

FAIRY TALES: SOCIALIZATION THROUGH ARCHETYPAL PATTERNS &
SYMBOLS

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CAPSTONE ABSTRACT

Fairy Tales and their Role in Socialization through Archetypes and Symbols

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This capstone explores fairy tales and their role in socialization. Fairy tales have remained a cultural mainstay for thousands of years, and their impact on generation after generation is difficult to deny. Fairy tales began through oral narration and eventually, with the help of technological advances, became a fixture in society when the printing press allowed the stories to be bound into printed collections. Even in modern times, the same fairy tales from long ago are being revamped and retold through new media platforms (such as film and television) and for the most part, the stories have remained the same. Fairy tales are everlasting, with their stories and symbols continuously captivating audiences with their enchanting lore. Although people claim that fairy tales have been updated and made empowering, and in particular for young girls, this capstone will illuminate the fact that this is untrue, and the new tales are actually more destructive to women and girl's autonomy. This research evaluates how symbols and archetypal

patterns are the main culprits for embedding patriarchal codes and gender behaviors into the minds of their audience. By comparing older, classic fairy tale stories to their new Disney-created counterparts, it is easy to recognize how the symbols and character patterns within them have not changed after all these years—even if they appear to at first glance. By taking a deeper look at fairy tales—both old and new—the social programming rooted within in them becomes obvious.

Introduction: Fairy Tales

Regardless of their background, culture, or economic stature, most kids have one thing in common—they have been introduced to fairy tales. Whether through a book, oral narration, or the now popular form of film and television, children all around the world are familiar with the same fairy tales that have been shared for thousands of years. Well known stories like “Rapunzel,” “Sleeping Beauty,” “Snow White,” as well as countless others, have been shared through the span of innumerable generations all across the globe. Through symbolism and archetypal patterning, fairy tales have proven to be an ideal method throughout history to indoctrinate children with cultural norms, such as gender roles (feminine/masculine), beauty standards, and behavior expectations. Fairy tales subtly shape our beliefs, behaviors, and ethics, as they powerfully create culture and modify history. Fairy tales have evolved through the years and many have been redesigned or retold in attempts to appease the negative views of these stories overtly gendered ideologies. Through the evaluation and retelling of these stories with different archetypal patterns and imaging, the patriarchal and binary system that has dominated fairy tales for such a prolonged time might be broken. This paper closely assesses whether modern fairy tales have accomplished the goal of eliminating (or updating) behavioral standards by examining the psychosocial effects of fairy tales, as well as focusing on how symbols and archetypal patterns are used to create social requirements and rules.

Creatures of Story

Jonathon Gottsthall stated in the preface of his book, *The Storytelling Animal*, that “Tens of thousands of years ago, when the human mind was young and our numbers were few, we were telling one another stories...we are, as a species, addicted to story.” The connection to language, myth, and the human mind seem intricately attached to each other. Gottsthall takes the view that the fairy tale’s roles and plot structures are hard-wired into the human brain and are “nature’s innate story-telling device that specializes in simulating human problems (66).” Gottsthall continues by sharing his belief that engaging in stories is our evolutionary niche and the “glue of human social life (177).” Stories are deeply embedded into our psyche; children are creatures of story and these tales innately occupy their entire being. Children are “either enjoying stories in their books and videos or creating, in their pretend play, wonder worlds of mommies and babies, princes and princesses, good guys and bad (6).” Children mimic what they hear through fairy tales and desire to take on the same persona or archetypal pattern from the characters within the fairy tales they watch or read. These stories define social groups and holds them together (Gottsthall 177). However, Gottsthall’s claims contradict each other when examined closer. His notion of stories being hard-wired into our brains is not substantiated, but instead supports the notion that fairy tales are cultural tools that shape our conditions of reality. His assertions that “stories penetrate our skulls and seize our brains (90),” defining and holding together social groups, indicates how a story’s audience is affected by and trained through the stories, not how stories are not innately hard-wired within the psyche.

While language and myth do seem to play a role in how children acquire a social self, there are several other schools of thought when it comes to just how fairy tales inculcate children. Theoretically, it can be argued that it is language that “sets the stage for the development of self-conscious behavior and thought (Taylor 6),” rather than behaviors and roles being inborn. Between the ages of four and seven, children’s brains are learning to comprehend gender as a basic component of self. Through symbolism contained within these stories, fairy tales present a “microcosm of ideologies, values, and beliefs from the dominant culture,” indoctrinating gender beliefs and scripts (Taylor 6). Due to the state of development in children, they thus adopt these scripts, internalizing gender roles through imagination and role playing by effectively “practicing” gender ideology. Maria Tartar, professor and folklore specialist, also agrees with Taylor, setting forth that fairy tales are indeed didactic in nature, and used not only to keep kids in line by scaring them into good behavior, but also the edification of feminine and masculine roles. In fairy tales, children are punished for their curiosity and vice. How and what children are punished for is determined by their assigned gender role. Patriarchal gender embedded codes are organized into these tales, just as children absorbing the matter are just beginning to acquire their own self-awareness and personality. To add to this perspective, folklorist and professor, Jack Zipes, insists that fairy tales are memes (informational pattern in the human brain) used as tools through the evolution of culture. Symbolism and archetypal patterns, wrought throughout fairy tales, offer insight into group processes, gender ideology, and behavioral hierarchical dimensions. When we understand how stories are central in children’s thoughts and development, we realize fairy tales are the perfect vehicle to teach children how to define their existence.

