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NATIONAL COLLEGE OF ART & DESIGN

FINE ART PAINTING

Cinderella, from Perrault to *Pretty Woman* and beyond.

by

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SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF HISTORY OF ART & DESIGN AND COMPLEMENTARY STUDIES
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF BACHELOR OF ART, 1994.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank Tanya Kiang for all the advice and assistance she gave me in writing this thesis.

CONTENTS

Introduction	P. 1 - 3
Chapter One : Structuralist Theory, Folklorist Opinion	P. 4 - 9
Chapter Two : Psychoanalysis and the Fairy Tale	P. 10 - 18
Chapter Three : Cinderella in the Twentieth Century	P. 19 - 22
Chapter Four : Film and the Business of Enchantment	P. 23 - 29
Chapter Five : <i>Cinderella</i> and feminism	P. 30 - 36
Conclusion	P. 37 - 39
Bibliography	P. 40 - 42

INTRODUCTION

For centuries children from almost every culture and corner of the world have been told fairytales. Such is the power of these magical worlds of princes, princesses, frogs and fairies that they remain with us in many ways long after we cease being told the tales by our parents. Fairytales are fundamentally rooted in an oral folk tradition and passed down from generation to generation in this manner by local story tellers. These stories were later collected and enshrined in print by people such as Charles Perrault, the Brothers Grimm and Hans Christian Anderson. In the transition from oral to literary form, violent or sexually explicit aspects of the tales were often edited out. This was particularly marked during the Victorian era, at which time with the strict moralism of the bourgeoisie combined with a shift from fairytale as part of oral folk culture to fairytale as the mainstay of a commercial 'children's literature'. Thus in the various realms of transmission, be they oral, literary or cinematic the teller of the tale and the listener have changed over the centuries.

(not a collector)

A great many of the tales best known and most dearly loved have their origins in Eastern culture. *Cinderella* was first written down in China in the ninth century A.D. but the precious nature of the tiny foot and tiny slipper was appreciated not only in China but also in Egypt where in 301 A.D. the Roman Emperor set maximum prices for gilded slippers for women. Thus, the fairytale is perhaps unique in contemporary culture in that it clearly stems from a pre-Gutenberg era (with some exceptions) so that questions to authorship are not really appropriate. Indeed some scholarly approaches to fairytales which I discuss in Chapter One place great emphasis on their universality and common folk origins in oral culture.

But I would argue that although fairytales share universal features they are far from timeless and in understanding any variant, contemporary or otherwise, we must appreciate the historical context of its origins. Fairytales have absorbed the

influences of the day and have changed to absorb the needs of the audience. Fairytales are continually changing and must be studied as individual variants in relation to the culture that created them. For example, with the 'creation of childhood' and the emergence of the bourgeoisie in the eighteenth century came fairystories to entertain in the nursery. By the twentieth century early film makers such as Georges Melies and Jean Renoir were using the new technology available to tell tales of fantasy and magic on the screen.

As befits the many forms of fairytales there are numerous interpretations of them, some stressing the mode of transmission, while some place more emphasis on the motive behind the transmission. It is the interpretations of fairytales that I wish to concentrate on, noting in particular that most critical analysis and interpretation does not take into account the historical context in which a particular transmission is set and relies on a limited range of variants for their discussion. Also I would argue that the method of imparting a tale is as important as the motive behind telling it.

In brief, the four methods of interpretation identified are the folklorist approach, the structural or formal approach, the psychoanalytical approach and finally the feminist approach to fairytales. Each of these shall be addressed in separate chapters.

A leading writer on the structure behind the fairytale is the Russian writer Vladinir Propp. Propp and fellow structuralists emphasise the 'deep structure' of this kind of popular narrative. They attempt to show that fairytales have a universal structure or core consisting of central characters and a chain of events. The folklorist on the other hand studies the changes the tale undergoes as it passes from generation to generation. Folklorists analyse the meaning of the fairytale at the time of creation and note the subsequent influences upon it thereafter, however no support is given to one change over another, they are merely recorded. Freudian and Jungian approaches such as that of Bruno Bettelheim concentrate on the psychological and psychoanalytical and try to compensate for the lack of

attention to the social and human context in the structuralist reading of fairytales. Feminists have reacted strongly to this interpretation and although they acknowledge the importance of fantasy they see negative role model for females within the tales. Feminists fear that young girls learn to behave in certain ways under the influence of fairytales. In a sense feminism takes Freudian readings one step further seeing the tales not only from a human point of view but exclusively from the female point of view. In line with this, feminists have offered alternative tales to those they see as propagators of patriarchy and the myth of romance. The weakness shared by all critical and analytical approaches to fairytales is that they do not take into account all contextual elements and all adaptations and versions of fairystories. Through further analysis of each approach to the tale in the following chapters a void can be identified into which a more balanced approach can fit. There is need for a simultaneous appreciation of both the psychological and the sociological elements within fantasy. I have chosen *Cinderella* as the tale through which to examine the interpretation of the fairytale within the context of its various creations.

In Chapter One *Cinderella* shall be introduced and the structuralist and folklorist approach discussed. In Chapter Two Freudian psychoanalytical understanding shall be investigated and compared to the theoretical approach of the structuralists. In Chapter Three the considerable influences of the twentieth century on *Cinderella* shall be addressed. These include the cinema, Walt Disney, advertising, mass market romantic fiction, Marxism and feminism. Chapter Four shall deal with film and the final chapter shall discuss feminism alone. Great changes have occurred to the *Cinderella* tale since its inception in oral culture. The strong willed, pre-Perrault *Cinderella* of the sixteenth century is hardly recognisable in some twentieth century versions. So much so that those seeking to redefine the most well known mass market *Cinderella*, perhaps need only look back rather than trying to create an entirely new girl.

CHAPTER I

The tale of Cinderella is one of the best known stories in the western world and its popularity has continued from its oral origins, unabated, into the twentieth century. In 1893, the English Folklore Society published Marian Roalfe Cox's study *Three Hundred and Forty Five Variants of Cinderella, Catskin and Cap O' Rushes* in which she identified this number of Cinderella-like tales from all over the globe. In 1951 Anna Rooth wrote a doctorate on the tale. In her *Cinderella Cycle* she identified twice as many variants as Miss Cox. Joseph Jacobs, a Victorian collector said of a *Cinderella* he printed that it was "an English version of an Italian adaptation of a Spanish translation of a Latin version of a Hebrew translation of an Arabic translation of an Indian original", (Alan Dundes, 1982, p. 297). These wide and varied origins and subsequent variants prove *Cinderella* to be a survivor among fairytales and so a suitable example through which to examine the interpretation of tales. Insofar as it is a story concerning the relationship of a girl with her sisters or stepsisters as well as a girl with her mother or stepmother, it has special appeal for women. As a women I can acknowledge its relevance to me because of this.

The folklorist approach is a good one from which to begin a study of the many interpretations of folk fairytales for it begins at the beginning and tries to discover the old form of the story and to trace the development through time of the different types of the tale. All along there have been attempts to explain the meaning and significance of the story. Some writers see reflections of historical customs and ritual, (feminism and Marxism sees many of these as negative to their causes), while some such as Freud and Bettelheim see the story as a manifestation of the human psyche. The genre and structure of fantasy have also been adopted by literature and film making. All of these adaptations with their familiar images of the princess, the wicked stepmother, the prince and the ball have infiltrated daily life on many levels.

The basic ingredients of the western, in particular American *Cinderella*, include the glass slipper, the pumpkin and the fairy godmother but on a more universal level, common traits recognised by folklorists are these; an ill-treated though worthy heroine in Cinders-disguise; the aid of a magical gift, (in the Grimm version it is a branch), or advice by a beast or fairy, (in Perrault it is the godmother); the dance or festival where the heroine is revealed as the radiant beauty she always was and finally recognition through a token.

Folklore, of which the fairytale is elemental, changes as it moves from place to place and is transmitted from generation to generation. Each individual story teller or group within society may change the story to fit local social or psychological needs. Folklorists document and study these changes. Great changes occurred when tales shifted from the oral to the written style and so folklorists concentrate on the differences between these two methods of communicating events as they are crucial in understanding the changes that occurred within the story itself. Folklorists are concerned specifically with the contents of tales in isolation rather than in connection with their meaning. To understand the changes of content one must understand the value of oral communication. It is one thing to listen to or to tell an oral tale, it is another to read a fixed written text of the tale. The nature of the oral tale allows the listener to question events as he/she sees them and the teller can make changes accordingly. A reader cannot change the events of a book but the writer can edit and revise the text. In an oral culture, the teller is as important to the genre of story telling as the universally known characters it contains.

Whatever we may print, we need in our files not only the record of the tale but a conversation of the teller with the recorder which reveals something about his or her personality and the bias it may give to the way he tells the tale.

(Francis Lee Utley in Max Luthi, 1976, p. 58)

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"The fairytale has no landlord", is a common expression in Greece. Each teller can tell the story his/her way as long as the basic structure is retained. Folklorists study changes at the expense of a study of their meanings and enduring structures.

In the English Folklore Society review of 1893 Andrew Lang states that "Borrowing seemed to me the general and prevalent cause of the likeness in the Marchen (folktales) of the world". He suggests that diffusion was carried out by traders, slaves and captives of war. There are the unconscious changes made to the fairytale, however they also become consciously changed for political or other reasons. It is these reasons rather than the relevance of the changes that interests the folklorist. Marxism, capitalism, patriarchy and feminism all lead to changes within fairytales. Marxist for example believe that folklore is the weapon of class conflict and that the folk (meaning the oppressed peasant or proletariat) can use folklore to express resentment at the capitalist system. According to Marxist theories it is perfectly appropriate to change folklore so that it demonstrates the "correct" ideological view. So in the East German version of *Cinderella*, the fairy godmother has been eliminated, the king has been unmasked as futile and witless and the prince is depicted as a former parasitic who rejects his fruitless existence and becomes a revolutionary. In 1950 a similarly revised *Cinderella* was preformed in Romania,

When the prince wished to marry Cinderella, a poor girl, the king disclaimed him, saying he was a working-class child whom he had adopted. The prince, delighted to hear this, said that it explained why he had never felt affection for his "father", and now he could marry Cinderella as an equal.

(Jane Yolan in Dundes, 1982, p. 295).

