look up and forward to a figure who has successfully navigated the obstacles on the distinctly female journey. Cinderella's rags-to-riches story inspires females to prevail against improbable odds. People do not believe in myths because of some inherent truth in them, but because they substantiate what those people most wish to be true: Cinderella is a falsehood painted as possibility. What one worships in her is not what she is but what she gets. Subscribing to the myth of Cinderella, allows women to sustain their collective female belief in wealth, beauty, and revenge. One can relate to the myth of Cinderella even in today's world, if one takes into consideration the recent matrimonial ads in which the groom almost always desires a fair, beautiful, charming and domestic girl for marriage. In fact the trivial matters of a fairy tale often echo the emergence of a popular culture and it has been a popular culture through ages to take a bride who is fair, beautiful, meek and submissive. Therefore often girls in order to transform themselves into suitable matches take up such attitudes and imbibe them even though their true nature must be something else. Situations become highly complicated for a genuine girl who has not been bestowed with so much beauty as fairy tales are enough to create a reservation against them in the minds of every male reader. This further leads to the development of a kind of inferiority complex within the girls of average looks. Girls begin to consider the procurement of wealth and status to be the only benefits of marriage and this in turn increases the predicament of not so wealthy boys. Apart from such repercussions the commercial market enchases the popular culture by producing cosmetic products and fairness creams for girls, all of which often claims to make them more fair and beautiful. There have been hundreds of literary, dramatic, musical, poetic, and cinematic versions of '*Cinderella*' since the early nineteenth century, and the 'heroine' of the story has become the icon of a rags-to-riches success story. However, since the 1970s, many feminists and postmodern writers have questioned the passive aspects of a girl who waits for her prince, and the term 'Cinderella Complex' has come to stand for a troubled woman who cannot determine her own destiny (Zipes 2000, 97).

The concept of marriage is a very important part of the fairy tale. A major social institution, marriage functions not merely as a comic ending, but also as a bridge between the worlds of fantasy and reality. Whereas "once upon a time" draws the reader into a timeless fantasy realm of ogresses, fairies, animistic nature, meamorphoses, and wish-fulfillment, the wedding ceremony catapults her back into contemporary reality. Precisely this close association of romantic fiction with the actuality of marriage as a social institution proves the most influential factor in shaping female expectations (Rowe 2010, 251). Marriage is associated with getting rich: it will be seen that the reward basis in fairy and folk tales is overwhelmingly mercenary. If the heroine or hero is already rich, she or he may marry someone of equal rank and wealth. Since girls are chosen for their beauty, it is easy for a child to infer that beauty leads to wealth, that being chosen means getting rich (Lieberman 1972, 386). The system of rewards in fairy tales, then, equates these three factors: being beautiful, being chosen, and getting rich (Lieberman 1972, 387).

RIMA BHATTACHARYA

The early illustration of *Cendrillon* by Gustav Dore depicts the ball to which Cinderella goes and meets the prince [7]. The face of the prince is marked by an expression of almost revealing lasciviousness. Cinderella on the other hand is portrayed as a meek, almost cowering figure, even as almost all the men and women of the ball are trying hard to get a single glimpse of her. The painter cleverly depicts the fact that being the centre of attention, should not be a source of joy for the woman, but a source of intimidation. Thus it seems to propagate the mythic message that women should be meek, shy, fearful and submitting in all situations.

Another well-known version of Cinderella was recorded by the brothers Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm in the 19th century. The tale is called *"Aschenputtel"* (*"Cinderella"* in English translations) and in this tale the help comes to Cinderella not from a fairy-godmother but the wishing tree that grows on her mother's grave. This version lowers the Prince's status and he seems less heroic, raising Cinderella's status as a strong-willed individual. A stamp series published for social welfare in the year of 1969, depict the picture of *Aschenputte*l [8]. Apparently the picture depicts many noteworthy changes which could make one think that the figure of Cinderella has considerably evolved from the stages when it was tied down by the patriarchal shackles. The girl here is dressed in a simple dress and not in an elaborate gown. She is not depicted as an epitome of beauty but has a common and plain look. Even her hair is not long but cut short. But her attitude has not changed much. She is depicted to be sitting passively on a mound, with a bowl in her hand and feeding the doves. This is again a repetition of the scene, so common in fairy tales, depicting the domestication of girls.