With extraordinary tales of hero-princes, talking frogs, and magical endings shared with children at pivotal developmental stages in their lives, it is no wonder these “happily ever after” tales grab such a hold on children’s impressionable minds. Professor and Freudian scholar, Bruno Bettelheim, believes that reading fairy tales to children is important and useful because they stimulate the imagination and help children develop intellect (5). He goes on to say that for a child to understand himself, learn moral lessons, and cope with society’s conditions, fairy tales are a necessary tool in refining a child’s unconscious. The suggested images these tales provide give structure for their daydreams and “give better direction to his life (7).” Bettelheim believes that the use of fairy tales is the perfect device to help mankind succeed in wringing out the meaning of his or her existence (8). An issue with Bettelheim’s belief becomes evident when we ask the question, what exactly is being programmed into these impressionable minds? It is important to look at what fairy tale stories are teaching and realize how they keep children (and humanity) trapped in a system where deviation from the norm is unwelcome and punished.

The fairy tale has captured audience’s attention for thousands of years. Originally, listeners gathered around oral narrators, hypnotized by the power of the rhythmic energy and patterning force of tales happening *once upon a time*. Through the centuries, these stories have undergone numerous oral translations—distributing versions of these chronicles to all corners of the world. When technological interventions arrived, such as the printing press, it allowed for oral narrations to be placed in print, thus concreting fairy tales into the narratives of history. Strict Calvinists, brothers Wilhelm and Jakob Grimm, engaged on a 15-year journey seeking to find and document myths and folklore from

storytellers around the German countryside before publishing their collections of printed fairy tales, *Fairytales for Children and Use Around the Home*. The Grimm's tales, along with fairy tales by Hans Christian Andersen, Charles Perrault (and others) have prevailed through the centuries and continue to today—now in new modern forms. These old tales have been translated, edited, and updated hundreds (if not thousands) of times through the ages. It is interesting to compare various fairy tale versions throughout history. Many of these stories appear to have gone through drastic changes at first glance, but by studying the underlying symbols and patterns, rather than the story itself, it is easy to identify how the same patriarchal behavioral coding from long ago is still embedded within the tales today, and continue to shape society in a same manner.

Jungian Archetypal Patterns

The scholarship above leaves little doubt that fairy tales play a role in the human psyche and children's personal development. Because of the connection between stories and the developing self, it is vital to learn and understand the meanings of the patterns within the stories in order to grasp the complexity of how they work in the human psyche. Through the interpretation of these tales and the symbols within them, we can better understand how society has been created and perhaps recognize how to change the symbols and archetypes to be more embracing of people's individualities. According to Jungian scholar and analyst, Marie Louise von Franz, fairy tales are important to analyze, just as one would dreams or the waking state. In fact, von Franz begins her lecture in "Interpretations of Fairy Tales" by stating "Fairy tales are the purest and simplest expression of collective unconscious psychic processes" and archetypes in their barest and most concise form. Therefore, it is imperative to value them as scientific investigation in order to depict the general human basis and mental structure.

While fairy tales have remained fluid, von Franz explains how motif, symbolism, and archetype have remained basically the same for over 3000 years. "So it can be said that the basic structure of archetypal elements of a myth are built into a formal expression, that links it up with the cultural collective consciousness and to known historical material (von Franz II 3)." Because these stories are innately part of our unconsciousness, they have a vivifying effect, giving children (and adults) satisfactory reactions of peace and recognition within their foundation. In Jungian theory, archetypes constitute the structure of the collective unconscious, and are psychic innate dispositions that allow humans to experience and represent basic human behavior. Archetypal images

manifest in all cultures and religions and humans have been endowed with the experience of archetypes through a universal library of knowledge (collective unconscious).

The archetype concept stems from repeated observation of how myths and universal literature contain the same themes and motif (von Franz II 3). The main archetypes evident in what Paul and Andreas Moxnes call the “Big Five of Fairy Tales” are the king, princess, queen, the mentor, and the hero-trickster. These five roles are found throughout all myth—including real life. Jung hypothesizes that these frequently repeating roles might be the underpinning for a default model of personality traits born to us. And, while von Franz and other Jungian theorists understand that this interpretation and understanding of archetypal image is not the complete picture of the human psyche, it does seem to represent and modernize the myth into psychological form (von Franz III 7). According to von Franz, to interpret and analyze fairy tales, one must divide story into exposition (time/space), as well as *dramatis persona* (people involved). To get a greater understanding of Jung’s theories and how they relate to fairy tales (and programming society), a brief review of these concepts and archetypal patterning is necessary before proceeding.

Exposition and the King/Father Archetype

If you skim through a collection of fairy tales, the similarities of how they begin is obvious. At the start of many fairy tales, the reader is transported to some unknown place in time. It is quite common to read “Once upon a time...,” or “In times past there lived...,” or “In times gone by there lived a King...” The exposition of nowhere-ness is apparent in nearly all fairy tales, indicating “timelessness and spacelessness—the nowhere of the collective unconscious (von Franz III 2).” Within the next few sentences

of the story, we are introduced to the psychological situation and its players. According to von Franz, the Brothers Grimm's collection of fairy tales had at least 60 tales that start off by introducing a king and his sons. This paradigm is not representative of a normal family, for one cannot help noticing the lack of feminine elements. The depiction of the fairy tale family clearly showcases dominant male cultures right from the beginning of the story.

Jungian scholars, when analyzing the symbol of the king, look first at leaders within primitive societies (where these stories first originated from). In archaic societies, the king or chief usually has a magical quality and the entire prosperity of the country/kingdom depends wholly on the mental state and health of the king, thus indicating that the king represents the divine principal in visible form (von Franz IV 5). Through a Jungian view, the king represents the self and is the central symbol in the contents of the collective unconscious. Furthermore, it underlies political and religious doctrines within a social group. While the king character is looked at as the central symbol, he is usually depicted as aging, ill, or out-of-luck. He and his kingdom need saving—as his power seemingly fades with his youth.