In capitalist countries changes have been made not so much for ideological reasons but for financial ones. This is particularly true of cinematic work. In the West the emphasis is on making a product that will sell and the final version of an adapted fairytale usually includes elements that will attract the widest audience possible. This shall be dealt with more comprehensively in Chapter Three, for from a folklorist point of view the reasoning behind the changes is not as important as the

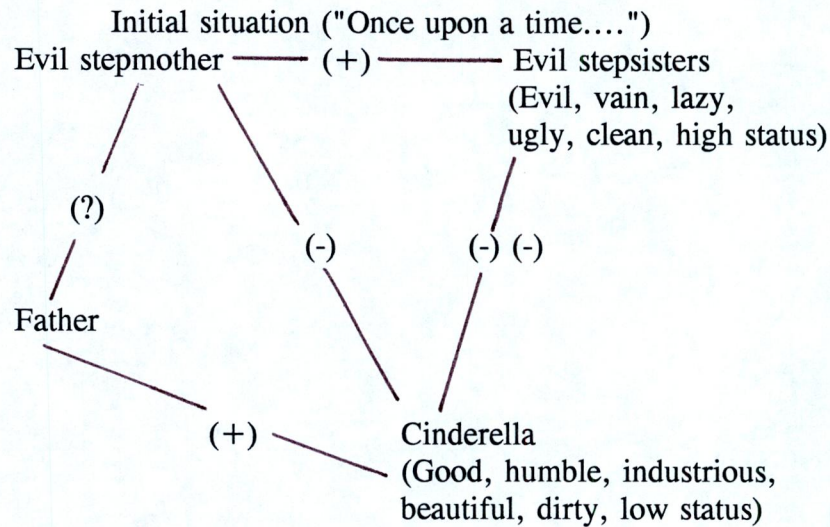
changes themselves. Like the socialist *Cinderella* of the former Eastern Block the American *Cinderella* results from a mixture of social forces. It is partially Perraults but where communism intervened in the East, Walt Disney intervened in the West. His subsequent film of 1951 launched *Cinderella* as we now know it, "a coy, helpless dreamer, a 'nice' girl who awaits her rescue with patience and a song" (Jane Yolen in Dundes, p. 297). According to Yolen it is not Cinderella who is at fault but the mass market, mass media influences of the twentieth century who successfully managed to block from our memories the tough, resilient hero of the oral versions.

Like the folklorists, the structuralists avoid the meaning behind the tale. Theirs is a themetical reading. Russian structuralist Vladimir Propp's 1928 *Morphology of the Folktale*, translated into English in 1958, and the influential writing of French anthropologist Claude Levi-Strauss have produced a flood of structuralist understanding of fairy tales and myths. However there are differences between the approaches of these two writers. In Propp's case the emphasis is on form and in the case of Levi-Strauss it is on structure. In defining the fairytale Propp says;

The tale may be termed any development proceeding from villainy or lack, through intermediary functions to marriage or to other functions employed as a denouement.

(Propp, 1968, p. 121)

As well as describing the structure through words Propp also uses diagrams to illustrate the chain of events - as if a tale were a piece of machinery.



(Dundes, 1982, p. 248)

Such a method as this could be termed a linear sequential structure containing the plot of the story. In contrast Levi-Strauss looks for opposites within the structure which give a pattern to the story as a whole. Levi-Strauss says that form is defined by opposition to material other than itself whereas structure has no content as it is content itself. Propp is a formal structuralist in that he is concerned with the functions of the characters which remain the same from tale to tale and not with the names and attributes which change. This approach ignores the input of the story teller and the other influences of time on the tale. Levi-Strauss tends to do this less in that he seeks to reconstruct the structural elements according to the differences between tales thus adopting a more socio-structural approach as he bridges the gap between myth and the concrete elements in the life of a culture. The historical context does come into his analysis so adding a human element but he still sees the social aspects in relation to the structure of the tale rather than the lives of the listeners.

A Proppian, faced with a *Cinderella*-like story, would begin by seeking to identify the various segments of the plot with the functions common to the tale. Once identified, the functions would be set out in an invariant order, a diagram of

the succession of events made and the analysis would be complete. Something would have been learned about the formal patterns which lie behind the *Cinderella* tale but the tale would remain completely isolated and the telling of the tale, in any manner, would be inconsequential to the analysis. Propp recognised that the transition from the initial situation to the final one conveys messages about social mobility and development. In between the beginning and the end are two incidents which provide drama, tension and colour and which reinforce the ideological messages of the story, these being the intervention of the fairy godmother and of the prince. Propp uses these, not to make associations with psychological or social meanings, but instead to form a structuralist diagram. Levi-Strauss does allow the outside world of age, sex and class to enter into his analysis but only because he sees it as relevant to his formation of the essential structure. He does not take his comment on fairytales beyond the essential components of a tale at a given time.

Both the folklorist and the structuralist approaches concentrate on only one aspect of the fairytale at a time. The former lays emphasis on the changes that occur within the content but not on the reasons for these changes. The latter focuses the essential components of the content but pays scant attention to the social and the historical context in which the tales were recounted.

By distancing themselves from real people both structuralists and folklorists ignore the social aspects of the fairytale and the interaction between person and tale which is linked directly to the context in which they are told.

CHAPTER II

Fairytales and myths have attracted psychoanalytical and scientific attention since Freud drew attention to their close relationship to the world of dreams and psychosis. Franz Ricklin, in his writings of 1915 reviewed large groups of fairytales from various countries and noted universal psychosexual themes. He drew particular attention to Oedipal references within the tales. Ricklin, Freud and Jung forged the way for the interpretations of Max Luthi and former professor of psychology and psychiatry at the University of Chicago, Bruno Bettelheim (1903 - 1990).

For reasons of simplicity and also because I see *Cinderella* as particularly relevant to women and being a woman myself I am going to refer to the audience for fairytales as "she".

A Freudian analysis sees fairytales as primarily for children and so one of our strongest early influences. Bettelheim doesn't approach the tale in a purely clinical manner. He does stress the importance of the telling of the tale. It is good for a child to feel that she is experiencing the tale with a trusted person "from father I got my bearings, the seriousness in life's pursuits, from mother the enjoyment of life and love of spinning fantasies". (Goethe in Bettelheim; 1991, p. 317). There is a great difference, obviously, in the way children view the world in comparison to adults. Children do not have the benefit of hindsight or experience as adults do and so react differently to their surroundings and the events of their development. What seems normal to an adult may seem fierce or unreasonable to a small child. The basic psychological reading, as given by Freud and Bettelheim for example, is that the fairytale is a medium through which the child can act out her feelings and desires. It serves also to create a distance between the child and that which is occurring psychologically to her as she develops from infancy to puberty. Guilt, for example which may be felt by a child following

an expression of anger toward a parent can be eased if the guilty feelings are associated with a fairytale character rather than an actual person. Following these externalization theories comes the belief that if they are to be successful, the child must remain unaware of the feelings she is responding to when acting out the stories and making their solutions her own.

Freud and his followers however, like the folklorists and structuralists, view the tales from one angle only, namely a psychological and psychoanalytical one. Subsequently the tales emerge as symbolic journeys into the unconscious. The listener undertakes this journey, encountering conflict, pain and confusion in order to emerge independent and in control. There is validity to these theories but there are other considerations to be addressed. These shall be clearer after a further discussion of Freudian based approaches to the fairystory. The Freudian approach holds that different aspects of our personalities identify with different characters within the tale. In short the tale offers a representation of a divided self and its resolution should coincide with a personal resolution regarding painful feelings of loneliness, stupidity, sibling rivalry, fear of desertion and Oedipal conflicts, experienced first as young children when we have no other experience to draw on in order to cope rationally with these feelings. Following psychological studies, the fairytale can be seen to have two distinct functions; firstly, it attempts to bring order to the internal chaos which occurs naturally within a developing child and secondly it aims to give hope to the young child who, because of this chaos, often feels despair and needs to have a happier future to believe in. Descriptions of such turmoil may seem dramatic but even the fact that children are physically smaller and weaker than adults alone can make them feel inadequate. Fantasy can be used to help ease the difficulties arising from some of these feelings. For example, through day dreaming and playing we can create a preferable world in which we can wield authority. Children do this when playing with their dolls. In reality children are not in positions of authority but through the daydream and play they can be. The everyday play of both children and adults provides the opportunity to relieve pressures and to address the conflicts, problems and questions of daily life. However, self-motivated play is not always a sufficient means of dealing with

development, we need external stimulation and prompting. It is for this that the complex nature of fairytales as both educators and consolers function to aid us in dealing with complex and deep rooted feelings. If a child has feelings that are too violent, ambivalent or hurtful to be acted out in a game (for example loneliness or anger following an apparent rejection), she can subconsciously recognise her own similar feelings as revealed in the fantastic events of a fairystory where a happy ending is assured.

At a glance *Cinderella* is about wishes coming true, the humble being elevated, true merit being recognised from beneath the ashes and the rags (Fig. 1 and 2). Virtue is rewarded, evil is punished and *Cinderella* finds her prince. This is a children's story and most often recognised as such. It is aimed at the developing child and ideally should provide her with the assistance she requires in coming to terms with and overcoming feelings of neglect. It is also a story that can be adapted for and relevant to adults. We identify with the innocence of *Cinderella* and hope that everybody will believe in our innocence just as they do in hers. If feeling hard done by we obviously feel innocent of anything we could have done to provoke the situation. The extreme evil of the stepmother and sisters serves only to highlight Cinderella's good nature and in turn, through identification, our good nature. Thus any fears we may have regarding our own shortcomings fade in comparison to the behaviour of those wielding authority. We are assured that our feelings of worthlessness are only transitory and that we shall emerge triumphant and assured. In *Cinderella* stories we feel only the anxiety of degradation and not the degradation itself so that we can project our own situations onto the events.

