From Fairy Tales to Disney Movies: Gender Roles and Stereotypes Then and Now

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This paper is dedicated to my parents,

S.M. Mohiuddin and Feroza Begum

I would have never come this far without your support

Thank you for taking care of me and blessing me with your love

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Abstract

This thesis studies classic fairy tales of the seventeenth, eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries by Charles Perrault, the Grimm Brothers and Hans Christian Andersen to observe how gender stereotypes and gender roles are portrayed. These tales not only indoctrinate gender roles for men and women, but also reflect the value system of contemporary patriarchal society. The paper will also explore different Disney films to understand how much the modern representations of classic fairy tales changed gender stereotypes and role models with the passage of time.

This paper has six chapter. The first chapter is the introductory part. The second gives a brief history of fairy tales. Then the third, fourth and fifth chapters analyse different fairy tales and character. Finally there is chapter six which is the conclusion.

Chapter I

Introduction

Fairy tales existed in different forms from generations to generations. People grow up listening to fairy tales from parents or grandparents, reading them as literary text and watching them as films. During the eighteenth and nineteenth century fairy tales by Charles Perrault and the Brothers Grimm were popular among people. These were mostly circulated among women and children to teach gender-appropriate behaviours and social norms (Patel 2). The characters of these fairy tales have been presented in a stereotypical way which influences society's idea about gender roles and behaviour.

Gender role is the role or behaviour learned by a person as appropriate to their gender, determined by prevailing cultural norms (Oxford Online Dictionary n page). This means that gender roles are defined based on norms and standards created by society. In most of the societies masculine roles are associated with strength, aggression, and dominance, whereas female roles are associated with passivity, nurturing, and subordination. Children learn their respective gender roles through various agents of society such as family, education, peer group and mass media. The society uses various techniques and schemes through these agents to teach appropriate gender roles. Gender schema theory suggests that the culture of a society largely influences how children develop their ideas about what it means to be a man or woman. The theory was first introduced during the early 1980s by psychologist Sandra Bem. According to this theory, children adjust their behaviour to fit in with the gender norms and expectations of their culture. (Cherry n page). Bem also believes that individuals observe the people and the culture around them, learning the various relations to masculinity and femininity. When children are exposed to the agents of socialization such as family and mass media, they do not just

observe the physical difference between men and women, but also the roles they play in certain context. They notice the characteristics of each gender and how they treat each other. Therefore, when they read and see female and male characters acting in a certain way in fairy tales, they create a schema about how man and woman should behave. This influences their thinking process and how they perceive the world.

The famous classic fairy tale collectors or writers are Charles Perrault (1628-1703), The Brothers Grimm: Jacob (1785-1863) and Wilhelm (1786-1859), and Hans Christian Andersen (1805-1875). The popular fairy tales collected and written by these famous authors are "Cinderella", "The Sleeping Beauty", "Snow White", "Rapunzel", "The Little Mermaid" and so on. Almost each of these fairy tales presents typical male and female stereotypes. Women are often depicted as weak, inferior or unfavourable characters. They are most of the time fragile young beautiful girls or princesses who wait to be rescued by brave princes. The princes also fall for the beauty and innocence of the young maidens and marry them. Thus, the miserable lives of the young women acquire resolution by getting married to the princes. Fairy tales also present women as evil stepmothers or witches who are always up to no good. These women are always ready to kill the other characters or abuse them for their own purpose. They are often given more masculine characteristics to make them evil as an ideal woman is not supposed to have masculine traits. On the other hand, the men presented in the fairy tales are handsome and brave young princes or kings. They are active, assertive, bold and authoritative. Without the interference of a male character, no fairy tale reaches to its happy ending. Seeing men in active roles and women in passive roles young children construct ideas of gender role from fairy tales at a very early age.

At present, literature is gradually being replaced by visual media. Movies, cinema, animated movies and other forms of visual representations are becoming more acceptable and popular than written forms. Disney which is one of the most famous film productions has adopted and plans to adopt different fairy tales over the years. The first animated feature film which adopted from a fairy tale was *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (1937). This animated film was true to its original version in terms of gender roles and behaviours.

Although before the 1980's Disney used to follow the same story lines and passive female characters of fairy tales, it is modifying the fairy tales to give women a stronger ground and bringing changes in conventional gender roles and behaviours. Unfortunately, the movies are still faithful to their predecessors in many ways

This thesis will discuss the stereotyped characters and gender behaviours presented in the fairy tales and early Disney movies. Later, it will be shown that, although time has passed by and fairy tales has transformed from the oral, then written and finally to visual form, the main themes of fairy tales remain the same. Gender roles and behaviours constructed by the patriarchal society remains in the films almost the same as it was in the classic fairy tales.

The second chapter of this thesis will talk about fairy tales and its definition. A short history of fairy tales will be discussed and show how women were a prominent part of fairy tale literature. This chapter will also show how women writer gradually lost their popularity and fairy tales by male writers such as Charles Perrault, The Grimm Brothers, and Hans Christian Andersen became popular.

The third chapter will discuss the portrayal of female characters in fairy tales and show how fairy tales label these characters as either good or evil characters. Similar to the second

chapter the fourth chapter will talk about male characters and how they play significant roles in fairy tales.

In the fifth chapter, popular Disney films, such as *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (1937), *Cinderella* (1950), *The Sleeping Beauty* (1959), *The Little Mermaid* (1989), *Tangled* (2010) and *Frozen* (2013) will be discussed to see what changes Disney is making in terms of gender roles and behaviours in modern time. This chapter will prove that although Disney makes more independent and stronger female characters than the classic fairy tales, it is generating similar controversies that the oral and literary fairy tales have created. The female characters are still beautiful young women and dependent on male characters. Moreover, Disney is creating visual representation of ideal beauty for its male audiences. The term "Male Gaze" by Laura Mulvey will be briefly discussed to understand the impact of male gaze in Disney films. The production is also criticized for presenting characters from the male perspective. To support my argument, I will compare "Cinderella", "The Sleeping Beauty", "Snow White", "Rapunzel" and "The Little Mermaid" with their visual representations to see how fairy tales have promoted socially constructed gender behaviours over the passage of time.