The Queen/Mother Archetype

Queen and mother figures do show up in fairy tales, of course, but offer very distinct patterns for their feminine behavior. There are typically two different variants to the queen or mother archetype. She is represented in one of two ways. These images showcase a woman who is either benevolent, or they are evil. As for the benevolent queen/mother, they are typically shown as compassionate, receptive, and noticeably quiet. Moreover, sympathetic feminine characters tend to die early in the story or have

already passed when the story began. Other times, the maternal character is unable to bear children. The women who are infertile are punished by losing their child. Examples of infertility playing a major role in fairy tales can be seen in tales such as “Rapunzel” and “Sleeping Beauty”. In both these stories, the queen/mother figure is unable to bear children. In “Rapunzel,” the man and his wife long for a child, but it is in vain. The story tells how the woman is dying and sends her husband to the witch’s garden to fetch her some rampion. He is caught by the witch, and in his distress, he promises the witch their child when it is born (Grimm 94). It is important to consider how in these and other stories, the couple’s infertility is blamed on the women rather than the possibility the king might be sterile. According to von Franz, the benevolent queen image represents an accompanying feminine element to the king archetype including emotions, feelings, and irrational attachments to dominant culture (von Franz IV 7). The benevolent mother/queen, just like the king archetype, is shown in the beginning, but does not play a major role through the remainder of the tale.

Along with the benevolent queen archetype, there is another female pattern that appears more often—the dark and evil queen/stepmother/witch. The evil witchy-woman image is heavily depicted in fairy tales. “Sleeping Beauty,” “Snow White,” “Rapunzel,” and several others focus on the evil feminine image. The evil women in these tales are envious of youth and beauty, and will steal or kill in attempts to gain it from those who embody these treasures. One example of an evil witch trying to capture youth and beauty is in the story “Rapunzel”. The evil witch locked the beautiful Rapunzel up for many years. She raised the girl as her own, but when the queen learned the king’s son had been paying visits to the locked-up Rapunzel, the queen became wicked and vicious. “O

wicked child,” cried the witch, “what is this I hear! I thought I had hidden you from all the world, and you have betrayed me!” after this, the witch seizes Rapunzel by her long beautiful hair, strikes her, and cuts her golden locks right off (Grimm 95). The evil queen is controlling, aggressive, and destructive. She is shown as greedy and always chasing beauty and youth to the treachery of the younger maiden.

The Maiden/Princess Archetype

The princess/maiden image tends to portray a bumbling girl who gets in trouble when curiosity and lofty ideas strike her; she is passive and one dimensional. The maiden tends to have one job: performing household chores, and just one main objective: to find a husband. Fairy tales portray the maiden/princess character as docile, without career goals—and without any real particular behavior at all. Instead, these tales work as didactic devices, warning young girls of the dangers of the world, teaching them to be courteous and well-bred. These stories demonstrate the proper behavior expectations for each gender. Fairy tales repeatedly show maidens and princesses who venture out on her own, but by the end, those fair maidens need saving from the hero of the story. The maiden in fairy tales ends up “locked up in towers, locked into a magic sleep, imprisoned by giants, or otherwise enslaved, waiting to get rescued by a passing prince (Lieberman 389)” making the imprisoned maiden the quintessential heroine of the fairy tale. In “Rapunzel,” the maiden disobeys her mother-figure by having a prince visit her, and when the witch lashes out and cuts her hair, it is the strong prince who saves her from the evil woman. Likewise, in “Snow White,” a prince comes along and saves the fair maiden from her poisoned death. This feminine archetype image always needs saving, demonstrating how the princess/maiden image cannot exist alone. She needs a savior.

The maiden needs a man. The maiden/princess image that appears across continents and generations is an archetype based on chauvinistic ideals. These standards permeate the unconscious collective—imposing gender rules and behaviors and promoting the docility, domestication, and submission of women and girls.

The Hero Archetype

The hero is the savior of the story. He demonstrates courageous hopefulness while saving the kingdom from witches, dragons, evil spells, and other maladies, to free his kingdom (and do not forget beautiful (and often-time bewitched) maiden). The hero figure typically displays both bad and good qualities, and trouble tends to find him early in the story. Regardless of the distress he encounters throughout the tale, by the end the hero redeems himself, ruling the kingdom, and lives happily ever after with his prize: the fair and beautiful maiden. Jungian scholars note that the hero figure exists as an instrument to completely express what the self wants to happen. “The hero is an archetypal figure which presents a model of an ego functioning in accord with the Self (von Franz IV 12)” and gives a model for living through difficult life situations. Heroes, however, are almost always male, while the feminine archetypes, as mentioned above, are displayed as passive, domesticated, and subservient. Furthermore, Jung and von Franz believe the “hero” represents the self (ego) and the ego is not self-constituted, but taught through parental and public education. By understanding the didactic nature and the psychological effects of fairy tales, it becomes evident how these stories are tools used by parents and teachers to aide in the development of self-conscious behaviors in children. Professor Frank Taylor, of Edinboro University of Pennsylvania, also agrees with

Jungian sentiments, adding that children learn through language and stories through the use of cultural symbols contained within them.

Professor Naomi R. Goldenberg argues that Jungian psychology warrants a feminine critique because it is a form of patriarchal religion itself (Goldenberg 444). The Jungian model clearly denotes the same binary system these stories share, with decidedly masculine and feminine stereotypes. What Jung believes is collective unconscious is simply generations of patriarchal thought. Evidence of the strength of patriarchal embedding within Jung's theory becomes obvious when investigating his archetypes for the feminine image. His feminine archetypes lack depth and agency. The main goals and life lessons for the optimal female character within these tales is to be good at household chores, stay out of trouble, and appear beautiful enough to be chosen by a man. Ideals of sexism are evident in Jung's theories, and the strength of the masculine imprint becomes more evident. Goldenberg states, "The theory clearly favors men, even though it has been praised as a liberating concept... (Goldenberg 446)." Goldenberg feels that Jung's theories should be abandoned because the images and archetypes within his theories conform women to roles established by an absolute patriarchal experience.

Character archetypes are not the only significant patterns to pay attention to, however. For a more comprehensive look at how fairy tales anchor patriarchal societal norms on the mass population, and in particular children, it is important to assess key symbols within the tales, as well.

