



Power Struggles Approach in Analysis of the Fairy Tale *Cinderella*

Student's Name

Institution





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| *Cinderella's* Positive Influence on Children through Didactics of Forbearance, Gratitude, and Endeavor

Cinderella's rags-to-riches story, which was republished scores of time and adapted to the changes of the modern world, may be considered an inspirational role model for abandoned societal exiles who are searching for their self-worth and magic. The intertextual matter of the *Cinderella's* character is assumed to bring a piece of moral instruction that states that hard work is rewarded and one's transformation can reach superior existence if one tries to develop a friendly relationship with other and forgive those who bring harm. Furthermore, *Cinderella's* literal concept justifies that the ideal of beauty can help a person reach this superior existence if magic will be incorporated in reaching the elevation over the improbable odds of the miserable existence. However, the symbolic style of the story teaches that the main character takes any chances on the way to elevation in the rising action of the story, when Cinderella walks on the glass shoes as a symbolic object that represents fragility of the personality traits of the main character. In addition, the enveloping action of the story is described with the spatial signifiers of an attic, carriage, and royal palace, which reflect Cinderella's transformation from silence sufferer into strong socially-respected woman.

Considering power struggles approach, the story describes the



antipathetic family relations that are marginalized through passive obedience of Cinderella to abusive stepmother and stepsisters. At this point, Crowley and Pennington (2010) stated that Cinderella “was not born like this but become one”, which means that the stereotype of the absence of the mother and presence of a stepmother indicate the lack of quality of attention that should be adjusted with submissiveness (p. 298). Therefore, such anti-social behavior represents the story’s aesthetics that mirror “incarnations of imaginative truth” and describe Cinderella as “the collective body of reimagined domesticity” (p. 302-309). In this respect, Baker-Sperry and Grauezholtz (2003) admitted that the traditional narrative of the adult-interpreted fairy tales “legitimize and support the dominant gender system”, which might provoke abnormal attitudes toward housework and early marriage among young girls (p. 712).

Considering that traditions of the fairy tales prescribe incorporation of magic for the main character superior transformation, Cinderella’s perceivable growth comes with her fairy godmother’s appearance and assistance. At this point, the godmother’s restrictions for magic might raise the question among children about added punishment for Cinderella. Furthermore, considering the risk that Cinderella was facing while literary walking on glass to meet the Prince, the children might assume why the shoe was made of such material and why it was the only item that retained its shape, after the godmother’s magic expired.

In this respect, Sexton (2012) claimed that the details of the glass shoe appeared due to Brothers Grimm’s mercenary attempts “to document the living tradition for prestige of well-received literary publication” while sacrificing composition of oral ideology and contaminated written form (p. 52). Therefore, the biases of the story, which the authors did not take

into consideration, include the godmother's constant presence beside abused and abandoned self-worthless beauty who had to be grateful for the chance to reach the higher social class but remember the limitations of this opportunity and the price that she had to render for it.

Furthermore, the abovementioned externalities can be viewed in the light of the social class stratification, which kept Cinderella in her socially isolated place even with the exception of the tangible transformation that was directed by her magic guide. Another example of the microcosm that is described in the story is based on the juxtaposition of reverse transformation of Cinderella and her animal friends which identified them as the lower class representatives that serve upper class as animals. At this point, Apo (2007) stated that the fairy tales were intended to render "the democratic concept", which could be reduced "to mean only lower strata of society" (p. 20). Furthermore, Crowley & Pennington (2010) added that the foundations of the fairy tales "come to us as unmediated expressions of folk and its desires" (p. 300). Therefore, it can be argued that the authors of the story tried to create the complex tale to reveal the imagined truth of the different real life problems that were disguised behind the ideology and form of the fairy tale.

At this point, it should be assumed that the moral of the story was presented through articulation of the personal Cinderella's traits that helped her to overcome the societal isolation and gain well-deserved reward for her domestic and endeavored hard work. Furthermore, Cinderella retained her positive qualities regardless her superior and reverse transformations and remained grateful to the limited magical assistance that she had received.

Concerning the issue of reaction to the text of a reader of different gender, even little boys are assumed to identify themselves with the character of Cinderella if they have personal limitations regarding the story. At this point, Crowley and Pennington (2010) stated that children do not imagine gender “as singular, essential, and purely identity based”, and, therefore, “desire for love and compassion cannot be shaped by gender” (pp. 302-310). Given the knowledge that *Cinderella* was designated to teach children about the moral lessons of kindness, forgiveness, and endeavor, it should be argued that children might interpret the story beyond the measure of the intertextuality of the single main character rather than apprehending the moral of the entire story. In this respect, it should be assumed that children might understand the story through analysis of the actions of the main character rather than analyzing motives and intentions of all of the characters.

In conclusion, constantly changing narrative of *Cinderella* retained aesthetical ideology and form that create imaginative truth of the potential of public success of these socially disadvantaged exiles who, even being fragile, could advance with the help of magic and good intentions. In this respect, fascination of these exiles is not measured by the established beauty ideals but rather by their charm and motivation to overcome the improbable odds. Additionally, the literal concept and symbolism of the story justify that social inequality suppresses passive and docile anti-social representatives, but their pursuit helps them reach an elevation over the limitations and remain authentic human beings regardless of the stages of their transformation.