Chapter II

A Brief History of Fairy Tales

Fairy tales may appear to be innocent tales written for children, but they are not that simple. Fairy tales are difficult to define. The famous scholar Jack Zipes agreed that it is a complicated term. In his book *The Irresistible Fairy Tales*, he says:

> The difficulty in defining the fairy tales stems from the fact that the storytellers and writers never used the term fairy tale until Marie-Catherine d'Aulnoy coined it in 1697 when she published her first collection of tales. She never wrote a word about why she used the term. Yet it was and is highly significant that she chose to call her stories Contes de fees, literally "tales about fairies" (222).

Jack Zipes also mentioned that the translation of d'Aulnoy's Contes de fees was published in English as Tales of the fairies in 1707, but the term 'fairy tales' came into common English usage during 1750. If we break the term, it means tales about fairies. Nonetheless, this is not true in the case of most of the fairy tales. Cambridge Dictionary describes fairy tales as, "a traditional story written for children that usually involves imaginary creatures and magic". However, in the past, fairy tales were told and written for adults in a mature language which were not suitable for children. These tales had violence and adult contents. Scholars like Ruth B. Bottigherimer also attempted to define the complicated genre of fairy tale stories. He said:

> Tales about fairies depict the quests, tasks, trials and sufferings of usually royal heroes and heroines as well as intersections between their lives and fairyland inhabitants. The protagonists' destinies generally change when they encounter good or evil fairies, whose actions are often unintelligible and frequently lead to troublingly amoral consequences and conclusions. (261)

In most of the fairy tales protagonists are in an adventure and encounter fairies and magical creatures on their way. These fairies can be witch or wizards, who either help the protagonist or create more challenges. In most of the fairy tales, there are royals such as kings, queens, princess or princes. The protagonists either belong to a royal group or end up marrying into a royal family. For example, in "Cinderella", the protagonist has to work day and night for her stepmother and sisters. She does not belong to the royal society, but gets the opportunity to meet the prince. After some dramatic change of events and help from magical creatures, she finally marries the prince. This is a story of a common girl whose life changes because of magic. Similarly, in the story "Snow White", a princess is tortured by the evil queen for her beauty and innocence. Similar to Cinderella, she is also rescued by a prince and gets married to him. These stories have several common features. For instance, there are beautiful maidens, handsome princes, evil stepmother or witches, and happy marriages. The stories create the idea of good and bad, how a man or woman should act and what happens if people do not act according to social demands.

It is not possible to trace back the origin of fairy tales. They have been in practice since the beginning of time. Fairy tales has existed throughout the world for thousands of years and still continues to exist in different forms. Many studies show that the origin of the fairy tales can be traced back to oral folk stories. Jack Zipes believes that the tales were told to the members of tribes to explain natural occurrences such as the change of the seasons and shifts in the weather or to celebrate the rites of harvesting, hunting, marriage, and conquest. The emphasis in most folk tales was harmony in the society (10). His research proves that fairy tales were used for moral education for thousands of years. A storyteller either man or woman told these tales to bring the members of a tribe closer and teach them moral duties. Scholars have argued for ages

about the origin of fairy tales, their themes, and concepts. Some argue that fairy tales were all derived from India and then brought to Europe. Others claimed that the source was actually ancient Babylonia (Patel 10). These tales existed in India and throughout many parts of Asia. Tales such as "Cinderella" and "Beauty and the Beast" have different versions in both China and India. (Patel. 11) These stories existed long before the European versions came into light. Also, written forms of many ancient tales such as the Indian Panchatantra (which was in existence by the 6th cent. AD) and the Katha Sarit Sagara (Ocean of Streams of Story), the Book of Sindibad (which probably originated in Persia at the beginning of the 9th cent.) have several features of contemporary fairy tales (Veselá 12).

In his book *The Irresistible Fairy Tales*, Jack Zipes commented on the transformation of European fairy tales from oral to printed form. He said, "Fairy tale, also known as the wonder or magic tale, underwent numerous transformations before the invention of print led to the production of fixed texts and conventions of telling and reading" (222). Fairy tales existed as oral folk tales across and beyond Europe until the invention of the printing press in 1440. The first written form of the European oral tales came into light during the sixteenth century by two Italians, Giovanni Francesco Straparola, and Giambattista Basile. Straparola's Le piacevolinotti was published in 1550. It had written forms of some Italian oral tales. Although these tales were not called fairy tales during that time, Straparola is still considered to be the 'father' or 'progenitor' of fairy tales (Patel 7). Il Pentamerone by Giambattista Basile was published in 1634-36, which had a great influence on French fairy tales. This collection of stories had the earliest written versions of classic fairy tales like "The Sleeping Beauty", "Cinderella", "Snow White", "Puss in Boots" and many others. Following their footsteps, writers like Charles Perrault, Hans Christian Andersen, George Macdonald, Oscar Wilde, and the Grimm brothers

wrote many literary fairy tales. Most of the popular writers are men, and women writers are

hardly ever mentioned. Nevertheless, women were and still are very important part of fairy tale

genre. According to Terri Winding:

> Straparola, Basile, Perrault, and even the Brothers Grimm made no secret of the
>
> fact that their source material came largely or entirely from women storytellers.
>
> Yet we are left with the impression that women dropped out of the history of fairy
>
> tales once they became a literary form, existing only in the background as an
>
> anonymous old peasant called Mother Goose. (n page)

In the past, women used to stay at home with their children and had plenty of time to tell stories

after finishing their household works. Sometimes to escape their mundane life, they gathered and

shared ideas and stories. During the mid-seventeenth century, prominent French aristocratic

women used to visit and gather in salons of Paris. Zipes mentions that, "Storytelling, riddles, and

other parlor and salon games had been common in Italy, Spain, England, and France since the

sixteenth century" (224). In these salons, some men also gathered to discuss various issues and

topics such as marriage, love, financial independence and education. Through this group of

people emerged the first collections of fairy tales in France. These men and women who gathered

in salons were called précieuses for their literary writing style (Windling n page).

Many oral folk tales were often retold and rewritten for various purposes by the

salonnieres. These tales had magical elements, fairies, imaginary kings and queens who lived in

the utopian world. The writers used these stories to indirectly comment on the social and political

situation of the contemporary time. The stories were simple in form and language, but never

failed to have a deeper meaning. Some critics argue that to understand the narrative, style and

form of fairy tales of France, one must first study the time and the society in which it was

published. During the later years of Louis XIV, society was exhausted by reckless wars and court competitions (Vesela, 13). Women were treated as accessories and they were bound to do the duties imposed by the patriarchal society. Therefore, people tried to find serenity in simplistic form of fairy tales. However, these fairy tales were more suitable for adults than for the children. The stories were rich in moral basis and took place in a utopian setting where everything is perfect and peaceful at the end.