Freud identified the id as the pleasure seeking side of our nature, and the ego as the more rational side less in favour of immediate gratification. The motif of the two siblings running through so many tales can clearly be seen to mirror the opposite sides of our nature, unable to live apart but for a healthy existence must learn to integrate and serve each other for the overall benefit of the unit, i.e. the individual. Because of the fairytales ability to capture the imagination through mystery, magic, riches and exoticism, children do not see the adult definition of id,

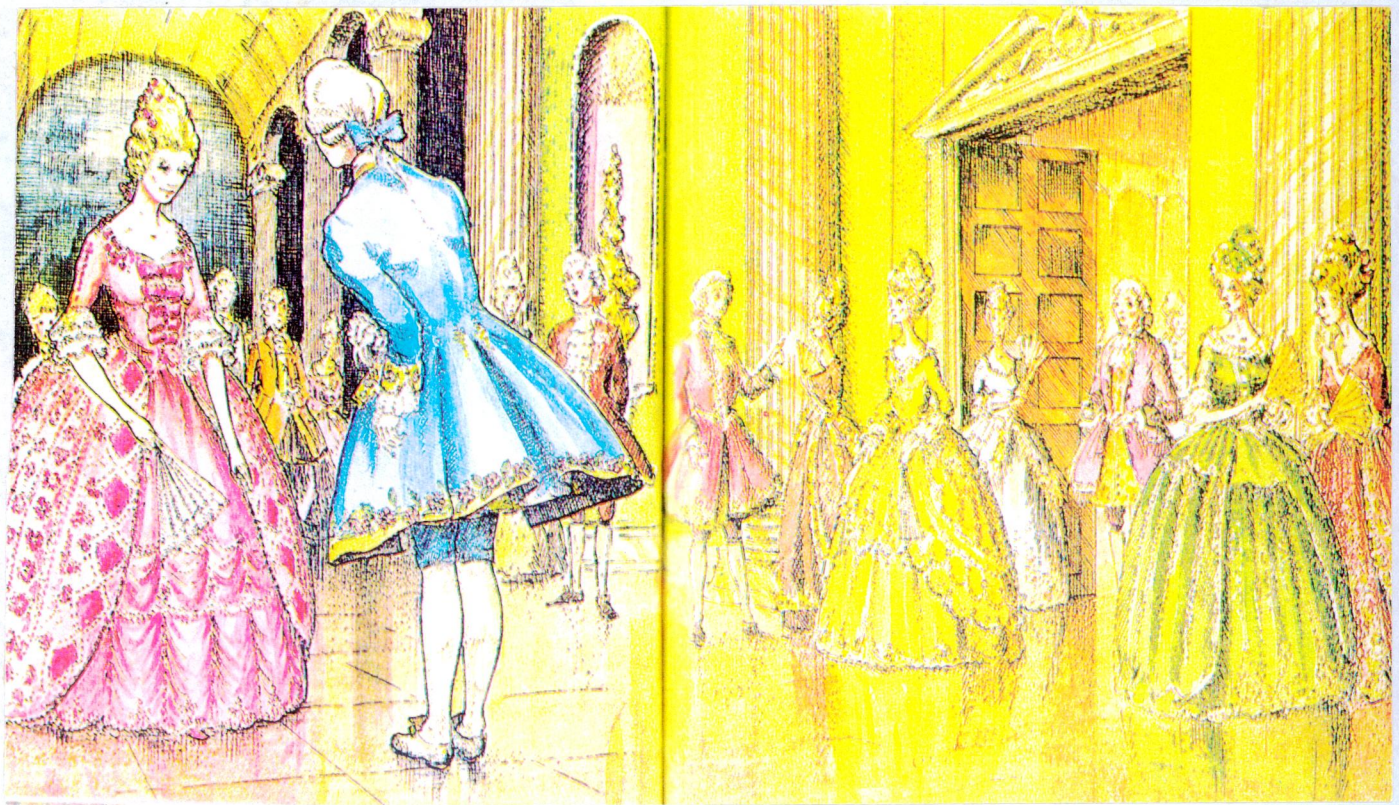
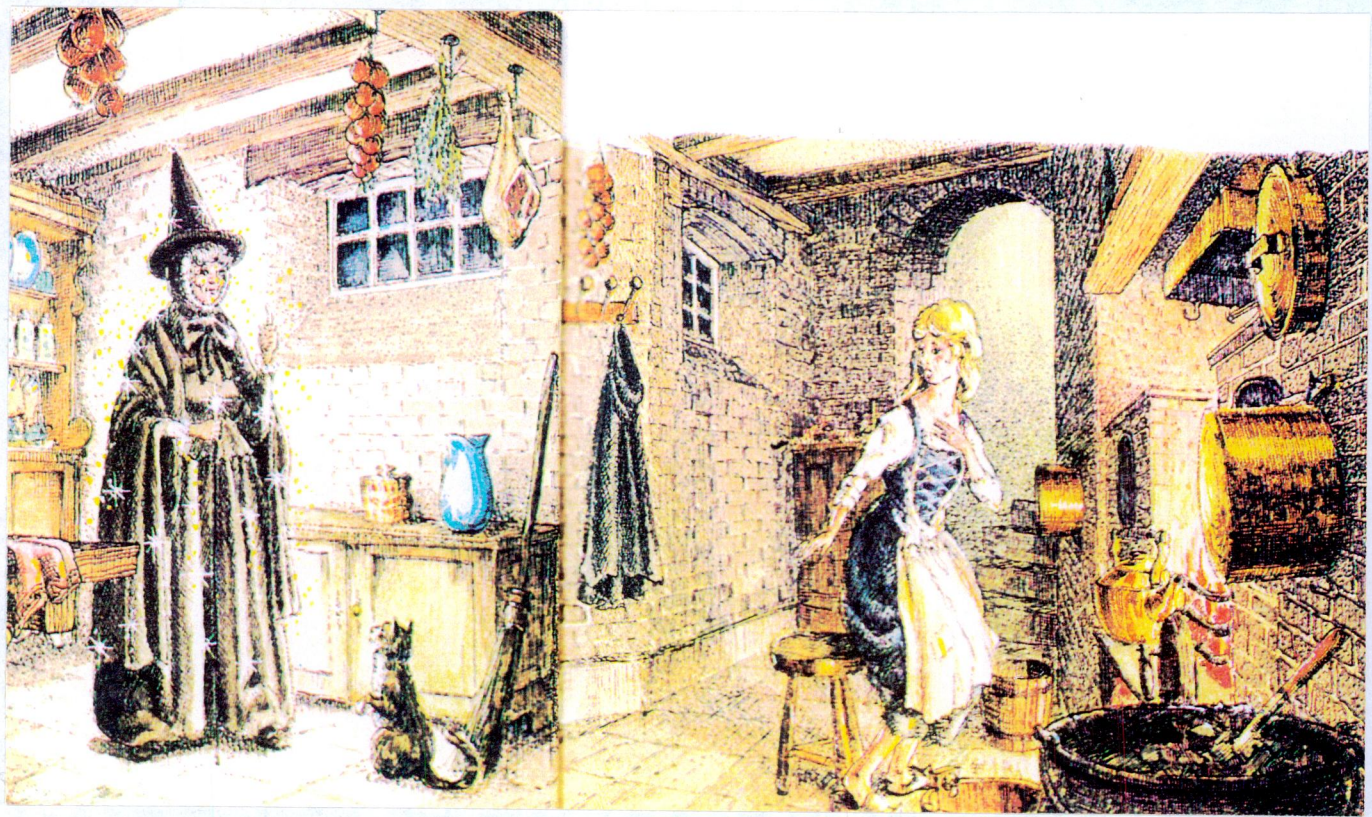
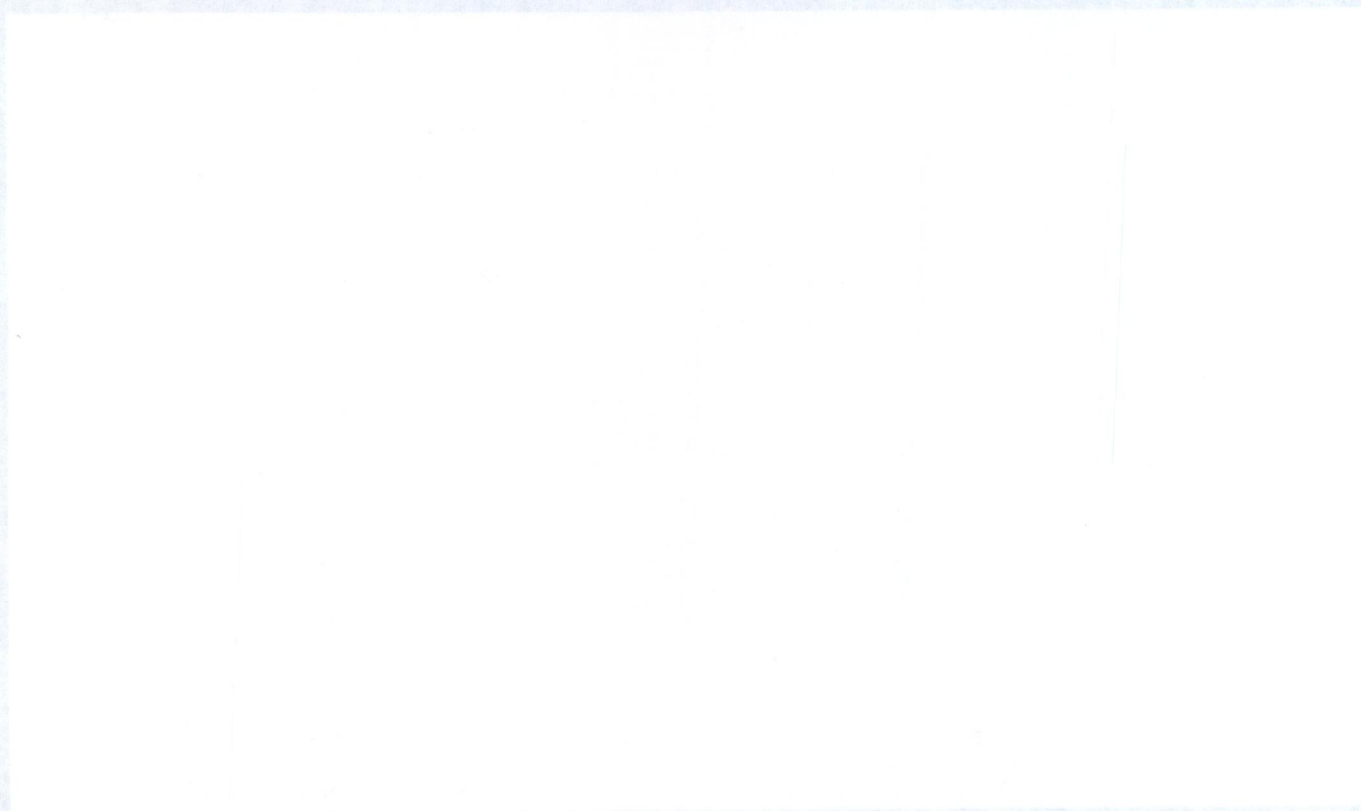


Fig. 1 Perrault's Cinderella before transformation.

Fig. 2 ... and afterwards.



ego and super ego and see instead the wonderous symbols of these. The fierce, devouring wolf-like animals are the untamed side of our nature trying to take control of the more rational side given form through the wise birds and helpful toads, so often a part of the tales.