One of the most popular versions of *Cinderella* was written by Charles Perrault in 1697. The popularity of his tale was due to his additions to the story including the pumpkin, the fairy-godmother and the introduction of glass slippers. This particular story has inspired numerous illustrations from the early to the modern times. Unfortunately the mythic connotations were never discarded from the illustrations. While the illustration by Oliver Herford, depicts the common scene of domestication, where Cinderella is engaged in cooking, a more modern illustration by Eric Kincaid depicts Cinderella dressed in a glorious gown, almost in the manner of a 'fashion queen'. She is all set to bedazzle the prince, more by the virtue of her outer beauty, than her inner beauty and personality.

If the fairy tale survived many centuries in oral tradition and has vigorously continued to live on for more than a hundred and fifty years in book form, the reason is to be sought in the freedom which it allows and offers to listeners, readers and narrators. The narrator is allowed the freedom to discover and realize new variations, new possibilities of development and new narrative goals. He is reteller and model for other tellers, heir and innovator at the same time, just as man is the carrier of tradition but oriented towards the future, preserver and renewer in one, and the fairy tale itself, in the form of repetitions and anticipations, set forth this basic condition of man. Limitation and freedom, integration into the whole but preservation of the identity of the individual element, stability and dynamism, clarity and mystery, recollection and anticipation, and reality and utopia are bound up into the narrative form of fairy tales and the history of its transmission, just as they are into the nature of man himself.

End Notes

[1] The myth acts to deny its historical and systematic development. It takes material that already has a signification and reworks it parasitically to make it suitable for communication in an ideological mode that appears non-ideological. Barthes views myth as a double system; its point of departure is constituted by the arrival of a meaning. For Barthes, myth is a collective representation that is socially determined and then inverted so as not to appear as a cultural artefact. Myth is a manipulated speech. Barthes defines myth as a type of speech defined by its intention. According to him its intention is somehow frozen, purified, eternalized, made absent by a literal sense. See Jack Zipes, The *Brothers Grimm: From Enchanted Forests to the Modern World*, 2nd Edition (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 149.

[2] Just the presence of a man in the Perrault version of *The Sleeping Beauty* of 1697 is enough to break

the enchantment and revive the princess. The Grimms add the kiss in 1812 to bring her back to life. They make us forget their literary ancestors in the fourteenth century romance *Perceforest* and in Basile's sixteenth-century *Pentamore*, two works that prefigured the revised tales by Perrault and Grimms. We are not to remember that the anonymous author of *Percefrost* mocked the chivalrous code of courtly love and portrayed a more realistic picture of a knight taking advantage of a sleeping lady. Basile's tale and similar motifs from *Percefrost* became the stuff of myth. It was almost predictable and acceptable for a man to take advantage of a defenseless woman. By Perrault's times this behavior continued, but it was not openly condoned, and thus Perrault pointed to a different moral resolution when he rewrote Basile's tale. It was evidently Grimm's shorter more prudent version which became frozen into a bourgeois myth about the proper way that males save and are to save comatose women. See Jack Zipes, *The Brothers Grimm: From Enchanted Forests to the Modern World*, 2nd Edition (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 151.

[3] Depending on the publisher's policy and the type of publication, the illustration had different functions. As an analogue to the text, the illustration had a denotative function, to reinforce the lines of the text to which it referred without deviating form the apparent, literal meaning of those lines. As a commentary on the text, the illustration had a connotative function, to refer to a concept beyond the apparent meaning of the text. Naturally the illustration could be and often was analogue and commentary at the same time. Yet, for the most part, fairytale illustration was developed along ideological lines as an intended commentary on the text. See Jack Zipes, *The Brothers Grimm: From Enchanted Forests to the Modern World*, 2nd Edition (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 159.

[4] See the cover- page of *The Sleeping Beauty: Silver Anniversary Edition*, retold and illustrated by Trina Schart Hyman. See Heidi Anne Heiner, "Trina Schart Hyman in Fairy Tale Art: Illustrations from Children's Books," *SurLaLune Fairy Tales Blog*, 4 Jan 2011, Accessed on 2 May 2012. <http://surlalunefairytales.blogspot.in/2011/01/day-1-trina-schart-hyman-in-fairy-tale.html>.

[5] See the cover-page of *The Sleeping Beauty* retold and illustrated by Mercer Mayer. See "The Illustrations of Mercer Mayer," *Poliorketika*: *Art and Design*, 21 June 2010, Accessed on 22 March 2012. <http://poliorketika.com/2010/06/21/the-illustrations-of-mercer-mayer/>.