As the primary performers in the salons were women, logically the first set of literary fairy tales were written by women. Among the upper-class aristocrat women who enjoyed creating fairy tales in the salons of Paris was Marie-Catherine d'Aulnoy. She wrote a fairy tale "The Isle of Happiness" and added it in her novel Histoire d'Hippolyte, Comte de Douglas in 1690. Little did she know that she was about to set a trend in France which would become contagious among the readers and her fellow writers. Later in 1697, she introduced the term Contes des fees which means tales about fairies (Zipes 224). After that other writers started to use the term, and initiated the new genre now known as fairy tales. She was soon followed by a number of other writers such as Mme. De Murat, Mlle. L'Heritier, Mlle. Bernard, and Mlle. De la Force. Although these writers are hardly mentioned today, their stories are still retold and republished as "The White Cat", "The White Deer", "Green Snake", "The Yellow Dwarf", "Blue crest", "The Royal Ram", and other magical stories (Windling n page). These women were aware that they were living in an oppressive patriarchal society. They were not allowed to raise their voice directly, thus, they used their characters to show their stand against the society. Kings and queens, good and evil fairies, young princes and princesses were very common elements in their stories. Through each of the characters and magical creatures, the writers were indirectly commenting on the patriarchal society. Compared to the male writers' female characters, the

female characters in women writers' fairy tales were independent, intelligent, and active. They challenged many patriarchal rules such marrying the perfect prince, obeying the elders, or remaining passive for a perfect ending.

L'Héritier de Villandon, Marie-Jeanne (1664-1734), born into a family of scholars, was among the successful writers of the early period of the seventeenth-century fairy tale writing. She had all the support to become a successful writer and she followed her mentor Madeleine Scudery, who was also a salonniere. Like her mentor, she refused to marry. She was confident to live by the income she made as a writer. She later inherited Scudery's salon and ran it side by side with her writing career. Charles Perrault was her uncle and she also had close relationship with Murat. L'Heritier dedicated her first major collection of tales to Murat (Windling n page). Scholars argue over the fact that it was L'Heritier who influenced Charles Perrault's interest in fairy tales, but another group insists that Perrault was an inspiration for his niece. It cannot be ignored that both of their tales had similarities. Nevertheless, there are stories by L'Heritier which are different from Perrault's stories. Like her fellow female writers, her stories had intelligent and self-conscious aristocratic female protagonist who stood against the rules of patriarchal society. One of her famous tales is "The Discreet Princess". In this story, a king locks away his three daughters in a high tower so that their chastity is safe from the rest of the world. In a nearby kingdom, there was an evil prince who sneaks inside the tower. There he seduces and impregnates the older princesses. These two sisters were foolish and unwise to trust the evil prince and allowed him to come close to them. Then the prince approaches the youngest sister, Finette and used the same compliments to seduce her. However, Finette was intelligent and she does not fall for the prince like her sisters. She locks herself inside her room and refuses to open the door. At this, the prince became impatient and breaks down the door with a wooden log.

Finette was ready to defend herself with a hammer. She warns the prince not to come close to her or else she would attack him. At the end, the princess outwits the evil prince and marries the prince's noble brother who becomes the next king.

This story is different compared to the stories written by Perrault and Grimm brothers. For example, the heroine is more active in the story and does not fall for the charming prince. The villain in the story is also unconventional. Normally, the villains are female characters such as witches, stepmothers, and evil queens. In this case, it is an evil prince. Yet, the story has common features of classic fairy tales. For example, it is a story of aristocratic class, active male characters, naïve princesses, and ends with a happy marriage.

With the growing popularity of fairy tales, the number of men in the salons also increased. When Charles Perrault's fairy tales collection *Histoires, ou Contes du Temps Passés* was published in 1697, fairy tales were already a popular genre. He was born in Paris in 1628 to a rich bourgeois family. Perrault's father was a member of the parliament and a lawyer. Perrault had seven brothers and sisters who were also successful in the fields like theology, architecture, and law. After passing from the university of Orleans, Perrault himself became a lawyer but three years later he gave up to become a court administrator. While acting as a secretary to Jean Baptiste Colbert, the financial minister under the Sun king, Perrault worked in support of culture and arts. For example, he was one of the men who designed the Louvre and Versailles. He wrote poems, essays, and panegyrics dedicatedto the king and got elected in 1671 to the French academy. Perrault married Marie Guichon in 1672 and had three sons. His wife died because of smallpox in 1675 and he never remarried. After Colbert's death Perrault devoted himself to full-time writing. During the 1690s he composed poems and tales influenced by folklore themes. In an article on Charles Perrault, Lydie Jean says:

Charles Perrault published his first fairy tales in 1694: Patient Griselda,

Ridiculous Wishes, and Donkeyskin were published separately, and then gathered

together into a book. In 1696 he published The Sleeping Beauty in the magazine

Le Mercuregalant, and his eight tales in prose the year after. When Perrault wrote

his Contes, he had lost his position at the Court – Colbert died in 1683 – and had

dedicated himself to his children. Writing fairy tales was a way to entertain his

children, try to return to the Court by following the fashion of the salons, and

defend morality through amusing tales. (278)

Perrault wrote total twelve tales which are:La Patience de Grisélidis (Patient Griselda), Les

Souhaits (Ridiculous Wishes), Peaud'Âne (Donkeyskin), Le Petit Chaperon Rouge (Little Red

Riding Hood), La Belle Au Bois Dormant (The Sleeping Beauty), Le Chat botté (Puss in Boots),

Cendrillon (Cinderella), BarbeBleue (Bluebeard), Le Petit Poucet (Hop o' My Thumb), Les Fées

(Diamonds and Toads), and Ricquet à la houppe (Ricky of the Tuft). As mentioned before all of

these tales were written in prose with a moral at the end. Jean also mentions that "Almost all of

those tales have their origins in traditional folklore, but they have been modified by Perrault to fit

the audience he was aiming at: the aristocracy" (277). When the tales were first published, they

were not as popular as they are now. The stories by Mmed'Aulnoy, de Murat and L'Heritier,

were more popular among the readers. Eventually with the passage of time, Perrault's tale took

over the other writers' tales. According to Ruth B.Bottigheimer, "Perrault's tales gained

popularity more slowly, but fit modern notions of fairy tales in a folk style and in the nineteenth

century outpaced Mmed'Aulnoy's tales in popularity, maintaining their precedence in the

twenty-first century" (262).