Symbolism in Fairy Tales

Most theologians are aware of the similarity of symbols within stories and tales, but many have their own thoughts on how to best evaluate and connect them. For example, Sigmund Freud reasoned that the symbols contained in fairy tales represent the “fossilized residue of primordial sexual metaphors (Vaz de Silva 1).” Maria Tartar believes that fairy tales are simply metaphoric teaching devices, while Carl Jung taught that symbols in fairy tales (and dreams) express an innate archetype demonstrating the “basic patterns of the human psyche” (von Franz I 14). When interpreting fairy tales, scholars and theologians tend to examine the symbols hiding within them. “Although all models of symbolism agree that the contents of fairy tales are not to be taken literally, they disagree on what symbols may be (Vaz de Silva 3).” Symbols offer alternative propositions about their meaning, and are created using colors, numbers, elements, setting... basically, anything can ultimately be used or translated as a symbol. Blood, beauty, numbers, and mirrors are a few common examples of symbols and images that appear in fairy tales. The prevalence and repetitive natures of these symbols aid in influencing the patriarchal-based archetypal pattern.

Symbolism in Numbers

Numbers are an often-used symbolic device in storytelling and fairy tales. Not only do the numbers help its audience remember key points of the story, but the numbers themselves hold special symbolic meaning. The story of “Snow White” is a prime example, for it is difficult to miss how often the numbers three and seven arise when reading the tale of the fair maiden and the poisonous apple. Snow-white is seven years old when the mirror first tells the queen she is no longer the fairest in the land. Snow

White comes to a house and finds seven little chairs, seven plates of food, and seven different beds she lies on before she gets comfortable. It takes the queen three visits before Snow-white finally falls dead and is not saved by the dwarfs. Each time the queen travels to the forest to tempt Snow White, she crosses seven little mountains. Three times we read how the queen “went across the seven mountains and came to the house of the seven dwarfs, and knocked and cried, “Good wares to sell (Grimm 334)!” Likewise, when the seven dwarfs realize Snow White cannot be saved, they “laid her on a beir, and sat all seven of them around it, and wept and lamented three whole days (Grimm 336).” Through the entire tale, the numbers three and seven are used over and again.

There are several schools of thought on what the numbers seven and three represent. Jutta von Bucholtz connects the number seven to the seven days of the week, the seven planets, the seven rungs of perfection, the complete cycle of the moon, and indicates passing to a new cycle. According to Stephen Olderr, author of *Symbolism: A Comprehensive Dictionary*, the number three has significant ties to forward movement, moral and spiritual dynamism, perfection, success, marriage, and the completion of a phase of growth (Olderr 51-52). Similarly, Olderr views the number seven as expressing perfection, transformation, and the unification of hierarchal order. It is also known to signify to represent virginity, the Great Mother, fate, and courage. In all religions, the number seven plays a role. In Babylonian times, there is the seven cosmic tower and seven branches of life. In Christianity, the seven virtues, seven vices, seven deadly sins, and the seven angels. Islam has seven heavens, seven climates, and seven prophets (Olderr 99). By looking at “Snow White” through the symbolism of the numbers three and seven, it makes sense that this tale represents a transitional time for the fair maiden,

or an awakening of her maturation. Her perfect beauty causes the need for Snow-white to hide away with the dwarfs. If one looks at “Snow White” as a transitional tale, it is important ask why a girl’s transition happens only when she is introduced to the masculine. In “Snow White,” “Sleeping Beauty,” and “Rapunzel” (as well as other tales), the girl/maiden, is only matured when she has been domesticated, tamed, humbled, and saved by a masculine aspect. Snow-white must learn the dangers inherent in beauty (von Bucholtz 9), and she does while living with the seven little men. The use of these particular numbers imbeds lessons that girls/women are to be trained by and subservient to the male element.

Mirrors and the Epitome of Beauty

“The mirror is alluring. It is a magnifying glass where I might glimpse the surface of the cultural text that is myself (Newberry 20).” The mirror is another image commonly used in fairy tales. The mirror can be viewed as a representation of beauty. Olderr states that a mirror represents thought, self-realization, wisdom, fertility, pride, seduction, and the personification of truth. It can be viewed as a door to another world (Olderr 3536). The mirror is a tool to gauge ones looks—to become or make sure they are fairest of all. The mirror thus becomes tightly tied to gender identity, propelling vanity, and the quest for beauty as an indicator of success for girls and women. “Snow White,” “Sleeping Beauty,” and “Beauty and the Beast” are just a few tales where mirrors are used to create and teach specific feminine image behaviors to its readers.

In the “Beauty and the Beast,” the image of beauty is such a large part of the story, it is the first word of the title. The maiden is never introduced by her first name, but the readers are informed that the merchant’s youngest daughter, in comparison with her

sisters, “was really far prettier and cleverer than they were. Indeed, she was so lovely she was always called Beauty (de Villeneuve 3).” It is the maiden with the radiant looks that wins in the end, and her prize is getting chosen for betrothal by a man. Mirrors, along with beauty, appear in this story. Early in her stay with the Beast, Beauty tries to find ways to amuse herself, and sets out to explore the many rooms of the massive palace. The first room she enters is lined with mirrors. Beauty sees herself reflected on every side and thinks she has never seen such a charming room (de Villeneuve 15). The scene is an indication of Beauty’s self-realization and egotism. To be pleased with her own image filling the room demonstrates the cultural importance of beauty. It teaches readers that beauty is the focal piece of the feminine aspect.

Another example of the use of mirrors to emphasize beauty is in fairy tale, “Snow White”. In fact, the mirror plays a pivotal role in this tale between beauty and evil. The queen is obsessed with being the most beautiful one in the land. The mirror is magical and talks back to the queen, informing her if she reigns the fairest and most beautiful of all. The mirror image reflects the queen’s self-worth and unhealthy relationship with the quest for beauty. Just as the king’s power diminishes with age, the queen similarly loses her power as she ages and loses her beauty. Fairy tales greatly focus on female vanity, concreting the glorification of outward beauty into the minds of readers. They exemplify the notion that the pursuit of beauty is the ultimate quest for the female. Unfortunately, the competition to be the prettiest in all the lands breeds jealousy and bitter battles between females.