[6] See the cover-page of *The Sleeping Beauty* retold by Jane Yolen, illustrated by Ruth Sanderson. See "Yolen, Jane (re-told by) - THE SLEEPING BEAUTY - Illustrated by Ruth Sanderson," *Etsy: Vintage Childrens Books,* Assessed 27 April 2012. <http://www.etsy.com/listing/45257269/yolen-jane-re-told-by-the-sleeping>.

[7] See the illustration of *Cendrillon* by Gustav Dore. See "Illustration for Charles Perrault's *Cinderella* from *Histoires ou Contes du Temps passé: Les Contes de ma Mère l'Oye* (1697)," *Wikipedia*, 22 April 2007, Assessed on 27 April 2012. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Cendrillon2.JPG>. Gustave Doré's illustrations appear in an 1867 edition entitled *Les Contes de Perrault*. It is the second of three engravings.

[8] See the stamp of 1969 depicting the picture of *Aschenputtel*. See "Series for social welfare 1965, fairy tale of the brothers Grimm, *Cinderella*," *Wikipedia*, 21 March 2009, Assessed on 28 April 2012. <http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:DBP_1965_485_Wohlfahrt_Aschenputtel.jpg>

WORKS CITED

Aries, Philippe. *Centuries of Childhood*. Trans. Robert Baldick. New York: Vintage Books, 1965. Print.

Baker-Sperry, Lori., and Liz Grauerholz. "The Pervasiveness and Persistence of the Feminine Beauty Ideal in Children's Fairy Tales." *Gender and Society* 17.5 (October): 2003. 711–726. Print.

Bettelheim, Bruno. *The Uses of Enchantment: The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales.* New York: Vintage Books, 1989. Print.

Bottigheimer, Ruth B. "Tale Spinners: Submerged Voices in Grimms' Fairy Tales." *New German Critique* 27 (Autumn): 1982. 141–150. Print

Daly, Mary. *Gyn/Ecology: The Metaethics of Radical Feminism*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1990. Print.

Darnton, R. "Peasants tell tales: The meaning of Mother Goose." *The Classic Fairy Tales*. Ed. Maria Tatar. New York & London: W. W. Norton & Company, 1999. pp. 280–290. Print.

Dosse, Francois. *New History in France: the triumph of the Annales*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994. Print.

Duggan, Anne E. *Salonnières, Furies, and Fairies: The Politics of Gender and Cultural Change in Absolutist France*. Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2005. Print.

Evans, K. S. "A closer look at literature discussion groups: The influence of gender on student response and discourse." *The New Advocate* 3: 1996. 183–196. Print.

Fischer, J. L. "The Sociopsychological Analysis of Folktales." *Current Anthropology* 4: 1963. 235–95. Print.

Freedman, Rita. *Beauty Bound*. Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1986. Print.

Gilbert, P. "The story so far: Gender, literacy and social regulation." *Gender and Education* 4: 1992. 185–199. Print.

Goldberg, Harriet. "Sleeping Beauty." *The Oxford Companion to Fairy Tales.* Ed. Jack Zipes. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2000. Print.

Grimm, Brothers. "Snow White and the seven dwarfs." Trans. E.V. Lucas, L.Crane, & M.Edwards. *Grimms Fairy Tales by the Brothers Grimm*. New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1945. pp. 166–177. Print.

____. "Snow White." Trans. E. Taylor. Selections by M. Edwardes 1824-1826, 1839. *Grimms Fairy Tales*. New York: Dutton, 1949. pp. 138–145. Print.

____. "Snow White." Trans. L. Crane. *Household Stories by the Brothers Grimm.* New York: Dover, 1963. pp. 213–221. Print.

_____. *The complete fairy tales of the Brothers Grimm*. Trans. Jack Zipes. New York: Bantam, 1992. Print.

Haase, Donald. "Children, War, and the Imaginative Space of Fairy Tales." *The Lion and the Unicorn* 24. 3(September): 2000. 360–377. Print.

____. "Feminist Fairy-Tale Scholarship: A Critical Survey and Bibliography." *Marvels and Tales* 14.1: 2000. 15–63. Print.

Hannon, Patricia. *Fabulous Identities: Women's Fairy Tales in Seventeenth-century France*. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1998. Print.

Harries, Elizabeth Wanning. *Twice Upon a Time: Women Writers and the History of the Fairy Tale*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2001. Print.

Heilbrun, Carolyn G. *Reinventing Womanhood*. 1979. New York: Norton, 1993. Print.

Hurley, Dorothy L. "Seeing White: Children of Color and the Disney Fairy Tale Princesses." *The Journal of Negro Education* 74. 3 (Summer): 2005.221–232. Print.