With the death of Charles Perrault in 1703, the "first wave" of fairy tales also came to its end. Other writers who were a great part of the tales also died in next few years. During the eighteenth century "exotic tales from the Orient" such as Antoine Gallard's phenomenally successful translation of *The Thousand and One Night* and Arabian-style pastiche by men such as Abbe Jean Paul Bigon, became popular (Windlingn page). This phase of fairy tales was called the second wave of fairy tales. The third wave of fairy tales was published during the 1730s to 1740s. Among the works, parodies and burlesques by Anthony Hamilton and Claude Philippe de Caylus were famous. However, during the 1750s many writers emerged who were clearly influenced by the first wave of fairy tales. Most of these tales targeted children as audiences. Among the writers was Madam de Beaumont. She rewrote De Villeneuve's "Beauty and the beast" for an English girl's magazine. This new version of "Beauty and the Beast" was for teaching moral and social values to the children. Fortunately, tales by d'Aulony, de Murat, L'Heritier, Perrault and many other salonnieres survived in series of cheap and popular chapbooks called *Bibliotheque Bleue*. These chapbooks spread wide across the Europe and other countries.

When the tales arrived in Germany, they were more simple and easy to read. Thus, the lower-class people could also enjoy the tales. In time, the literary fairy tales slipped back to oral tradition. Ruth B. Bottigheimer explores the history of fairy tales and folk tales in his paper, "Fairy Tales and Folk Tales". There he says:

> Fairy tales in Germany derived extensively from the French tradition. For a
> century, translations and borrowings had enabled German booksellers to repeat
> the French model: the writings of Charles Perrault, Marie-Catherine d'Aulnoy,
> Charlotte de la Force, Suzanne de Villeneuve, Mme Leprince de Beaumont, and

the Cabinet des Fées supplied middle- and upper-class German adults and children with elaborate tales about fairies and simpler fairy tales, such as 'Puss in Boots', 'Sleeping Beauty' and 'Beauty and the Beast'. Chapbooks delivered simplified versions of the same material (Grätz 1988: 83ff) to the lower orders. (263)

In Germany, two brothers, Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm were the first writers to collect the oral tales in their fairy tales collection *Kinder und Hausmarchen* (Childhood and Household Tales). The collection was first published in 1812. Later they edited the stories to make them more suitable for children, and added Christian morals. Their collection of tales became popular in Germany and eventually in other parts of the world. Jacob Ludwig Carl Grimm was born in 1785 in Germany, and his younger brother Wilhelm was born a year later. Their father Philip Wilhelm Carl Grimm was a lawyer and court official, and their mother Dorothea Grimm was a housewife. When the brothers were studying at the University of Marburg, they were inspired by the folk poetry collection Des Knaben Wunderhorn written by Clemens Brentano and Achim von Arnim. After that, they collected folklore tales from all over Germany (Patel 8). Their tales collection *Kinder-und Hausmarchen* (1812) contained 210 tales and they labeled their collection as "childrearing manual" (Bottigheimer 264). The tales on the collections includes, "Cinderella", "Hansel and Gretel", "Snow White", "Little Red Riding Hood", "The Frog Prince", "Twelve Brothers", "Rapunzel", "The Sleeping Beauty" and so many other famous fairy tales and folk tales. Most of the stories are rewritten and different from the French versions. The tales were changed according to cultural and social values of Germany. Both of the brothers dedicated their life to collect these stories and present it to the reader regardless of class and power. Wilhelm Grimm died in 1859, at the age of 73 and Jacob died four years later at the age of 78.

Another significant name which should be mentioned for fairy tales and magical story writing, is Hans Christian Andersen. He was born in 1805 in Netherland's city Odense, and grew up in Copenhagen. He was attached with both of the cities. In Odense, he got to know about the traditional norms and customs. There he got his inspiration for writing tales from the elderly women who used to tell him countless folklore during his childhood. In 1819, he traveled to Copenhagen to pursue a career in acting and dancing in the theaters. After being unsuccessful in both, he tried to become a playwright which was also a failure. Finally, he decided to write prose especially fairy tales and gained popularity. Most of his works were written in the mid-1800s. They were not only popular in Netherlands, but also became popular in other parts of Britain (Patel 9). Among his famous tales, there are, "The Little Mermaid", "Ugly Duckling", "The Emperor's New Clothes", "The Red Shoe" and "The Snow Queen".

These stories written by all these writers are not just for entertainment. They also reflect a society's culture, norms, and the way society wants people to behave. The writers present a utopian world where perfect human beings live. There, good is rewarded and evil is punished. These tales still exist in the society because they serve the purpose of entertaining and educating people. The stories by women writers of the past faded away with time because they are not fit to serve the purpose of the patriarchal society which is teaching gender-appropriate roles. The classic fairy tales by Perrault, The Grimm Brothers and Andersen survived throughout centuries because they are the product of patriarchal society. The patriarchal society used these tales to teach gender-appropriate behaviors and heterosexual norms to young boys and girls.

Chapter III

The Image of Female Characters in Fairy Tales

In traditional fairy tales, there are two types of female characters. The first kind is the perfect heroine who is beautiful, kind, and compassionate. She is the idealized "good" role model every girl wishes to follow. She is also too innocent to take control of her own life. The heroine is helpless, naïve and unintelligent in a good way. The second type of women is witches (good or bad), fairies, stepmothers, or mothers- in-laws. These women lack the feminine characteristics which the heroine possesses, and create either opportunity for the heroine or attempt to destroy her happiness. Henal Patel comments that, "When it comes to female roles, the message these tales convey is that there are only two types of women: the helpless and the malicious" (17).

Throughout all these year, role of woman in the society have undergone many changes in Western countries and different parts of the world. Nonetheless, fairy tales like "Snow White", "Cinderella", "Sleeping Beauty", "Rapunzel" or "The Little Mermaid" which have passive heroines are still popular as ever. The patriarchal society is using these stories to teach moral, religious and gender lessons. This chapter will analyses popular classic stories by Perrault, The Grimm Brothers and Andersen to see the depiction of female characters and gender roles associated with them.