As a child is read or reads a tale or sees it on the screen, as is more and more the case, she can put herself in the role of the heroine and make associations between the other characters and people she knows. Through the different characters fantasy provides us with a means of externalizing our feelings in a controllable way. The good fairy can take care of pleasurable wishes, the evil fairy can deal with destructive desires and the fierce animal can embody feelings of jealousy and revenge. Small children tend to act on feelings rather than rational thoughts as is obvious from their frequent reactions of screaming, banging, crying and refusal to speak. If the child can externalize her contradictory feelings through fairytale characters she can come to terms with them and the chaos they cause. This is the theory and there is no doubt that children do assume the characteristics, briefly or otherwise of fairy story characters. Ben Rubenstein in his essay *The Meaning of the Cinderella Story in the development of a little girl* describes how his five year old acted out the *Cinderella* tale,

"Why do you treat me like Cinderella?". Almost speechless her mother managed to ask, "why do you think I treat you like Cinderella?". She enthusiastically replied, "Because you make me do all the hardest work in the house". (Dundes, 1982, p. 222).

So the confusion arising from an apparently contradictory self or parent figure can be eased by such externalization. Parents, grandparents, teachers, etc. are trusted figures and it is a shock if they are unexpectedly unsympathetic to us. Psychologically it is important that the positive side of trusted figures is not engulfed by the negative. It is easy to remember how one moment our parents appeared playful, happy and kind and the next angry, fierce and commanding. Hopefully the dramatic transformations occurring in tales coincide with what the child is experiencing in her own life so that the good image, (good fairy, good

mother) is the most powerful and lasting image giving credibility to the good parent in reality.

"'Tis that little gift called grace,
Weaves a spell round firm and face...
And if you would learn that way
How to get that gift today -
How to point that golden dart
That shall pierce the princes heart -
Ladies, you have but to be
Just as kind and sweet as she!"

This is the conclusion of Charles Perrault's *Cinderella* of 1697. Bruno Bettelheim in his analysis of the story makes no distinction between girls and boys interpretation of the tale or of fairytales in general. He sees identifications as interchangeable from gender to gender within the tale, with girls identifying with both male and female and both good and bad and likewise for boys. The *Cinderella* format that I and most children grew up with was Charles Perraults. It is this version and the Brother Grimms *Cinderella*, (*Aschenputtel*) that Bruno Bettelheim uses to demonstrate his and Freuds psychoanalytical interpretation of the tale. Cinderella is forced to live among the cinders and to work from morning until night cleaning, sewing, cooking and serving until her fairy godmother appears, enabling her to go to the ball. Here she meets the prince, who, after much searching and to the immense anger of her stepmother and sisters finds the beautiful girl and marries her. She become a wealthy princess in a fabulous castle. This widely known version carries a message of hope for the underdog.

Cinderella is primarily a story about feelings of jealousy and guilt between siblings and between parents and children, the dictionary definition being "a person or thing that is persistently neglected in favour of others". It is also about feelings of low self worth, of loneliness and of despair among people of all ages. Memories of a childhood *Cinderella* are filled with satisfactory feelings of relief as the degraded heroine wins out over those who abused her. Initially the heroines interests are sacrificed to those of the people in power, (the stepmother and sisters),

and in general the world thinks little of her. Everybody, especially small children, feel like this at some stage when older siblings or parents have control over them. Adults too can find themselves in positions of subjugation, financially, socially or professionally where the wicked stepmother may be a group rather than an individual. Psychologically *Cinderella* urges us to believe in final deliverance and victory as we are given hope that in the future we can surpass those who were initially seen as superior.

Freudian theory notes the Oedipal relevance as crucial. During the Oedipal period the young girl's love is strongest for her father from whom she wants equal amounts of love in return. She sees her mother and siblings as competitors for this love. When disappointed by the father who does not fulfil her desires she returns to the mother. The mother now however is no longer the all giving mother of infancy which results in the child feeling let down on all sides. This is where we find Cinderella at the start of the story. She lives among the ashes in the hearth - the hearth at the centre of the home being a symbol of the mother and *Cinderella's* attempt to return to the mothers warmth. As the story unfolds it is acknowledged that this is impossible and that moving forward is preferable. The appearance of the fairy godmother or original good mother is a symbolic resolution of Oedipal conflicts.

In the Brother Grimms version of *Cinderella*, called *Aschenputtel*, the father goes to the fair one day and asks *Cinderella* and her stepsisters what he should bring them back.

"Beautiful clothes", said one, "Pearls and gems", said another.
"What about you, Aschenputtel?" he said, "what do you want?"
"Father, the first thing that pushes against your hat on your return trip, break it off for me".

He returns with a hazel branch for Cinderella. She plants the branch on her dead mothers grave and;

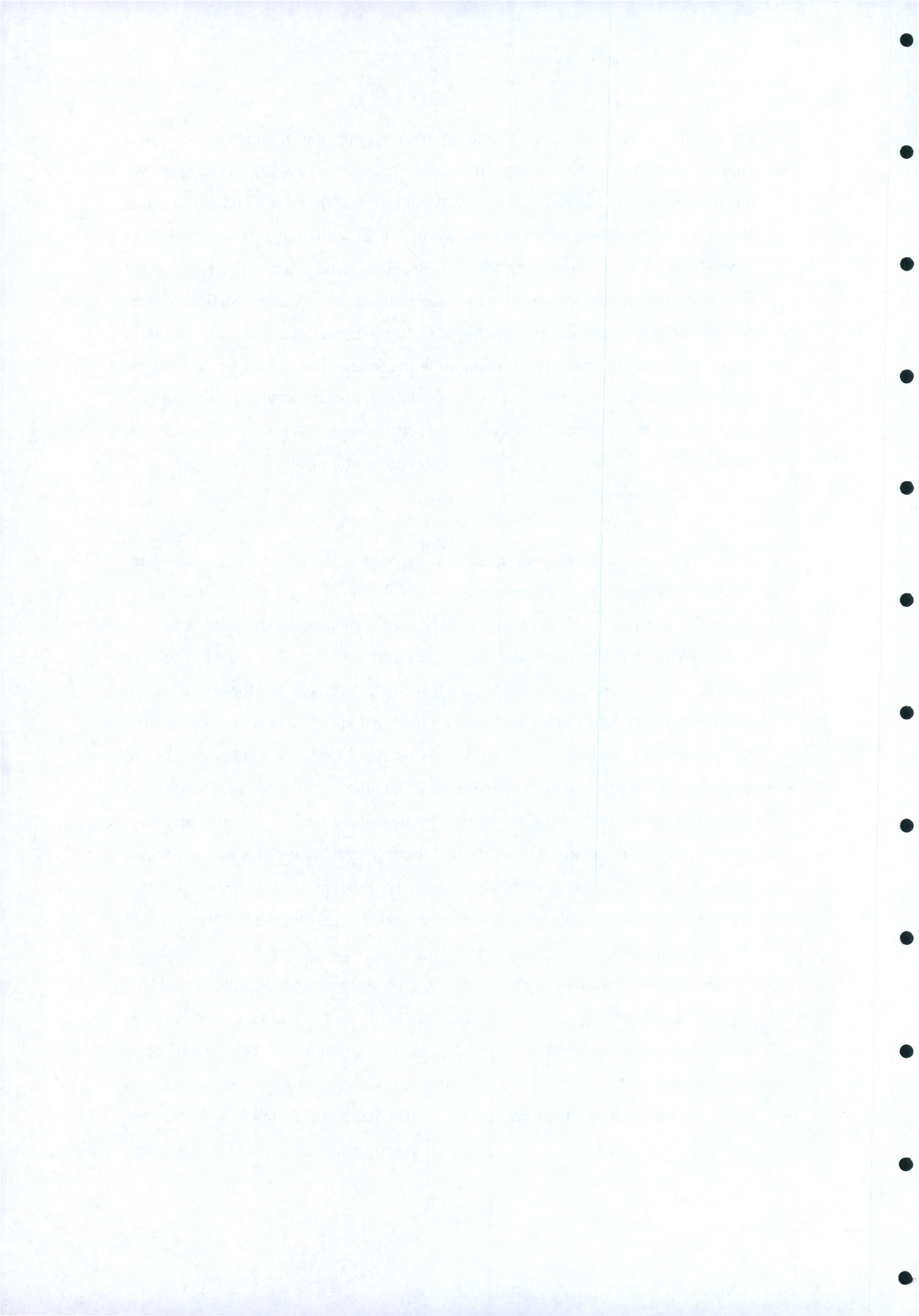
"She wept so much that her tears fell on it and watered it. It grew and became a beautiful tree, there she went three times a day and wept and prayed, and each time a white bird lighted on the tree and when she expressed a wish the white bird threw down what she had wished for."

If viewing *Cinderella* morally, as psychologists do, many lessons can be learned from this passage above. Cinderella was rewarded for her humble request in the end gaining far more than her greedy sisters and their desire for immediate gratification. Long into the future Cinderella is reaping the benefits of her request. We are also assured that Cinderella in her apparent isolation is not alone at all. Ultimately Cinderella's rejection of worldly goods in contrast to her sisters attempts to gain them is the means to her final glory as is her trust in the mother of infancy, the symbol of goodness. In some versions this mother is symbolised by a cow because of its associations with nourishment. Rubenstein, also brings up connections between the twig and phallic aspirations of the young girl during the Oedipal stage with the twig suggested as a compensation for lack of a penis or of the fathers love.

The fairy godmother takes over as the dominant force of good in the story. She transforms Cinderella so that she has an appearance to match her inherently good nature. She can go to the ball but is warned that she must return to her ragged state. This she duly does but on her third night at the ball, in her haste to leave the palace before midnight she loses her little glass slipper. The prince then uses this to find her. Every woman in her attempt to become queen tries on the slipper but it will only fit Cinderella's tiny foot. Associations can be made between the slipper and sexuality. Bettelheim interprets Cinderella's running away from the ball as an attempt to protect her virginity and the slipper, itself in its fragility, as an image for the vagina. Glass is a standard symbol of virginity. It can be broken only once. Bettelheim draws all of these sexual connotations from one source only, Perrault's version of the story. In M.R. Cox's text only six of the three hundred and forty five variants contained the glass slipper. In a Scottish

version there are glass shoes and in an Irish version the heroine receives glass slippers, from an old man in order that she be able to climb a slippery slope. We all remember the instance of the glass slipper which shows the impact that Pessault's *Cinderella* has had on the world but in assuming that it is the story through which to psychoanalyse the tale, Bettelheim and others after him are not looking at the tale as a whole or in a historical context. The mutilation of their feet by the ugly sisters serves to highlight Cinderellas perfect shape. The victim of degradation has become a princess but in doing so can have been seen to send out negative messages regarding the role of appearance in attaining this elevated position. Bettelheim sees the sisters as "agressive in their sexuality", (Bettelheim, 1986, p. 270). This purely psychological rendering of an analysis leaves gaps in an analysis as a whole.