“And the Queen went home and stood before the looking-glass and said,
*“Looking-glass against the wall,
 Who is fairest of us all?”*

And the looking-glass answered as before,

“Queen, thou art of beauty rare,

But Snow-white living in the glen

With the even little men

Is a thousand more times more fair (Grimm 334).”

Snow-white and the queen are connected by their need to be beautiful. Their pursuit of beauty becomes potentially deadly. Snow-white naively wants to adorn herself with a lace and a comb and these articles of beauty end up killing her. We observe how deadly beauty can be, and again we witness how the maiden needs saving from the masculine to survive. Beauty is a precious commodity and the evil queen easily sells them to the young maiden. The comb is of notable relevance because, according to Orderr, the comb symbolizes vanity, sacrificial remains, burials, and entanglement (Orderr 145). The queen certainly has all intents of sacrificing the young beauty with the comb, and the comb also works as a sign of vanity, as well. The evil queen, by witchcraft, poisons the comb and tempts Snow-white with it, simply by showing it to her. “It pleased the poor child so much that she was tempted to open the door (Grimm 334).” For which the queen responds, “Now, for once, your hair will be properly combed.” The comb, a symbol and feminine ideals and behavior, further solidifies the importance of beauty in relation to happiness.

The value of beauty continues to be at the forefront of the tale. The dwarves are unable to bury Snow-white in the dark, cold earth because of her unsurpassed beauty. Her beauty is so stunning that the dwarves and men (hero) from the kingdom feel that they must be able to gaze upon her, even after her death—as if her beauty keeps her immortal somehow. The significance placed on beauty in fairy tales is directly tied to attracting the

hero to the maiden, as well. In “Snow White,” the king’s son gazes upon her beauty as she lies dead in the glass coffin and says to the dwarfs, “Let me have the coffin and I will give you whatever you like to ask for it...I beseech you to give it to me, for I cannot live without looking upon Snow-white (Grimm 336).” The constant focus on the motif of beauty in these tales reveal how girls/women are viewed as, and expected to act as objects; something to be admired and kept. Through the indoctrination of the tale, beauty becomes the top achievement of feminine identity. When you are the fairest of all, you win all the prizes. You get to marry the King’s son! You get to live in a castle! Achieve beauty and you can live happily-ever-after! Moreover, the lessons taught on the rewards of beauty teach young girls that the end goal/prize in a female’s life is to be chosen by a man.

Blood Red Beauty: Symbolism of Color

The image of blood within these tales holds a myriad of hypothesized interpretations. Blood is thought by Bettelheim to symbolize the change from sexual innocence to sexual desire. According to Orderr, it represents sacrifice, passion, life, and fertility. It is connected to witchcraft and magic. In “Snow White,” the queen pricks her finger while embroidering, and when the three drops of blood splash against the pure white snow, the queen gazes down at the drops of blood and at that moment she decides “Oh that I had a child as white as snow, as red as blood, and as black as the wood of the embroidery frame (Grimm 330)!” Several interpretations could arise from the drops of blood on the white snow. Perhaps it represents the queen beginning her menstruation for the first time, or the loss of virginity or maybe a sexual encounter? Just like blood, the color red has a major role within the fairy tale. In fact, red appears continuously throughout the narrative. For example, when Snow-white takes a bite of the poisoned apple and falls to the earth dead, the queen exclaims, “As white as snow, as red as blood,

as black as ebony! This time the dwarfs will not be able to bring you to life again (Grimm 334).” Snow-white was envied for her beauty, and she is sacrificed for it. Red is associated with love, virility, passion, emotion, sin, sacrifice, wildness, and sin. It is interesting that the queen chose blood red to describe her want for a child, as opposed to rose red or cherry red. The use of blood to describe red indicates the darker, more tragic side of the color. A cherry red or rose red would create lighter and less dangerous images for the reader/audience.

Like the color red, the use of white also appears often in the story of the fair maiden, Snow-white. White is known as the purest of colors, and is associated with the sun, purity, chastity, virginity, peace, and perfection (Orderr 5666). The contrast of white snow and red blood could be a symbol of the death of an old life and the birth of a new one, demonstrating the transition of Snow-white from a scared little girl hiding in the woods to developing into a princess living happily ever after in the king’s castle. However, Snow-white is not the only one in the story going through a transition, and these color symbols could indicate transitions for the queen, as well. The aging queen’s role in the story transforms—just as her beauty does—glorifying youth and alluring appearances.

In the story “Sleeping Beauty,” our attention is again turned towards the images of blood and beauty. The benevolent queen, unable to conceive, laments while bathing and a frog (another masculine figure) appears and says her wish to have a child shall be fulfilled within the year. When the frog’s premonition came true, “The Queen bore a daughter so beautiful that the King could not contain himself for joy (Grimm 96).” Because the king is quite anxious to show off his daughter’s beauty, he throws a great

feast. Unfortunately, one of the wise women invited is left without a plate or seat to eat from, and in her vengeance, she proclaims of the baby princess: “In the fifteenth year of her age the Princess shall prick herself with a spindle and shall fall down dead (Grimm 96).” Due to the curse by the excluded wise woman, the king has all the spindles in the kingdom burned. Looking closer, the reaction of the king might represent his attempt to halt the maturation of his young daughter, the princess. Ultimately, it is the princess’ curiosity that leads her to an old tower that holds a little room at the top of a staircase. Once in the tower room, the princess sees an old lady sitting at a spinning wheel. The inquisitive princess pricks her finger as foretold by the shunned woman, thus falling asleep for a hundred years. Just like in the story of “Snow White,” one can speculate the prick of the finger and the resulting blood as illustrating the loss of virginity and innocence.