The first popular fairy tale which comes to mind is "The Sleeping Beauty". The story presents perfect gender stereotypical roles and the ideals of patriarchal society. It has both French and German versions. "The Sleeping Beauty in the Woods" was first published in 1697 by the Charles Perrault, and later the Grimm Brothers collected it in their fairy tale collection. Both of the versions start with the king and queen being unhappy for not having a child.

Fortunately, soon the queen gives birth to a beautiful princess. The king arranges a great feast after the christening ceremony to celebrate his child's birth. He invites all the fairies of his kingdom to bless his daughter except for one fairy. This enrages the fairy, and instead of blessing the child with virtues like the other fairies did, she curses her saying, "The princess should prick her hand with a spindle, and die" (Perrault 5). Fortunately, one good fairy was left to bestow her blessing and she tries to lessen the effect of the curse. She says that instead of dying at the age of sixteen or fifteen as the evil fairy said, the girl would fall in sleep for hundred years and can only be reawakened by a prince. In the French tale, the evil fairy is very old women and the good fairies are young and cheerful beings. In further discussion we will see that the idea of old versus the young is a very common concept in fairy tales.

The king destroys all the looms of his kingdom (But for some reason forgets to warn his daughter) and forbids anyone to use it. The girl grows up and "she was so lovely, modest, sweet and kind and clever, that no one who saw her could help loving her" (The Grimm's 206). Being naïve like most of the heroines of the fairy tales, she touches a spindle and falls asleep for a hundred years. In both versions, Sleeping Beauty, who is also named Rosemond in The Grimm brothers' version, is so beautiful and lovely that princes risk their lives to get her. According to Perrault's version:

> You would have thought her an angel, so fair was she to behold. The trance had not taken away the lovely color of here complexion her cheeks were delicately flushed, her lips like coral. Her eyes, indeed, were closed, but her gentle breathing could be heard, and it was, therefore, plain that she was not dead. (6)

When the hundred years are almost complete a prince finally overcomes all the obstacles and rescues the princess. In the German version, the prince cannot but fall in love with the beauty of

the princess and kisses her. The kiss awakens the princess and without a word spoken, she follows the prince. The prince then takes the blessings of the princess's parents and lives happily ever after. None of them asked any question about each other or wanted to know how they were in person. Rosamond remained passive throughout the entire story and never questioned about what was going on in her life. The French version of the tale does not end simply with a marriage. It shows that the prince marries the princess, but he is afraid to take her to his kingdom. It is then revealed that he fears his mother, the queen, who actually belongs from a line of "ogres". When the prince becomes the king, he takes his bride and two children to his palace, but later leaves them under his mother's care for a war. Then the queen gets the opportunity to act on her will, and wishes to eat the children and finally the bride. When the chef who was ordered to kill the princess, discloses the plot of the queen to the princess, she still remains passive and helpless and begs him to kill her. The kind chef saves the family and keeps them hidden from the ogress. Throughout the story, the queen is given attributes which are less feminine and more masculine. She acts upon her wish, takes control of the kingdom and betrays the king.

Finally, she receives her punishment for not being passive like the princess, and falls in her own trap. In the Disney film *The Sleeping Beauty* released in 1959, the princess in the film, similar to the fairy tales, is beautiful and attractive. She has a slender body, blonde hair, and white skin. In contrast, the evil fairy is an older with dark hair and cloths. She holds her grudges against the princess and makes sure that she touches a spindle. At the end, she takes a form of a dragon, and gets killed by the prince.

The second story which also exists in both French and German version is "Cinderella". It is a story of a young maiden named Cinderella who is tortured and bullied by her stepmother and

stepsisters. This story establishes the idea that stepmothers and sisters are always cruel and unloving. They are evil and unkind. They order Cinderella to do house works such as cooking, cleaning, and even dressing up the sisters while other members of her family live happily. Cinderella is so kind that she spends rest of her free time giving advice about hair and dressing to his stepsisters. The king arranges a ball to find the right bride for the prince and all the beautiful maidens were invited. Like her sisters, Cinderella was also willing to attend the ball, but her stepmother and sisters avoid her. In the French version, when her family leaves for the ball, she said nothing but only shed tears. Seeing Cinderella so distraught for not being able to attend the ball, her fairy godmother appears and gives her the most splendid dress and carriage to fulfill her wish. Even when the godmother appears, Cinderella is unable to articulate her wish. Cinderella exhibits neither agency nor voice (Persons 144). Her fairy Godmother makes her so beautiful that nobody would recognize her. However, she warns Cinderella that she must leave the ball before midnight. When she arrives in the ball, the prince becomes awestruck by her beauty. He dances only with her in the evening and next few nights of the ball. She is an obedient and dutiful girl. Thus, she would not disobey her Godmother's words. Every midnight she leaves the ball and run away to her house before her stepmother or sisters return. At the final night of the ball, she tries to do the same, but accidentally loses a glass slipper while trying to escape. With the help of the glass slipper, the prince finally finds her. However, before that, every girl in the kingdom including Cinderella's sisters had to put it on, because the prince could not recognize Cinderella without her dress or makeup. He would have married any girl who the slipper fits. Cinderella not only had to put on the slipper to be recognized by the prince but had to appear more beautifully dressed than before. She is too kind to forget about her family although they tortured her. According to the story,"Cinderella was as good as beautiful" (64). After becoming

the princess she also brings suitors for her step-sisters to marry and offers them to live in the

castle with her

In the stories Cinderella cannot voice her own desires. She is unable to act by herself and

waits for her fairy godmother to help her. Linda T, Persons discusses different versions of

Cinderella in her paper "Ella Evolving: Cinderella Stories and Construction of Gender

Appropriate Behavior". In the paper she says:

> Cinderella is an object acted upon. The fact that a messenger of the prince
>
> discovers Cinderella and she is transformed once again by magic and beautiful
>
> clothes before meeting the prince indicates that in her humble state she would not
>
> be worthy of the match. She must be beautiful to be worthy. (144)

Cinderella cannot do anything for herself without any help, but still gets the ultimate reward of

every fairy tale stories. She gets the prince and becomes a princess, because she was submissive,

humble, innocent and above all beautiful.

In the German version known as "Aschenputtel" by Jacob and William Grimm published

in 1812, Cinderella is comparatively portrayed as more active than her seventeen century

version. The story starts with Cinderella's dying mother's advice to her. She said, "Dear child be

pious and good, and God will always take care of you, and I will look down upon you from

heaven, and will be with you" (Grimm 119). The Grimm brothers' used their tales mostly to

teach children moral and Christian values which also reflects in this story. The statement by

Cinderella's mother proves that she was a good and pious woman who advises her daughter to be

like her. The daughter follows her mother's footsteps and grows up to be good and pious as well.