Can becoming king or queen of the castle, a typical fairytale ending, symbolically mean having gained maturity and can having gained the kingdom symbolise self rule? Although the same stories are listened to by both sexes, the male path to self rule surely differs to the female. The 17th and 18th century writers, namely Perrault and the Grimms, who were responsible for writing down the most popular *Cinderella* tales suggest ideals that are often less than satisfactory for a twentieth century audience. Obviously, nobody is a totally balanced individual and those who do not emerge from childhood as the balanced adults that Bettelheim believes can exist are clearly not those who were never told fairytales. Psychological studies have discovered that there is significant chaos existing within children and that some state of order must be brought to this chaotic world. Sociological studies would go along with this but perhaps would not always be in favour of the ideal society suggested by the fairytale ending. By adulthood, ideally, the forces within us, identified as id, ego and super ego, should be working together thus lessening our internal sense of chaos and the dramatic way in which we, as children, saw the world. Psychologically, fairytales can be summarised as moral guides leading to independence and a realisation of our capabilities as adults through a symbolic rebirth from suffering. Theoretically, Bettelheim, Rubenstein and others have analysed fairytales and explained them in this way but can we all



describe ourselves as capable as balanced individuals even though we were read fairytales as children? If not, why not? And why have we failed to respond adequately and gain successfully from the world of witches, wolves, frogs and fairy godmothers? There must be negative forces within the forces of the fairytales best loved by and most frequently read by children which can be identified and seen to be working against the positive ones. Fairytales can be the foundations of lifes experiences on which we build as we get older. From experience comes wisdom, therefore it is very important that the foundations are right.

CHAPTER III

The psychological approach to fairytales puts an emphasis on symbolic meaning and its role in childrens psychological development. But the fairytale format and its dependency on fantasy is relevant to adults too. When fairytales existed solely in their oral form they were part of the lives of whole communities with the story teller telling their tales to young and old alike. However, Perrault, the Brothers Grimm and Hans Christian Anderson wrote their stories primarily for children. It was not until the twentieth century and the development of new forms of communication that the fairytale was again extended to adults and children alike.

Fantasy can work with or against the individual depending on its structure and content. There is an undeniable attraction to fantasy. We dream of what we appear to lack and the media of the twentieth century more than any other has made use of this unconscious need producing a constant stream of adaptations of well known fairytales. Their romantic nature provides an ideal basis for popular literature, animation and mainstream cinema. Advertising too, likes to associate its product with the wondrous prospects of a fairytale. Seasonal trends in the world of fashion have associations with fairytale characters. In reaction to these traditional, Perrault-based modifications come alternatives springing from feminists and Marxist theories.

The influences of the twentieth century have created many new Cinderella's. The most popular is essentially an American Cinderella. She is a mixture of many of her former and contemporary counterparts. She is partially Perrault's but she is also a product of her new surroundings. The Cinderella of mass market books and films is the one that finds her way into the majority of Western homes while the classic heroines sit unread in old volumes on library shelves. In most pre-Perrault versions, "there is no forgiveness in the heroine's heart. No mercy. Just justice". (Anne Yolen in Dundes, 1982, p. 301). The Cinderella of American popular culture or even of nineteenth century mass market books is not the hardy, helpful, inventive girl of the old tales. As the years pass and the market is flooded

with pop-up Cinderella books, colouring book Cinderellas and Cinderella dolls, children are offered a passive princess, an "insipid beauty waiting ... for prince charming" (Yolen in Dundes, p. 303).

Following in Perraults footsteps, Walt Disney produced such a *Cinderella* in his animated version of 1950. By 1985 the film had earned \$115.2 m for the company. (Source: La Revue du Cinema, No. 429, 1987, p.17). *Cinderella* comes eight in the list of earnings at the box office of all feature length films by Disney since the first film release in 1937 of *Snowwhite* so it is a hugely popular production. The appeal of Disneys account is that both adults and children can share the experience. Like an oral account it is a group activity and the child shares the approval of the parent as they both watch the film together. The animated version must find a way to incorporate into the essence of the tale its own imagined images as now both the visual and the oral are involved. These images must lend themselves to the highly fantastic nature of the tale even further enhancing it and continuing to attract the attention of the audience. When making films, writing books and producing television programmes there is a lot of money involved and potentially a lot to be made. It is the adult that controls the money therefore the product must be attractive to the adult even if it is superficially a childrens product. The Disney Corporation realized this and in order to gain the parents attention uses its films to play on feelings of nostalgia. By watching animated versions of fairytales with their children adults are reminded of the appeal fantasy holds and are given a chance, once more, to experience the satisfaction it provides. Within the story of *Cinderella* we are offered the opportunity to relive the comforts of infancy while at the same time made face the reality of leaving them behind. Simultaneously, on a broader scale within the structure of the Disney Corporation itself with its constant promotions of old titles, compilations and extracts on home video, merchandise and theatrical and television re-released we can relive personal memories of our individual childhoods. Disney knows that children are only the indirect source of income, it is the parents who spend the money on the theme parks, consumer goods, etc. these products are really aimed at the family unit. Disneyland was originally sold in 1953 to financiers as "a place

for parents and children alike to share pleasant times in one another's company". (Bob Thomas, 1977, p. 197). Walt Disney realised the appeal of the shared activity among generations, the fairytale being one aspect of this.

Just like Cinderella and all other fairytale characters, animation has the gift of eternal youth. As in all fairy stories the hero or heroine passes successfully from childhood to adulthood. The grown up child must part from her parents resulting in a story that is not so much about childhood but rather the loss of childhood. The presence of the parent in the cinema reassures the child as much as the success of the heroine on the screen. It is a similar reassurance to that felt when the parent reads the fairytale aloud.

There are obvious similarities between Perrault's and Disney's *Cinderella* regarding characters and events. Also the context in which the child is exposed to them is similar. A Bettelheimian psychological analysis of Perrault's *Cinderella* as described in the previous chapter could fit Disney's *Cinderella* too however where they both exist structurally and psychologically on a similar level, the historical context is entirely different. Disney created his adaptation within the realms of capitalist America. Twentieth century western fairytale productions from television to cinema, books to advertising are forced to exist within capitalist requirements. When Bettelheim reviews the fairytale he fails to acknowledge the influence of the mass market on shaping this generation of fantasy based tales. Marina Warner, in a 1992 article, criticises Disney for their adaptation of the classic *Cinderella* story which holds up "simpering, gutless, nipping-tipping idiots as paragons and introduced children everywhere to expect malignancy from older women" (Marina Warner in Petrie, 1993, P.4). In criticising market influences Warner emphasises the patriarchal aspect, whereas Psychologist, Jack Zipes takes a more Marxist stance.

What kept the Utopian aspect alive was the context in which the tales were actively received and retold by the common people...Today the audience for fairytales, whether they be transmitted as literary text, film, play, advertisements or T.V. show, has become passive, and the narrative perspective and voice are generally guided by commercial interests. Jack Zipes (1979, P. 123).

For Zipes it is the commodification through appropriation of the tales by capitalism which has destroyed their progressive (psychoanalytical or symbolic) meanings. Warner and other feminists would agree but would lay the blame on those who seek to maintain a patriarchal status-quo.

Popular romantic fiction too borrows from the fairytale and has become a mass market product and money maker combining the fairytale with modern Gothic romance. Such novels are full of Cinderella - like heroines transformed from rags to riches by a Prince. The romantic expectations of these heroines stem from Cinderella's experience. In Victoria Hunt's *The Legend of the Seventh Virgin*, for example, the heroine says, "It was the most exciting night of my life ! Melloyra has wrangled an invitation to the masked ball at the Abbas for me, Kenensa Carlee the servant girl !....Johnny St. Larnston danced with me out onto the terrace" (Victoria Hunt, 1975 P. 124). These books of fiction have a predominantly female audience. The structure of a childhood fairytale is used and serves to satisfy a readers appetite for fantasy from childhood to adulthood. The fashion industry too makes use of widespread images of fantasy with clothes to "drift dreamily through life in," (Vogue, 1993 P. 88). Descriptions such as this of magnificent ball gowns and wedding dresses serve to maintain our image of Cinderella in all her glory (Fig. 3) but fashion also is questioning this traditional image of Cinderella and presenting her in her pre-transformation attire too (Fig. 4).



Fig. 4 A hearth-bound Cinderella by Comme Des Garcons



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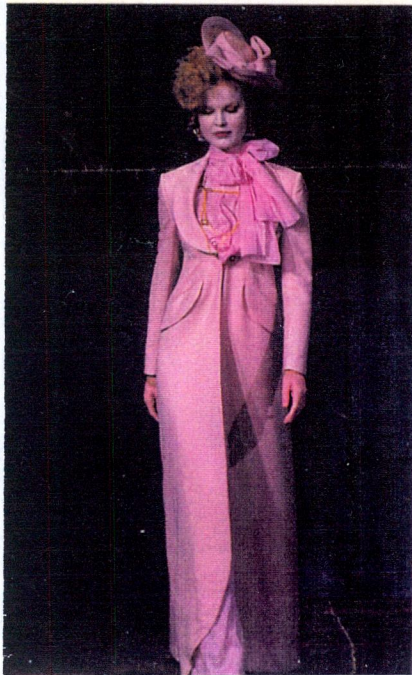


CHRISTIAN LACROIX



JOHN GALLIANO

CLAUDE MONTANA



JOHN GALLIANO



CHRISTIAN LACROIX



Fig. 3 International selection of fairytale inspired gowns, 1993.



CHAPTER IV

The overwhelming aspect of the fairytale is that it has survived and been adapted from the oral tradition to written versions and then to the screen. This is unique in that all other screen adaptations have the book as their source. There is a universality about the tradition of telling stories. It is done irrespective of education, class or culture and is bound up in ritual. It is often a means of communication between generations. Telling the tale aloud is a group activity and unlike the novel, which is a private experience, the cinema is a group orientated activity also. The cinema has taken over as the most popular professional story teller.

Film, more than any other twentieth century medium, can produce a result that comes closer in nature to the oral tradition in which the fairy story is based. When the story is recounted verbally there is an interaction between the listeners themselves, the listener and the orator and the listener and the fictional characters. In the cinema a similar structure of exchange between these groups occur. The story is shared by the listeners, only now the camera is telling the story and it is through its eyes that events unfold.