An Interpretation of the Tales

When discussing the use of symbols and the human psyche, von Franz explains that “in mythology, *we* are the soil of the symbolic motifs—we, the individual human beings (von Franz I 9).” Von Franz’ statement signifies that we cannot disregard the individual’s reaction/emotion to the symbols and metaphors. It is we who write and tell the tales, and it is we who create the symbols and interpret them. Therefore, fairy tales are almost always subjectively told and understood, helping make them the perfect cultural tools. The same moral and behavioral lessons remain in these stories throughout time because, although the stories often change on the surface, the symbolism and archetypes within them do not. With the fairy tale’s prophetic use of symbols and imagery, fairy-tale-language seems to be the perfect international language of all mankind.

Maria Tartar’s interpretation of fairy tales differs greatly from Jung and von Franz’ views. While she does not believe that archetypes and patterns are inherently born within us, she does agree that the narrator and interpreter “produce the textual truths continuous with our personal beliefs... morals are not stable entities and seem to vary dramatically with each reader (Tartar xvi).” Although fairy tales are didactic in nature, these lessons are “not spelled out in the text.” Fairy tales are reconstructed to one’s belief system in order to pass down lessons and rules, therefore productively socializing the intended audience. Each parent or teacher reading the story focuses on and describes what is happening in the tale based on their perspective and cultural propensity. Additionally, Tartar states that children’s literature works as cautionary tales to keep children in line, docile, and tame. While these cautions present themselves to all the

children within the stories, the disdain for the feminine character's disobedience is unmistakable. In all the fairy tales discussed so far, we see how giving in to temptation leads to punishment for the maiden archetype. In "Sleeping Beauty," the princess lands herself in trouble and pricks her finger after she is left alone in the castle. She ventures out in boredom and curiosity strikes when her parents leave. The princess "wandered about into all the nooks and corners, and into all the chambers and parlors, as the fancy took her, till at last she came to an old tower (Grimm 97)." Her wonder leads to her cursed and painful prick, resulting in the kingdom's hundred-year slumber.

Another example of how fairy tales (and archetypal patterns) forewarn girls against non-compliance is the tale, "The Frog Prince". The maiden in the story is disobedient and does not keep her promise to the frog. In turn, she is punished by her father and made to indulge the male frog in his rulings. In both these stories, it is the girl's curiosity and rebellion that leads them to trouble. Of course, in the end it is the maiden's beauty that saves the day. The maiden's exquisite beauty saves them, and their defiance is forgiven (as long as they agree to marry the hero). In story after story, the hero chooses the maiden because of their beauty. Beauty is the maiden's sole attribute, and this is shown in the many tales where princes come across a beautiful girl who is not even alert. The hero desires the maidens as objects and do not even have to get to know the maiden, yet insist on marrying her. These directives reiterate the achievement of beauty as the coveted feminine ideal and reaffirm feminine behavior standards. The fair, beautiful maiden that is lucky enough to be chosen must be meek, naïve, docile, and subservient. When strong-willed, active, and ambitious female characters show up in these tales, they are portrayed as ugly, wicked, and alone. Fairy tales program obedience,

cautioning girls of too much curiosity, of wandering around by one's self, as well as being too beautiful. Fairy tales edify the notion that, for the female, the desire and actions toward freedom are a punishable offense.

The punishment/reward strategy further acculturates a binary gender system, presenting a clear "picture of sexual roles, behavior, and psychology... an examination of the treatment of girls and women in fairy tales reveals a certain patterns." These patterns play "a major contribution in forming the sexual role concept of children, and... the limitations that are imposed by sex (Lieberman 384)." These stories drill into its readers that for a woman, marriage is the fulcrum of life. They infer that beauty equals wealth, and that women need to be chosen by a man. In all these tales, the girl/woman cannot choose their partner or be a part of the process. Generations of women and girls have undoubtedly formed their psycho-sexual self-concepts through the bombardment of expected feminine behaviors demonstrated by the images and motifs that repetitively appear in these stories. Psychologically, these stories teach jealousy between women, including with the other females in their own family. The jealousy felt between women leads to depression, aggression, and isolation. Jungian theory argues that we are inherently born with these archetypes and all destined to adapt these patterned roles, but by reflecting on the examples of archetypes, images, and various interpretations shown above, fairy tales are clearly a tool for imbedding socio-cultural values, manners, relational concept, and gender behaviors, thus affirming that the component of self is acquired, and not biological at all. Through the continuous rewriting of these tales using the same archetypes and images through the centuries further concretes these archetypal roles into the subconscious, keeping the motifs in folklore alive.

EVOLUTION OF THE FAIRY TALE

Fairy tales are fluid and adapt to the times they are told. Once narrated folktales have morphed through the centuries and have made it to the digital age of film and the fairy tale empire. In today's era, fairy tales are synonymous with Disney. Disney has taken hold of the fairy tale and adapted them to our time through the use of film and television. Disney's began recreating animated shorts of classic fairy tales in 1922, with "Little Red Riding Hood," "Goldilocks and the Three Bears," "Cinderella," "Jack and the Beanstalk," and "Puss in Boots." Less than a decade later, the first full-length-feature fairy tale film came out and *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* became the most successful sound film in motion picture history up to that point (Pfeiffer). Disney has not only kept these classic stories alive; they have adapted them to our time-period and culture, creating a lucrative empire off the fairy-tale-princess. Just as the stories they are based off of, Disney films immerse children in products that establish "identification with familiar media characters and communicate gendered expectations about what children should buy, how they should play, and who they should be (Wohlwend 57)." Disney has brought the image of the fair maiden archetype into everyday life through their pull on the consumer. The Disney Princess is a multi-million-dollar empire, perfectly imposing established feminine behavioral traits through the marketing of princess costumes, DVD's, toys, dolls, bed linens, video games, fast-food, clothing, interactive webpages, and more. These franchised products have become, like the stories themselves, attached to the development of children's gendered identities.