Cristina Bacchilega discusses the mother-daughter relationship in the fairy tales and how the

mother characters affect the heroine. She said that in fairy tales the idea "Good mothers give

birth to innocent children and good children mature symbolically innocent mothers" is a very common concept in fairy tales. Hence, Cinderella's evil stepmother has equally evil daughters who reflect their mother's evil nature. They are comparatively more malicious and wicked than the French version and made Cinderella's life as measurable as possible. Cinderella not being strong enough to defend herself, cries every day at her dead mother's grave complaining about her life. She plants a tree on the grave which later helps her with magic. Unlike, the French Cinderella, this Cinderella expresses her wish to attend the ball when she learns about it, but her stepmother does not allow her. Every time Cinderella asks to join them, she gives her an impossible task to fulfill. However, with the help of the magical tree and the birds, she attends the ball anyway. Like the former story, she dances with the prince and leaves her glass slipper which helps the prince to find her. Even in this story beauty is a very important concept. Cinderella's stepmother is so desperate to become the part of the royal family that she ordered her daughters to cut their toes to fit the slipper. At the end, the daughters were punished for being evil and ambitious by the birds which pick their eyes and made them blind.

The third story which has the same type of passive and beautiful heroine is "Snow White" by the Grimm Brothers. Similar to the Sleeping Beauty's mother, Snow White's mother desires a child. Seeing her own blood on the snow the queens says, "Oh that I had a child as white as snow, as red as blood, and as black as the wood of the embroidery Frame!" (215). No sooner that her wish came true she dies. The king marries a beautiful woman, who eventually becomes envious of Snow White's beauty. The queen has a magic mirror and every day she asks the mirror if there is anyone more beautiful than here. Whenever the mirror replied that no one was as beautiful as she was, she felt proud of herself. One day the mirror tells her that Snow White was the fairest of all. This made the queen angry and she orders a huntsman to kill Snow

White and bring her heart so that she can devour it. The huntsman, unable to kill the lovely princess, lets her go and she runs into the forest. In the forest, Snow White takes shelter in seven dwarfs' house. Like the huntsman, the dwarfs also could not be cruel to the beautiful princess and lets her stay with them. They said to her, "If you will keep our house for us, and cook, and wash, and make the beds, and sew and knit, and keep everything tidy and clean, you may stay with us, and you shall lack nothing" (219). Snow White is also a good girl like any other fairy tale heroines, and obeys the dwarfs. The voice of the dwarfs in this story is actually the voice of the patriarchal society. It clearly states that as long as women fulfill the expected duties prescribed by the society, they will lack nothing, but when they disobey the command, they will face consequences. The dwarfs also warn Snow White against her stepmother and leave her for work. When the queen learns that the girl is alive, she disguises herself as a peddler and visits Snow White. The princess is kind and extremely naïve. She lets the evil queen come close to her and the queen binds her with laces tightly to suffocate her. Fortunately, the dwarfs arrive and save Snow White. The queen attempts to kill Snow White the second time putting on the same disguise, and every time the naïve girl falls for the same tricks. In her third attempt, the queen uses a red apple to lure the girl. At first Snow White refuses many times, but soon she gets tempted and takes a bite. The poisonous apple takes its toll on her and she falls unconscious. After that, no matter how the dwarfs tried to save her, they failed. Finally, the prince arrives and sees her in a coffin so beautiful that he falls in love with her. He saves her and takes here as a bride. Later, when the evil queen learns about their wedding, she wants to see if the girl is actually alive. At the wedding, the prince gives her red iron shoes and orders her to dance until she dies. Throughout the story, Snow White remains voiceless, passive and inactive. She never takes any action to change her fate. The only thing that saved her from every life threatening

situation is her beauty. She was entirely dependent on the male characters such as the huntsman, the dwarfs, and the prince.

The tales of naïve princess do not end with "Snow White". The readers can find similar characteristics in the story "Rapunzel" by the Grimm Brothers. This story also starts with a childless couple longing for a child. This same concept is also present in other stories like "The Sleeping Beauty" and "Snow White". These stories not only support the idea that marriage is the ultimate duty of men and women but also the idea of heterosexuality. Motherhood is portrayed as natural for women (Bacchailega, 3). Women are incomplete without giving birth to a child. In "Rapunzel", the wife one day demands to eat rampion from a nearby garden. Little does the couple knew that the garden belonged to a powerful witch. One day, the husband gets caught by the witch, but she instantly lets him go on the condition that he must give their first born child to her. Soon, the wife gives birth to 'the most beautiful girl' and the witch takes her away. When the witch realized how beautiful the girl is growing up to be, she locks her away in a high tower in the forest. The only way to climb that tower was by climbing Rapunzel's long beautiful golden hair. Every time the witch wishes to see Rapunzel, she would sing a song and Rapunzel lets down her hair. One day, a king's son was passing by the forest and hears the beautiful voice of Rapunzel when she was singing. He sees the interaction between the witch and Rapunzel. When the witch leaves, he mimics her voice and asks Rapunzel to pull him up the tower. Rapunzel does not realize it is a trick and pulls the prince up to her room. The prince instantly falls in love with the princess and he does not take much time to convince Rapunzel to marry him. Rapunzel was hesitant because she never saw a man before. Soon she thinks that the prince is the only way to escape the tower. Although Rapunzel was naïve to trust the prince on their first meeting, she was comparatively more active than the other heroines. She yearned to leave

the tower and conspires with the prince to deceive the witch. Unfortunately, one day she accidentally tells the witch about the prince. The angry witch tortures her and cuts her beautiful hair as punishment. She leaves Rapunzel in a desert alone and miserable. The witch later turns the prince into a bird and the prince flew many years in search of his wife. After several years Rapunzel and The prince finally find each other. By then Rapunzel already has two children. With her touch, the prince becomes human again and takes them to his kingdom where they live happily.

As it is seen in fairy tales, the heroines in The Grimm brothers' fairy tales were slightly less passive than the French fairy tale heroines. This difference also reflects the time and society of the French and German. In the seventeenth century the French preferred their ideal women to be passive and beautiful whereas in the nineteenth century the Germans allowed the women to be a little demanding.