Jarvis, Shawn C. and Jeannine Blackwell. (Eds). *The Queen's Mirror: Fairy Tales by German Women, 1780-1900*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2001. Print.

Joosen, Vanessa. *Critical and Creative Perspectives on Fairy Tales: An Intertextual Dialogue between Fairy-Tale Scholarship and Postmodern Retellings.* Michigan: Wayne State University Press, 2011. Print.

Lash, Sarah. "Intellectualizing Smut: The Role of Tradition in Anne Rice's *Sleeping Beauty*." *Marvels and Tales* 22. 1: 2008. 67–76. Print.

Lieberman, Marcia R. '"Some Day My Prince Will Come': Female Acculturation through the Fairy Tale." *College English* 34.3 (Dec): 1972. 383–395. Print.

Luthi, Max. *Once Upon a Time: On the Nature of Fairy Tales*. Trans. Lee Chadeayne and Paul Gottwald. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1976. Print.

____. *The Fairy Tale: As Art Form and Portrait of Man*. Trans. Jon Erickson Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987. Print.

____. *The European Folktale: Form and Nature.* Trans. John D. Niles. Philadelphia: Institute for the Study of Human Issues, 1982. Trans. of *Das europäische Volksmärchen: Form und Wesen*. 7th ed. Berne: Francke, 1981. Print.

Parsons, Linda T. "Ella Evolving: Cinderella Stories and the Construction of Gender-Appropriate Behavior." *Children's Literature in Education* 35.2 (June): 2004. 135–154. Print.

Paul, L. *Reading Otherways*, chap. 1 & 2. Portland, ME: Calendar Islands Publishers LLC, 1998. Print.

Prose, Francine. "Sleeping Beauty." *Mirror, Mirror on the Wall: Women Writers ExploreTheir Favorite Fairy Tales.* Ed. Kate Bernheimer. New York: Anchor Books, 1998. pp. 293–303. Print.

Rodriguez, Carolina Fernandez. "The Deconstruction of the Male-Rescuer Archetype in Contemporary Feminist Revisions of 'The Sleeping Beauty.'" *Marvels and Tales* 16.1: 2002. 51–70. Print.

Rowe, Karen E. "Feminism and Fairy Tales". *Women's Studies: An Inter-disciplinary Journal* 6.3: 2010. 237–257. Print.

Sale, Roger. *Fairy Tales and After: From Snow White to E. B. White*. Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1978. Print.

Seifert, Lewis C. *Fairy tales, sexuality and gender in France 1690–1715 Nostalgic Utopias*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996. Print.

Stone, Kay. "Things Walt Disney Never Told Us." *The Journal of American Folklore* 88. 347 (Jan–March): 1975. 42–50. Print.

Tatar, Maria. *The Hard Facts of the Grimm's Fairy Tales*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1987. Print.

____. (Ed.). *The Classic Fairy Tales*. New York & London: W. W. Norton & Company, 1999. Print.

____. *Off With their Heads! Fairy tales and the Culture of Childhood*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1992. Print.

Taxel, J. "The Politics of children's literature." Ed. V. Harris. *Teaching multicultural literature in grades K-8.* Norwood, MA: Christopher-Gordon Publishers, 1992. Inc. pp. 3–35. Print.

Trousdale, A. M. "I'd rather be normal: A young girl's responses to 'feminist' fairy tales." *The New Advocate* 8: 1995. 167–182. Print.

Weitzman, Lenore J., Deborah Eifler, Elizabeth Hokada, and Catherine Ross. "Sex role socialization in picture books for preschool children." *American Journal of Sociology* 77: 1972. 1125–1149. Print.

Westland, E. "Cinderella in the classroom: Children's responses to gender roles in fairy-tales." *Gender and Education* 5: 1993. 237–249. Print.

Zipes, Jack. *Breaking the Magic Spell: Radical Theories of Folk and Fairy Tales*. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1979. Print.

____. *Fairy Tales and the Art of Subversion*. New York: Routledge, 1983. Print.

____. *The Oxford Companion to Fairy Tales.* New York: Oxford University Press. 2000. Print.

____. *The Brothers Grimm: From Enchanted Forests to the Modern World*, 2nd Edition. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002. Print.

____. *Sticks and Stones: The Troublesome Success of Children's Literature from Slovenly Peter to Harry Potter*, chap. 5 & 6. New York & London: Routledge, 2001. Print.

____. *Fairy Tale As Myth Myth As Fairy Tale*. Lexington, Kentucky: University Press of Kentucky, 1994. Print.

RIMA BHATTACHARYA