Disney claims that the archetypes in their new tales—in particular the feminine maiden—break away from "age-old stereotypes of passive, submissive female characters and to reflect more modern, contemporary, agentic and realistic roles models for young

viewers (Rudloff 2).” In particular, Disney films *Frozen* and *The Frog Prince* have received positive reviews for their display of the female equivalent of the hero, but with a closer look, it is evident the same age-old images and outcomes are still embedded within these revered films. By comparing the films with the original stories they are based upon, we can see how these stories create an illusion of powerful, agentic female characters, yet still imbed the same patriarchal messages as the original tales.

Frog Kisses

Disney’s *The Princess and the Frog* differs greatly from the Grimm version, “The Frog Prince” in many ways, but the motif and images remain the same and therefore share the same fixed meanings. In the original Grimm version, the reader experiences the typical Jungian archetypes. There is a masculine element (the father) and his three daughters. Not much is learned about the daughters, only that the youngest is the most beautiful. The film, however, shows a different dynamic. There is no mother mentioned in the print version of the story, but in the film, the maiden is an only child, and loses her father early in the film. The mother appears off and on throughout the story, but does not play a major role. Other noticeable differences between the two tales is how each of the maidens come across their frog-prince. The girl in Grimm’s version drops a golden ball into a well and the frog appears. She uses him to retrieve her lost ball and then ditches the frog—disregarding the deal the two make with each other. In the Disney adaptation, the maiden is a go-getter, she works hard and has a goal—to open a restaurant. The girl in the original story is bored and looking for ways to pass time. In Disney’s version, the beautiful girl does not lose a golden ball, but wishes upon a star, and the talking frog shows up. In the film, the maiden (Tiana) kisses the frog and she, too, ends up a frog.

These differences may visualize an outwardly evolved feminine element in the film, however, by the end of Disney's tale, deeper implications emerge, illuminating the same behavior patterns and gender roles in Grimm's tales. Tiana is beautiful, with a tiny waist and oversized eyes, and it is her beauty that initially draws the frog prince's attention toward her. Near the end of the film, Tiana gives up her dream of the restaurant to remain a frog with her prince. It is also notable to mention that Tiana's dream is not originally her own, but the dream of her father. Through the whole film, the maiden is trying to please the father icon and masculine element. These behaviors reflect the masculine dominance and patriarchal ideologies that are unmistakable through the film's story. In the original tale, the frog was a lesson to the girl to keep her promises. She is punished for not keeping her pledge. Grimm's version is a cautionary tale, and the film is a love story from start to finish—ending with a kiss and a happily-ever-after. The Grimm's version does not show much love or courtship at all. Instead we see forcefulness and aggression from both the male and female in the story. When the frog asks to get in bed with the girl (threatening to tell the girl's father if she tells him no) she "felt beside herself with rage, and picking him up, she threw him with all her strength against the wall, and crying, "Now will you be quiet, you horrid frog!" (Grimm 3)." As the frog falls from the wall, "he became all at once a Prince with beautiful eyes, and it came to pass that, with her father's consent, they became bride and bridegroom (Grimm 3)." The feminine symbol in the print version lacks any autonomy and does not exhibit any dreams or ambitions as Tiana does in the film. Grimm's version does, of course, end on a happy note, however. The maiden is forgiven and chosen as a bride because of her beauty. In both tales, the masculine element is the ultimate decision maker and the story functions to

train the audience in the same patriarchal-based lessons. The film, as well as the classic version, teaches girls that the objective of womanhood is to be beautiful and if they are lucky, they will be selected by a man to be wedded.

In Disney's version, the female image appears strong, chasing after her own dreams. Just like the Grimm's version, being selected by, and married to a prince is the key focus of this happily-ever-after film. The film and Grimm's version end the same way...the beautiful girl is chosen to be the prince's wife. The print version "The Frog Prince" is not a love story at all, but Disney adapts the tale to resemble so many of their happily-ever-after love-story fairy tales, solidifying an even stronger message of the binary gender system and patriarchal-based behavioral ideologies. Disney teases the audience with what appears to be a strong feminine character, but Tiana abandons her dream to be with the frog-prince. The film, just like the book, shows being chosen for marriage as the ultimate reward.

An Icy Affair

Another story Disney has taken and revamped to marketable modern standards is Han Christian Andersen's "The Snow Queen". "The Snow Queen" and *Frozen* are drastically different in many aspects, but they are more alike than meets the eye. Disney's adaptation, *Frozen*, is hailed with praise for the story's feminist ideals of equality, empowerment, and self-agency (Rudloff 2). Like Disney's *Princess and the Frog*, *Frozen* is deceptive in its attempt at illustrating a different pattern for the feminine component. By showcasing the tenacity of the maiden, as well as the marketing of the princess as courageous and equal, people skip the fact that the same underlying lessons producing social and behavioral norms, ideas, and expectation are rooted in this film. *Frozen* is not a

film privileging sisterhood and autonomy but is just another story presenting harmful body-image ideals to girls, and promoting the happily-ever-after dream if they are deemed pretty enough. Within the film, as well as the old-age fairy tale, the representation of girls/woman remains the same, with beauty and submission as the main gender-code focus. In fact, through closer examination, one will see that Andersen's icy tale exhibits a more positive feminine ideal than Disney's version. In the classic tale, Andersen writes of two friends—one male and one female. The boy (Kay) is the one in trouble. After hearing the tale of the Snow Queen from his grandmother, he dares the cold queen to show up at his home—threatening to melt her on the stove. Later that evening, the Snow Queen arrives and Kay is bewitched by a splinter of glass from a broken magic looking glass. The bewitched Kay leaves and winds up at the queen's ice castle. He is under her spell, unable to remember the life he used to live. Courageously, the little girl (Gerda) heads out on her own to find her friend. As Gerda travels, she is helped by several wise characters. Gerda travels down the river to begin her journey and finds herself pulled into shore by an old lady with a crutch. The old woman brings her in and gives her cherries to taste and flowers to gaze upon. The woman combs Gerda's flaxen hair and says how she had long wished for a maiden like the fair Gerda. She is locked away, just like so many other maidens depicted in other fairy tales—in the clutches of an evil and jealous witch. When Gerda is finally freed, she is befriended by a crow, who shares knowledge of the princess with whom Kay has been captured. When Gerda finally makes it to the palace of the Snow Queen, "without shoes, without gloves, in the midst of the cold, dreary ice-bound Finland (Anderson 201)," she finds the frigid queen sitting at the center of the frozen and reflective lake she calls the Mirror of Reason.