Comparing with Charles Perrault and Grimm Brothers' fairy tale heroines, the heroines in Hans Cristian Andersen's tales are more active and ambitious. However, their ambitions do have consequences. The story of "The Little Mermaid" is the story about a mermaid princess who falls in love with a handsome human prince. She loves him at the first sight so much that she sacrifices her voice and her entire world to become human. The main difference with her and other heroines of the fairy tales is that she is not rescued by a prince, rather she rescues the prince from a shipwreck. Ironically, the sea witch asks for the beautiful voice of the little mermaid in exchange for a magical drink to become human. Without the voice, it becomes impossible for the mermaid to tell the prince that it was she who saved him. She drinks the potion and after excruciating pain she becomes human. In order to remain human and achieve eternal life, she has to make the prince fall in love with her. When the prince finds her helpless and voiceless near his

castle, he takes her with him. He definitely adores her, but he was already in love with a princess. Thus, the little mermaid loses all her chances to be with the prince. Although she does not have the ultimate prize which in the case of many fairy tales is marriage to a prince, she becomes an air nymph. The only way to turn into a mermaid again was to kill the prince and use his blood. However, she refuses to kill him and sacrifices herself. As a reward for kindness, she is turned into a nymph and guaranteed to have a place in heaven if she fulfills her duties.

In all the stories discussed in this chapter, the readers see many common characters. The first one is the beautiful and naïve heroines. The second type is the evil witch or the evil stepmothers, good fairies and fairy godmother. These tales not only talks about how patriarchal society expects women to be, but also how the society sees women. It also presents the condition of the society and how women were treated in male dominated society. The society sends the message that to achieve greatest happiness, women must be physically attractive, young, obedient and submissive. If they are young and beautiful, they are automatically associated with having good virtue. In the paper, "I'd rather be normal: A young girl's response to 'feminist' fairy tales", Trousdale says that in fairy tales, "Women are positioned as the object of men's gaze, and beauty determines a woman's value". Conversely, the other woman portrayed in the stories are either evil or unattractive and sometimes both. They are always less feminine than the heroines. According to Karen Evans "women who are powerful and good are never human; those women who are human, and who have power or seek it, are nearly always portrayed as repulsive" (197). Also, when the heroines are in trouble created by the evil witch or stepmother figures, they are helped by fairy godmothers or fairies that are asexual. The passive heroine always escapes from one powerful group (Evil mother or witches) and submits to the other powerful group which is man (Princes, hunters, and dwarfs) or asexual beings (Godmothers,

fairies). Moreover, unattractive physical appearance and old age are most of the time associated with evil characteristics. The fairy tales show us that, who are not young and beautiful are always malicious or mysterious. In almost every story, women who are beautiful and submissive are also patient. Thus, they are rewarded by getting married to princes and happy marriage. Karen E. Rowe states that, "Because the heroine adopts conventional female virtues, that is patience, sacrifices, and dependency, and because she submits to patriarchal needs, she consequently receives both prince and a guarantee of social and financial security through marriage" (217). Nevertheless, before enjoying the greatest bliss, the heroine has to suffer pain and torture by the evil women. In all these tales, the main female characters are stereotyped as "good girl" as they are gentle, kind, submissive, innocent and angelic and those who do not have these virtues are defined as "bad girl" in the tales. These characterizations imply that if a woman does not accept her patriarchal gender role, then the only role left forher is that of a monster (Tyson 19).

Ambitious and curious women in the fairy tales who act on her own always face punishment for their activities. The society wants women to be passive, therefore ambition and curiosity are not part of feminine virtue. The male characters are always active, ambitious and curious in the stories. Hence, according to patriarchal society women must not have the characteristics that men have. In the Grimm version of "Cinderella" the stepmother wants to become a part of the royal family and orders her daughters to cut their toes to fit the glass slipper. Her ambition leads all of them to miserable punishment. Interestingly, the beginning of the heroine's sufferings is also either because of their curiosity or desire. For example, Rosemond curiously touches the spindle and falls into deep sleep. Also, Snow White could not resist herself to take a bite from the red apple offered by the evil queen and gets poisoned, Both Rapunzel and

the little mermaid suffer because they desired the princes and escape from the life they should live.

The power of deception and manipulation are also a common characteristic in female characters. In "Good and Bad Beyond Belief" Jerilyn Fishr and Ellen S. Silber states that,

In the Brothers Grimm, women who have ambition, who show a desire for control and status, must attempt to secure their standing by misleading others. They can find agency only through fraud and manipulation. (127)

Evil witches and stepmother or sisters lie either to kill the heroine or to get close to the male figures. The stepmother from "Snow White" disguises herself as a peddler and fools Snow white several times, the stepmother from Cinderella tries to deceive the prince by cutting her daughters' toes and in "Rapunzel" the witch deceives the prince acting as Rapunzel and punishes him. Not only the evil characters use manipulation and magic to trick other characters, but also the good female characters use them to deceive the evil characters or the male characters. For example, Cinderella's fairy Godmother uses magic to change her appearance and the prince falls in love with that image created by magic. Also, The Little Mermaid uses a magic potion to become human so that the prince falls in love with her. All these stories prove that women use deception and manipulate situations in order to fulfill their desire or to get noticed by men. Moreover, the stories show that women are easily tempted and fall victim to curiosity. As mentioned before the Grimm Brothers us fairy tales as a manual to teach young children Christian and moral values. The story "Snow White" is not just a fairy tale but also an indirect representation of biblical stories. Just like Eve, Snow White was deceived to eat the poison apple. She could not resist her temptation to eat the forbidden fruit and suffers for it. According to Brittany Dodd:

Just as in the Bible, Snow White is tempted by the poison apple and ultimately

suffers for it. Just as Eve was warned against accepting the fruit, Snow White

knows she should not be talking to and accepting gifts from strangers. Her

weakness for the apple results in a "sleeping death", whereas for Eve, her

acceptance of the fruit results in a spiritual death. (n page)

All of the fairy tales discussed above are the most famous tales of all time. The stories present almost similar characters and create stereotypical images of women. The patriarchal society constructs these ideas and presents as ideal characters to the readers. Young girls learn that beauty is everything, and good women do not take any action by her own. On the other hand, women who break the patriarchal rules are evil and greedy. Thus, they should be punished and tamed by men. Time has changed, but the main theme of the stories remains the same because the society wants it to exist this way.