Malcolm le Grice talks of "identification with the camera" (Le Grice, 1983, P. 201). This would be identification with the narrator and seeing the story from his point of view. But the camera like an oral narrator has the ability to manipulate our feelings so that our sympathies swing from one character to another. The camera is both the agent of the narration on the one hand and that which brings about the components of the screen on the other.

The 1930's brought the first wave of fantasy verses realism debate within film theory. On the one hand there was the champion of realism Siegfried Kracauer and on the other the anti realist Rudolf Arnheim. The history of cinema is relatively short and the modes of narration within the medium are preceded by a vast history of oral and written transmissions of stories which have had a huge

influence on cinema. Franz Kafka said that true reality is always unrealistic. The fairytale is a basic and early form of literature. Realist such as Ibsen and Hauptmann all returned to the miraculous, the symbolic, the fairylike. "The sort of pleasure we get from folk fairy tales seems to me similar to that which we derive from Mallarmé's poems or from abstract art" (W.H. Auden in Max Luthi, 1976, P. 119). George Melies, the early French silent film maker adapted several of Perrault's fairytales and made three *Cinderella* films. One salesman, at the time, describing the wonders of the new medium said:

This is a spectacle which man can use to instruct himself in the bizarre effects of the imagination, where it combines vigour and arrangement; I speak of the terror inspired by the shadows, spirits and spells and the occult work of the magician
(In Petrie P. 14)

With such tricks of the medium Melies created worlds to match those of the folk fairy tale. Who is telling the story and for whom are they telling it ? These are questions that can be asked of cinema. Film with its habit of taking and reworking well known stories adapts itself to a new time and a new public. Film shares many characteristics with traditional storytelling. The camera acts as an anonymous narrator. Like oral story telling, one of the sources of the shaping and direction of the tale lies in the circle of the listeners. If the storyteller does not please, the audience will dwindle. Likewise the film will cease to be shown if it does not please. The necessity of attracting a group and pleasing the audience influences the teller and so shapes the story. Film is at the mercy of the market just as literature and animation are. As a result the old stories change as they become saleable products. So although this is of interest to the folklorist, the psychological reading of a twentieth century fairytale based film differs from that of its oral original. Freudian analysis may no longer be so fruitful with commercially marketable elements such as romance and film stars being emphasised rather than psychological symbolism.

Romance has infiltrated twentieth century fairytale based subject matter, it has become elemental to mainstream entertainment. In analysing twentieth century

fairytale we must be prepared to analyse romance. Out of a sample of one hundred Hollywood films David Bordwell discovered that ninety five of these contained a romantic element and that in no fewer than eighty-five romance was the principle line of action proving that a 'love interest' is a good box office. (David Bordwell, 1985).

An early film by Jean Renoir *La fille de l'eau* is a modern day dress recasting of the Cinderella story and is an ironical exercise in social comment where everyday reality becomes fantasy for the heroine, (i.e. a warm fire, clean bed, and plate of food). The film uses the formulaic rags to riches tale to represent contemporary conditions of drunkenness and child abuse. A young girl is abused by her drunken uncle having been left in his care. She runs away and meets a gypsy and his pipe smoking mother. They teach her how to survive but then abandon her. She then dreams of being saved by a rich prince on a white horse. This is only a dream however. This film describes a woman's rite of passage from girlhood to adulthood as she moves from one home to another.

With this century came film and its powers and new independence for women but also the restrictions of a society which commodifies almost everything. Film can respond to these influences in two ways. It can challenge the old assumptions of the fairytale or it can choose to reiterate them.

Working Girl (Mike Nichols, 1990) is a story of a lowly office secretary who makes it big and wins the prince having outsmarted the evil jealous boss. Alfonso Arau's *Like Water for Chocolate* (1993) tells the tale of a girl born into a family where she, the youngest daughter must never marry but must remain at home taking care of her mother until she dies, (Fig. 5) thus, initially borrowing from Perrault, (Fig. 6). *Pretty Woman* (Garry Marshall, 1990) took the fairytale format and set it in a 1990's American, capitalist society. The film itself exists according to the rules of this society. The film has earned more than \$400 m in worldwide ticket sales and is arguably the most successful of *Cinderella* based films. Julia Roberts, the film's star, does not agree with feminist criticism that the film glorified



Fig. 5 Tita (Lumi Cavazos) in *Like Water for Chocolate*.





Fig. 6 Cinderella, the housemaid in Perraults 17th Century Version.



prostitution and promoted marriage as the ultimate goal. Neither, presumably, would she agree with Bettelheim and his opinion that the fairytale is involved deeply with the psyche and consequentially our behaviour for in an interview with Timothy Egan in *The Irish Times* she says, "That film was a fairytale we did everything but put a glass slipper on", (Julia Roberts, 1994, P. 12). As such she would argue that it should not be taken seriously. But it must be remembered that the film was watched by millions because it offered what they desired and must have had an effect on their lives. It is a simple fairystory telling us that although we may suffer if we continue to hope we shall win out in the end. The heroine of the film is Vivienne, played by Roberts, a prostitute who meets Edward Lewis (Richard Gere), a corporate millionaire on Hollywood Boulevard one night when he asks her for directions. He needs a date for his week of social engagements in L.A. so hires Vivienne for \$3,000. In order to ensure that she is suitably attired he takes her on a shopping spree, playing both potential prince and fairy god mother (Fig. 7). She is lavished with much attention and wonderful garments. Following an argument she threatens to leave him, however, they find they can not part. Eventually she leaves swiftly followed by Edward who climbs up the fire escape of her building to literally sweep Vivienne off her feet and to take her away to a land where they can be truly happy together. As the street chanter says in the closing sequence of the film, "some dreams come true, some do not, but keep on dreaming..." We are not all living in Hollywood but when we identify with Julia Roberts we assume that we are. Hollywood itself is an ideal place from where to produce fairytale movies. The myths of the tales are reinforced by the myths surrounding the stars.

In *Pretty Woman* the prince is a wealthy corporate raider who changes his ways when kissed by the princess, who despite her appearance had always been a good person. The story runs parallel to *Cinderella* in that Vivienne, the prostitute, lives under the control of the society that treats her as a commodity. We can see ourselves in Vivienne when we see her in her little room filled with cuddly toys. Although far from splendid these surroundings endere her to us as they evoke fond memories of similar rooms we have known. The decisions surrounding what we see and from what angle we see it are in the hands of the story teller and the



Fig. 7 From prostitute to Lady, Richard Gere and Julia Roberts in "Pretty Woman."



camera is the instrument with which he/she makes these decisions. In *Pretty Woman* we are not alienated by the characters but rather drawn into their world. Due either to the familiarity of Vivienne domestic surroundings or to Edwards wealth it is portrayed as a comfortable place to be. With one prostitute saying, "we say where, we say when, we say how much, no one runs our lives !", we do not question the treatment of the prostitute at the hands of the men who hire her. Prostitutes are no more independent than anybody who depends on the custom of others and Vivienne is quite prepared to give it all up to marry her prince. Fairytales have happy endings but the choices in *Pretty Woman* are limited - prostitution or marriage and if either is accepted the status quo will be maintained.

The huge numbers who watched the film obviously accept the scenario offered. The film is a fairytale but it is equally a romance. *Cinderella* can be broken down into boy meets girl, boy loses girl, boy gets girl. Even in television advertising this structure is employed again and again. In coffee advertisements we asked "will they, won't they ?" In frozen food ads we have cosy dinners for two. We are saturated in romance. We buy romance through these products and then fantasize about it when we use them. We are not fantasizing about what we already have therefore there is a lack of *Cinderella* - like romance in our culture. This is because it does not exist and never will by projecting our dreams onto celluloid, onto the pages of novels, onto television screens or onto the pages of glossy magazines. We desire the unattainable and enjoy hearing about it and looking at it. The myth fills a gap, it conceals.

Romance is more dominant in adult rather than children orientated fairytales with themes of the sibling rivalry and the parent/child relationship being more relevant to children. Like the romantic fairytale, the romantic film is more concerned with the obstacles in the way of our desires rather than with the satisfaction of these desires. We know that the prince loves *Cinderella* as every prince loves his princess but several obstacles must be overcome before satisfaction can be granted. During this period, desires we were not conscious of are created within us. We adapt the fantasies of the film, look, play etc. to become part of our

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own fantasies. All myth makers face the problem of having to bridge the gap between what the spectator has experienced in reality and that which she desires through fantasy. As Claude Levi Strauss said "a myth signifies primarily by what it chooses to exclude", we must be able to identify with characters, they must have universal qualities and have suffered from universal troubles. In them we must recognise ourselves and the possibility we too have of achieving. The attraction of Cinderella and her counterparts is that they do not have to sacrifice anything in order to become desirable, they simply have to wait for their desirability to be recognised. In *Pretty Woman*, Edward, the representation of the patriarchal society that saw Vivienne as only a prostitute changes through is recognition of her worth into somebody who can fall in love with this former commodity. The power that the Cinderella character possesses in order to bring about this change is attractive to women.

Pretty Woman has been labelled " a womens film". Why is it that happy romance is most attractive to women ? It is because through the years we are assured that feelings of rejection and worthlessness are transitory and that we shall emerge from these secure and loved. For such large numbers to need this reassurance we have obviously been brought up in a society that creates opposing feelings of self doubt and fear. Women, find themselves in a society where salaries and financial rewards are less than those achieved by men, where there is danger in either living or walking alone, where it is difficult to both care for children and work outside the home and where even national sports and the dominant church are both male dominated. If ones life is less than a fairytale the chance to believe that the underdog can rise above and triumph over those in power is always welcomed. *Cinderella*, the romance, does this but only superficially. If romance dominates it is difficult for *Cinderella* to contain the symbolic meaning of its oral origins, within a twentieth century context. Romantic based fairytales create an illusion acting like a drug, when reality surfaces the illusion ends. Fairytales of this nature do not invite questions so that which we want to escape from is in actual fact maintained as we are temporarily satisfied by fantasy. Hollywood chooses not to ask if Vivienne is going from 'the frying pan into the fire' as she leaves prostitution for

marriage with Edward because it recognises the huge earning potential of the romantically based film. This film tells women that they are basically desirable and good and that it is possible to transform men into people who recognise this. Some do challenge the myth of *Cinderella*. Woody Allen in his comedies about failed relationships highlights the absence of romance. The Belgian director Jaco Van Dormal, in an interview with Jonathan Romeny in *The Guardian* said;

There is no continuity in life - it is not like cinema, there's no beginning or end, it goes nowhere, I think people make films to console themselves that life isn't a story. (Van Dormal, 1991 P. 20).