Again, the familiar symbol of the mirror appears in the story, along with the images of fertility, virginity, feminine pride, seduction, self-consciousness, and ego.

Having Gerda show initiative and venture out alone on a mission to find her friend is in stark contrast to the loose Disney version of this tale. As mentioned above, the film version is a tale about two sisters. In the film, both parents find an unfortunate end when a tempest takes their lives while traveling upon the sea. Anna, the younger sister, satisfies the maiden archetype, with her curiosity, naivete, and clumsy ways. Like Gerda, Anna appears to be courageous and exercises her own agency by journeying to save her sister, but similar to the images used in the *Princess and the Frog*, Disney's *Frozen* employs a high degree of stereotyping, reverting feminine characters back to the roles of damsels in distress. Furthermore, Disney's tale is a romantic story dedicated to teaching girls that finding romance and settling for matrimony is the optimal goal for females. Even from the beginning of the film, Anna sings about how she is ready to be noticed by a man and find true love. She dances around, occasionally singing into a mirror, again teaching girls to embrace vanity and the necessity of being beautiful to get a man's attention or find love.

Another variation between the film and Andersen's classic story, is the number of female characters present in the tales. Andersen's original tale has several female characters in it who assist Gerda and offer her wisdom on her journey. She receives help from an old woman, as well as a female crow, and with their assistance eventually Gerda saves her friend, Kay. In *Frozen*, however, there are no other female figures besides the two sisters. Anna is helped along by all male characters and depends greatly on the masculine image to accomplish her mission. In fact, when the townspeople are shown in

the film version, there are few, if any female characters. After the parent's early death, the two sisters are the only females shown until the very end scene when the town is brought back to colorful warmth. "Disney's Arendelle is a land inhabited and ruled predominantly by old, white men," while the females with any speaking lines are represented as two sexualized adolescent princesses. Masculine elements dominate this film, reinforcing conventional gendered notions of heteronormativity and its understanding of femininity and masculinity. While the movie posters might boast a female-forward tale empowering to girls, the Anna character embodies the "classical stereotype of an emotional, love-hungry, romance-seeking princess (Rudloff 6)." The film returns to the same symbols, archetypes, and narratives as its predecessors. Even at the end, when Anna experiences and understands her true love for her sister, she is still fixated on finding love and romance with a man. The wedding and marriage end up trumping the love between sisters. In retrospect, the story could have, and perhaps should have ended at the sister scene, but instead, Disney guided viewers to their common ideological views that girls must find and become betrothed to find true happiness. Repetitive patriarchal themes seen throughout all of Disney's modern fairy tales implant the belief that true happiness for a woman exists when you are chosen for marriage to the male hero. The story's script has not changed. The archetypes and images remain strong and continue reinforcing traditional patriarchal gender conformity.

Conclusion: Happily Ever After

The idea that these newer stories and adaptations from Disney have created a new feminine myth with self-confidence, autonomy, and equality should be looked at with skepticism. Through the examples used above, one can attest that Disney's repackaging of the maiden has not changed archetype narratives at all. In fact, Disney films have an even greater focus on romance, love, and matrimony than their classic fairy tale predecessors did. While Disney attempts to demonstrate bravery, compassion, and loyalty of their female characters, the underlying message is one of patriarchal ideals and binary gender roles. In all of Disney's fairy tales, a kiss breaks the spell. A kiss is the transformation. The kiss is the magic piece of the puzzle. Disney idolizes the kiss by making it pivotal and climatic. Disney film narratives focus on how the maiden cannot survive or be happy without a hero. It is when a female is chosen by a prince that she transforms, leading the maiden to the domesticated life of marriage and the patriarchal ideology that surrounds it. Just like the fairy tales they are based upon, Disney's princess films are training manuals for young girls. These stories are not empowering, but negatively reinforce a male dominated world and ideals. They use their images and symbols as methods of instructing girls to become attractive to assure they are chosen for marriage. As shown above, the symbolic elements in fairy tales are taught and therefore embedded within the psyche, rather than being inherent within us.

Breaking free from the patriarchal stronghold these stories and films is difficult. The imagery, archetypes, as well as how we read and interpret the stories needs to change (or be destroyed all-together). Some feminist writers have attempted to create new plots with differing character portrayals, but for the most part, "children are not fooled by these

false heroines (Kuykendahl 39).” Many retellings simply reverse the gender roles, but to truly change the story, a story must be freshly created from the ground up. These new tales need to be understood and taught that all the archetypes dwell within every individual—the combination of them all make up the whole. Unfortunately, mankind has separated archetypes and images into a binary system of behavior codes. The challenge is, real humans are not represented in fairy tales and these stories do not present realistic narratives. People, like fairy tales, are fluid. There is not one standard for each sex. Everyone is capable of being the hero. Everyone is capable of being the evil witch. Everyone might need saving at some point of their life. Stories retold by Disney, and even by feminist authors, have not relinquished these outdated and unjust images, and the same social programming and attachment to old theories continues (Kuykendahl 40). By removing certain images and motifs from the stories (for example, beauty, matrimony, mirrors) and disregarding a gender relation tie to any particular archetype, fairy tales could be retold in ways that help the readers solve life issues, teaching children how to be courageous, agentic, and self-conscious without the attachment to a set of gender expectations or standards.

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