With the technical advances of the twentieth century and the growth of popular culture, television, music and cinema were able to extend the myth of romance to all social classes. For romantic fiction to be satisfying we must have two people who when together lack nothing. They disguise the lack in each other and happiness results but the lack still remains behind the mask of attraction. Vivienne in *Pretty Woman* makes up for the lack of companionship in Edwards life, and he in turn makes up for the lack of approval and glamour in hers. In Perrault's *Cinderella* the prince provides the love and appreciation Cinderella lacked and she provides the caring bride he needs. "When one romantic lover says 'I love you', they are really saying that they love the combination of the two of them" (Lapsley and Westlake, 1992, P. 159).

So where does this leave the classic *Cinderella* tale analysed as a moral guide and form of hope for the young child? It can exist as this but it has also interacted with other social and textual forces since its inception.

The two distinct influences of the twentieth century on the fairytale are romance, as a very old genre (e.g. chivalrous romance of Arthurian legend), and capitalism. Patriarchy too can be identified more clearly in a twentieth light. It has always existed but was not identified as such.

The myth of *Cinderella* is that she was moving from imprisonment to independence. Colette Dowling talks of what she calls "The Cinderella Complex" within women.

In fact we were not trained for freedom at all but for its categorical opposite - dependency.
(Colette Dowling, 1981, P. 13).

As children both boys and girls depend on their parents but Dowling believes that girls are taught to go on depending on others as adults. We have a subconscious wish to continue our childhood existence. This may add to an explanation of the popularity of the Cinderella like story in film, literature, etc. It is reassuring to believe, that as women we have a right to a secure existence and that in the end of the day we shall be taken care of, the struggle will end and we can relax.

CHAPTER V

Feminists, including Angela Carter, Marina Warner, Jane Yolen and Andrea Dworkin have responded to the old tales and their modern day adaptations by rewriting them and by proposing alternatives. They seek to refine Bettelheim's approach by seeing the fairytales not from a human but a female point of view. Feminists fear that children can take on the characteristics of the fairytale characters, Bettelheim does not. Regarding *Cinderella*, the feminist argument believes that the constant repetition of the story can instill traits of passivity and submission in young girls thus conditioning females to think and have expectations like Cinderella. A danger is seen in the stereotypical female characters; the evil stepmother or the good but unreal fairy godmother, the prostitute or the wife. From a feminist perspective, fairytales are not guides to personal growth, as psychologists and psychoanalysts would maintain. Rather, feminists regard fairytales as part and parcel of the growth and maintenance of patriarchy.

There are common threads running through all Cinderella-like tales : the down trodden servant the wicked oppressor, the fairy-godmother, the magical transformation, the flight at midnight, the lost shoe, the search and the marriage. These capture the imagination of the listener and provide fuel for the teller with which to create a tale. Psychologically these elements are crucial with states of mind and stages of development linked to all of them. The feminist argument however fears that too strong a link is being made by women between what they hear and how they then behave. Feminism sees negativity surrounding the areas of the chosen bride, beauty, marriage, wealth and extreme female stereotyping. Certainly there are negative aspects to all of these familiar themes but it is simplistic to blame such fantasy exclusively for women's behaviour or forced behaviour. Fantasy is pleasurable and welcomed by women. It is not fantasy itself that is problematic but the manner in which the characters develop. By the end of a story we are given clear messages regarding behaviour and its consequences. Beauty plays a large role in fantasy. The beautiful are selected for reward. But feminism overlooks the fact

that in the cast of Cinderella it not beauty without thought. Cinderella, in Grimms story, chose wisely when requesting the branch from her father and it became her saviour. In *Pretty Woman*, it is made clear that a lack of social graces does not mean a lack of intelligence. Marriage is a long established expectation within our culture and thus a link between reality and fantasy for the listener. We know that literally a fairy godmother is an impossibility whereas marriage is not. And since Cinderella marries a prince who will inherit the kingdom it can be recognised that tales based on the characteristic features of Cinderella, discussed above, show marriage as the route to wealth with the wedding as the climax of the tale, a confirmation that the right choice has been made. Ideally, fairytales see marriage is a positive step from which the family unit can exist. We do not need feminist theory to remind us that this is only an ideal rarely achieved. Similarly, a child's first encounter with marriage is not through the fairytale but through her every day experiences of her own parents marriage or that of couples around her. On-going reality counter-balances the fairytale and its expectations. Cinderella's weakness is that she is a girl prepared to wait. Having left the slipper at the ball she must remain at home and await the prince. She is a martyr and it is only her tears that arouse her fairy godmother. As a girl in distress she waits to be rescued first by the fairy godmother and then by the prince. Of course this is a negative role model but as such not one that will necessarily be followed. Children can question her actions and compare them to real life situations. All characters in fairy stories have both weak and strong characteristics so we identify with more than one at a time. Alongside feminist criticism of marriage and its links to beauty and wealth within fairytales, is a criticism of the stereotyping of female characters. This aspect remains unquestioned more often than Cinderella's submissive character. Firstly, it must be noted that both boys and girls identify with the Cinderella story and so not always seeing the characters as exclusively female, also stereotyping is suffered by both genders however from a feminist point of view girls and women are given a limited choice of female role models to identify with or aspire to. Beauty accompanies gentle, kind and lovable characters such as Cinderella, her fairy god mother and her dead mother whereas ugliness is associated with evil. Feminist fear that the fairytale is powerful enough to cause a girl who identifies with Cinderella

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to be suspicious of or to create assumptions about girls who do not fit into this image and girls who do not identify with angelic representations of femininity may feel that all the associative features - wealth, love, marriage and power are out of their reach. The stepsisters do not fit into the slipper that fits Cinderella's elegant foot so perfectly. They are therefore less desirable to the prince and in the Grimms version they mutilate their feet, causing them to bleed in order to fit into the shoe. Bettelheim says of Cinderella "she does not need to mutilate herself...her repeated withdrawal shows that contrary to her sisters she is not aggressive in her sexuality but waits patiently to be chosen", (Bettelheim 1991 P. 270), his approach is in direct opposition to that of feminist analysis which has reacted against this picture of perfect womanhood as propagated by Grimm and has created new *Cinderella* stories to counterbalance the old. In *Cinderella on the ball, Fairytales for Feminists*, Linda Kavanagh, in her story. *The Ugly Sisters Strike Back* twists events so that it is the ugly sisters who met their princes, (in the shape of interesting cabinet ministers), at the ball and then go on to set up a museum so that the treasure of the palace can go on show to the public. In a similar publication, *Ride on Rapunzel*, Maeve Binchey in *Cinderella Re-examines* creates a Cinderella who becomes chief executive at Palace enterprises after taking on Open University night course. She rejects the prince and sets up an organisation to outlaw highheel shoes, especially glass ones which are particularly dangerous.

Feminists recognised a genetic factor implicated in the nature of the women. Cinderella is pretty and sweet like her dead mother whereas the sisters are demanding and aggressive like their mother. It is the mother who is responsible for the nature of her daughters. The only good and powerful woman, the fairygodmother, is not real. Her goodness is remote whereas the energetic, ambitious and strongwilled women are also evil jealous and ugly. The huge extremes between the representation of good and bad, the good being unreal and the bad being repulsive, create limited roles for girls to slot themselves into. There is a need to address the fact that neither of the two mother figures embody both assertive independence and goodness at the same time. The stepmother is jealous of Cinderella's impending womanhood, something that she is about to lose as old age

draws closer. Pitting women of different generations against each-other is counteractive to any progression made by women as a whole. Unity between all ages is far more beneficial and prevents the creation of the bitter old hag, jealous of youth which in turn renders old age itself as extremely undesirable which is of no benefit as it is a natural progression and inevitable. In *The Moon Ribbon*, a feminist tale by Jane Yolen, Cinderella's dead mother gives her a magic silver ribbon woven from silver hair. The colour is significant as it is that of older hair thus celebrating the power, beauty and wisdom of old age. In this tale the ribbon's power aids Cinderella, (called Sylva) as she struggles to deal with her mother's loss and her relationship with the stepsisters. There is no mention of men in the story but rather a concentration on the relationships between women and how they can be destructive or nurturing depending on the quest for power and dominance. If Cinderella and her good mother are chosen as role models we chose all that she represents - the prince, the castle, the fortune and so the cycle continues. If we reject this all that remains is the ugly sisters and what they represent; masculinity and aggression. Feminists see these as our only two choices however it is too simplistic to believe that we accept or reject on such an all-or-nothing basis. Processes of identification are more complex and cross genders and age and so directly such blatant stereotyping as exists in fairytales is not perhaps literally acted on but is nevertheless absorbed and there is a need to redress the balance somewhat so that it is ensured that Cinderella's expectations of enchantment and a magical transformation won't be mirrored by the listener, reader or viewer.

The stereotypical female characters as proposed by Cinderella do continue to exist beyond the basic fairytale. Seasonal fashion shows around the globe culminate in the bridal gown; the ultimate dress for the ultimate occasion. The position of the bridal gown within the realms of fashion reaffirms the positive message the fairytale associates with the ideal marriage. Television too, takes on familiar images associated with *Cinderella*. Soap operas such as *Dynasty* relied on the conflicts between poles of good and evil. The character of Alexis played by Joan Collins was inherently evil but also the only woman with power, independence and ambition. Her opponent was the selfless, gentler, blond Chrystle. Her name

itself suggesting purity and conjuring up images of glass whereas the name Alexis comes from a traditionally male name. An entire code of dress was derived from these television characters with the power suit lasting for most of the 1980's as the only way for women to present themselves in the professional world. It was thought that through emulating a male appearance women could successfully confront men. This view is changing now as women realise that their source of power does not lie in emulating men. It is important to meet in the middle but not to cross to the other side. In films such as *Metropolitan*, (Witt Stillmann, 1991) and *Working Girl*, (Mike Nichols, 1988), there is an attempt to show that beauty based on intelligence and courage can exist independently of wealth and connections. Writers too are trying to gain a balance between old assumptions and modern day possibilities. Judith Viorst writes;

And then the prince knelt down and tried to put the glass slipper on Cinderella's foot, I didn't really notice that he had a funny nose, and he certainly looked better all dressed up in fancy clothes.

He's not nearly as attractive as he seemed the other night, so I think I'll just pretend that this slipper feels too tight.
(Viorst in Zipes, 1986, P. 73)

The Bloody Chamber by Angela Carter is a rewriting of the tales of Charles Perrault. She reshapes and reimagines the archetypes of imagination, "recasting the bricks of our inner worlds", (Patricia Dunchar, 1986, P. 223). Dunchar, on discussing the rewritings of Angela Carter talks of ways in which our unconscious is filled with means by which we have been taught to perceive the world.

The fairytales, the received collective wisdom of the past, which as Carter rightly perceives, reflect the myths of sexuality under patriarchy, have been and still are used as the text books through which those lessons are learned.
(Dunchar, P. 224)

Likewise, Andrea Dworkin perceives the tales as vessels of false knowledge:

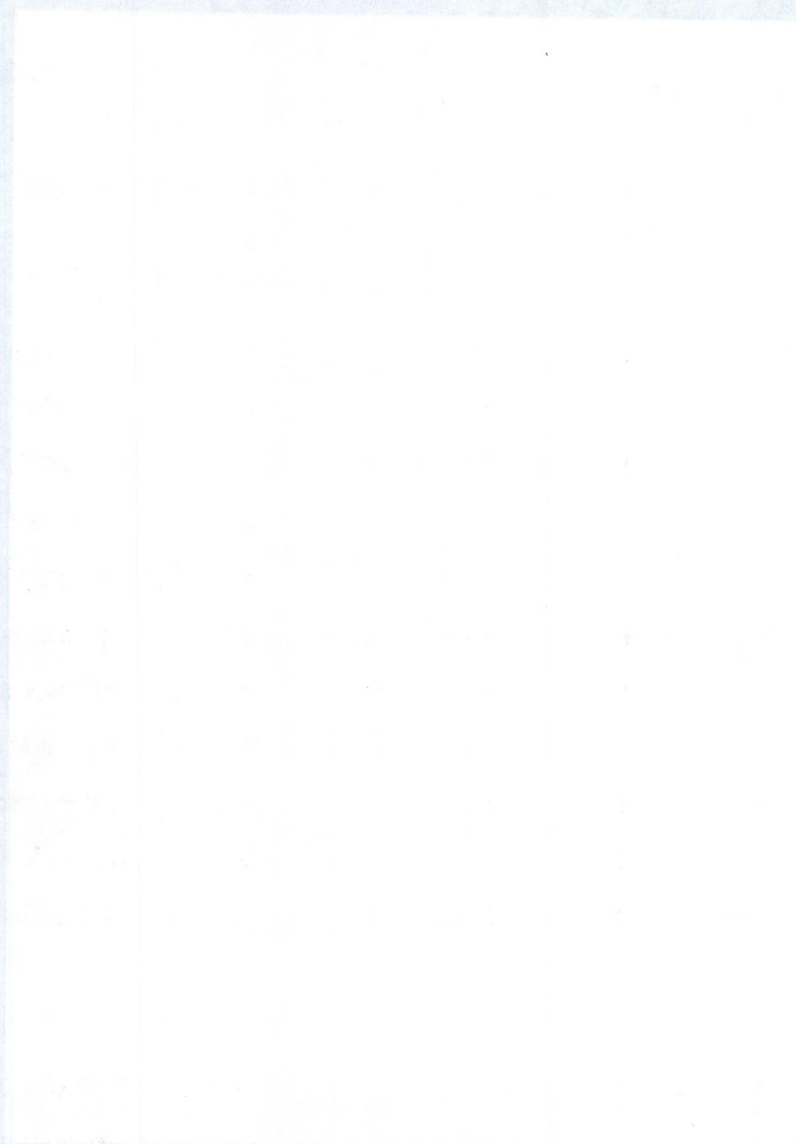
The lessons are simple and we learn them well. Men and women are different absolute opposites. The heroic prince can never be confused with Cinderella or Snowwhite or Sleeping Beauty, she could never do what he does at all, let alone better.... where he is erect, she is supine. Where he is awake, she is asleep. Where he is active, she is passive. Where she is erect or awake or active, she is evil and must be destroyed.
(Andrea Dworkin, 1982, P. 55)

This leads to questions surrounding the images of men in fairytales. Cinderella's period of waiting is akin to a rite of passage, she will become sexually mature within marriage. Within the fairytale this will have a different meaning for both boys and girls. Carter sees boys as thought courage and girls fear. Boys are sent out into the world to seek their fortunes, create their wealth and possess their women. For girls, however, the critical metamorphosis is sexual: menstruation, puberty and marriage. Carter, like Charlotte Bronte, turns her male characters into invalids in an attempt to weaken their physical and sexual power. This form of imposed weakness through mutilation, however, is not a lasting solution to the unbalance of power between the sexes. A similar structure is employed in films such as *Metropolitan*, *Thelma and Louise*, and *Like Water for Chocolate* (Fig. 8) with women in command.

Like all other approaches to the fairytale the feminist interpretation has overlooked certain aspects. Firstly, the images of men in the old tales create stereotypical male roles too. Men must take all the responsibility, men must protect, men must provide, men are denied hearth-centred activities as the nurturer. Men become the parent in authority and women become the child under his control. Men may not enjoy their position but as long as women wish to feel secure and sheltered men will feel that they must take responsibility, "Women, in short, must be trained, coaxed or dragged - kicking and screaming, if necessary - out of their socially sanctioned existential cowardice". (Madonna Kolbenschlay, 1979, P. 86). Feminists should realise that the updated fairytale is in mens interest as well as womens. That not only should the female begin to approach what was thought of as male, but that the male should begin to approach what was always considered female.



Fig. 8 Lunu Cavazos (Tito) and Marc Leonard (Pedro) in *Like Water for Chocolate*.



CONCLUSION

There are two essentials required in order that the fairytale exists, these being the contents of the fairytale and the context in which it is told. Its roots in an oral tradition stress the importance of the teller, while its survival from the spoken word to the written and from there to the screen shows the obvious relevance of its contents. Throughout the history of the folk fairytale the emphasis has continually shifted between contents and context. Each critical approach sees the tale in a different light. Some refuse to acknowledge the circumstances of the past while some seem unaware of contemporary influences.

Propp and the structuralists give prominence to the contents but only in a theoretical manner. It is as if the tale is a disembodied object like a painting that is never to be seen. It is viewed as if it has been created for the sake of fulfilling structural needs. Folklorists pay little heed to these needs. They accept that the basic structure continues to exist from generation to generation but note that it gives rise to various changes as the years pass and different cultures adopt the tale and make it their own. Again though, within their analysis the tale continues to float disembodied and unaware of the reasons behind these changes and more importantly, the consequences of these changes on the listener. For example the folklorist may note the alterations made by a Marxist regime on *Cinderella* but fail to comment on the society that is told this tale rather than a tale by Walt Disney or Angela Carter.

Freudian analysis such as that of Max Luthi or Bruno Bettelheim tries to bridge the gap between the folklorist and the structural by seeing the relevance of both the content and the context in which the tale was created and first told. However although these men were writing and teaching in the mid to late twentieth century they chose to analyse the tales of the nineteenth century and before. The sociological issues surrounding these tales are often no longer relevant. Marxists have made modifications within their regimes as feminists have within Western

culture. Bettelheim sees the tales as existing happily within patriarchy and capitalism. He does not see the tales having any bearing beyond the psychological development of the individual. There seems to be little appreciation or awareness of the different developments of the psyche in different cultures because of differing influences. The greatest debate must be between the symbolic (or unconscious) and the sociological relevance of events within the tale. A balance is sought where the values of the tale as a moral guide handed down from adult to child is acknowledged along with the position of both men and women, rich and poor, young and old in our societies. Is fantasy a vicious circle which breeds discontent through myth, existing so that reality can momentarily be forgotten or does it in ways prepare us for reality ? There is yet to be an analysis that borrows from the folklorist, structuralist, psychoanalyst and feminist critiques to create a new variant.

In response to Miriam R. Cox's volume *Cinderella 345 Variants* (1893), Mr. David Nutt in the British Folklore societies review of the same year discusses the possible origins of *Cinderella* in Britain:

We can show that of all existing versions of the true *Cinderella* tale it is one collected in these islands which presents obvious archaic features.

He presents three English versions, *Cinderella*, *Catskins* and *Cap O'Rushes*, concluding;

If any patriotic soul likes to think of the cinder-wench^{as} of starting forth from our land to conquer the world, I cannot deny there are grounds for hiding this to be more than a mere pious opinion.
(David Nutt, 1893, P. 297)

These words describe a strong, independent Cinderella, one that resembles a twentieth century feminist version. But it is unconsciously that Mr. Nutt describes his Cinderella as a strong woman for in the same review his colleague Mr. Joseph Jacobs asks: "Has there been continued existence of folktales from prehistoric times to the present ?", he views *Cinderella* as a poor example through which to answer this as he believes, "the essence of the tale is the rise in social position of a girl

who makes a fortunate marriage and, it would therefore be idle to look for its origins in socialites where there was little variant of social position", or in societies such as India which "is essentially a shoeless country" (Jacobs in Nutt, 1893 P. 301). The shoe being in his mind an essential component of the tale. Bettelheim would not accept this simplistic view of the tale as a fortunate marriage, feminist do however see the element of matrimony as critical. Jacobs goes on though to say: "The monogamous condition which is at the root of the slipper test does away with the probability that *Cinderella* arose in any but a tolerably advanced society" (Jacobs in Nutt, 1893, P. 301).

This is a folklorist opinion of one hundred years ago and a dialogue between it and more contemporary views could lessen the simplistic extremes of each if seen independently. There is without double^T a need to question the historical validity of the archetypal patterns of the fairytales that Freud, Jung and Bettelheim believe point the child in the direction of self knowledge and independence. Jack Zipes attempts to do this by saying;

To talk about fairytales today, especially feminist fairytales, one must in my opinion, talk about, power, violence, alienation social conditions, childrearing and sex roles.
(Jack Zipes, 1986, P. 27)

The essence in understanding *Cinderella* is to understand that it has changed and is continuing to do. Each variant must be studied in relation to the time and culture in which it was created. The final words of *Pretty Woman* are uttered by Julia Roberts when asked by Gere "what does the princess do when rescued by the prince ?", "she rescues him right back", says Julia. This is where the central difference of opinion lies in contemporary critical analysis and production of *Cinderella* tales. Perrault based stories like to suggest that women have the power to do this. There is no doubt that both men and women need to be rescued from traditional roles but Perrault's *Cinderella* as a traditional story is hardly a guide to this. Contemporary analysis says that we can rescue ourselves and in looking at *Cinderella* in relation to present day culture we must look at contemporary variants.

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