Chapter IV

The Image of Male Character in Fairy Tales

Women in fairy tales are always busy giving birth to beautiful princesses, doing household chores, plotting against each other and concerned with their beauty. On the contrary, men are busy ruling the kingdom, participating in wars, going on adventures, saving princesses, and performing other masculine activities. This chapter will discuss male characters from different fairy tales by Charles Perrault, The Grimm Brothers,and Hans Christian Andersen to see how they create the image of ideal men of patriarchal society. These characters may appear in the fairy tales for a brief moment, but the influence they have are undeniable. The male characters are most of the time rich or young and sometimes both. A young prince or a hunter with power and courage can overcome any situation. The elder men can also have the power to control if they are rich such as kings or knights. An ordinary old man who does not have the money or youth has no power in fairy tales. Only the ideal masculine man (rich, young and powerful) has agency in fairy tales. The kings or princes rescue the heroines all most in every fairy tale. They marry the beautiful women and provides security with wealth and royalty. Therefore, children who hear these tales, learn that it is a man who protects, provides shelter, and security to a woman. In the article "Why Patriarchy Persists (and How We Can Change It)", Drew Serres discuss the principles of patriarchal society and how it defines the duties of men and women. Drew Serres states that:

> Patriarchal society holds up the traditional male qualities as central, while other qualities are considered subordinate. The attributes of power, control, rationality, and extreme competitiveness are examples of these traditional male qualities.

Emotional expressiveness, compassion, and ability to nurture are examples of

subordinate qualities in patriarchal systems. (n page)

Fairy tales help the society to promote these ideas and present them to young boys and girls. The

children unconsciously agree with the concepts and learn gender-appropriate roles. They learn

that what men do are always important, difficult, and rational. On the contrary, the duties of

women such as childbearing or rearing and maintaining the household are subordinate or less

important jobs. Masculine men would never have feminine features like emotional attachment or

sentiment.

In the French version of "The Sleeping Beauty in the Woods" by Perrault, there are three

male characters, the king, the prince and the hunter. Each of them protects the princess in

different times and situations. The king, as expected, is wealthy, powerful and authoritative. He

orders and things happen. When his wife gives birth to a princess, he orders for a feast, and when

he learns of the curse upon his child, every spindle in the kingdom is destroyed. Unfortunately,

he fails to protect the princess and again orders to keep her daughter safe in a high tower. When

the father fails to protect his daughter, the prince enters the story to rescue her. The prince is

active in the initial part of the story. He is young, handsome and adventurous. Therefore, when

he learns about a princess sleeping inside a hidden tower for a hundred years, he takes the

responsibility to save her. In the story, it is said, "A young gallant prince is always brave" (9). He

valiantly cuts through the forest and reaches to the princess. Upon his arrival, the princess wakes

up from her curse. The prince falls in love with the princess beauty at the first sight. He marries

her, but does not take her to his castle with him, he fears his ogress mother and wanted to keep

his wife safe. However, soon he becomes the king and takes the responsibility to rule the

kingdom. While he was leaving for a war, he puts his mother in charge of the kingdom and

taking care of his family. This decision by the prince is contradictory to his earlier decision, but no one questions him because he is a powerful man. While the king was away fulfilling his duties of a king, another man takes responsibility of protecting the princess. The evil queen orders the chef to kill the princess and serve her as food. However, he protects the princess cleverly. At the end, the king returns and saves the princess from his mother and his presumption about his mother becomes true. This story supports that men are always right and only a man (prince or a chef) can rescue a helpless heroine.

In the German version, the prince does not have to do much to rescue the princess. He hears the story about the princess and marches inside the forest without facing any obstacles. The brave prince enters the forest and all the thorns turn into roses for him. When he sees the beautiful princess he kisses her and marries without knowing her personality. This story shows that men are always attracted to external beauty and does not care about personality. They are valiant and always ready for adventures.

This idea is present in other stories like "Cinderella", "Snow White", "Rapunzel" and "The Little Mermaid". In both French and German versions of "Cinderella", the prince is awestruck by the heroine's beauty and dances only with her. In the French version, when Cinderella runs away at midnight, he goes after her, but fails to stop her. He finds the glass slipper and orders his men to search for the girl as he wants to marry her. When they find Cinderella, her fairy godmother turns her even more beautiful than before. The prince marries her and lives happily ever after. Women come to him because he is rich, young and handsome. Even when Cinderella leaves, he simply orders other men to do his work, because he has the power to control. In the German version, the prince exhibits several commendable characteristics. During the ball, when others ask to dance with Cinderella, his response is "She is

my partner" (Persons 147). He clarifies that Cinderella belongs to him. He also searches for the heroine himself and declares that whoever the glass slipper fits he will marry. Although the prince is an active and powerful man, he fails to show practical intellect. Cinderella's stepsisters fooled him twice by cutting their toes to fit the glass slipper and he does not realize it until the birds inform him. This confirms that the prince is not much intelligent or clever. Nonetheless, he still gets the beautiful maiden, because he was rich. In this version, Cinderella's father is also mentioned. He is weak and powerless against his wife. He is an older man, unable to protect his daughter from troubles. What happens to him at the end of the story is not mentioned. As the father fails to protect Cinderella, getting the prince's attention becomes important for her. Only the young prince can give her love, security and wealth. At the end, the prince rescues her from her stepmother and she lives happily the rest of her life.

The Grimm Brothers, most of the time reflects the contemporary social values through their collection of fairy tales. "Snow White" is also a story which indoctrinates gender roles. There are several male characters such as the hunter, the dwarfs, and the prince in the story. These male characters are given masculine occupations which require physical strength and labor. On the contrary, women characters are a queen and a princess who are busy fighting over petty reason like beauty. The male characters take the responsibility of protecting the princess from the evil queen. At first, the hunter takes pity on her and lets her go instead of killing her. Then the dwarfs give her shelter and orders her to do household chores for them. They promised that if Snow White performs her duties properly, she can live without problem. The dwarfs are the rigorous voice of the patriarchal society which believes women should be faithful to duties assigned by the male dominated society without question. The dwarfs are also intelligent and wise. They warns Snow White many times to stay safe and when she is in trouble, they always

save her. Finally, a prince falls in love with Snow White's beauty. He was having an adventure and sees Snow White for the first time. She was unconscious and sleeping in a glass coffin, but she looks so stunning that the prince cannot help falling for her. The dwarfs hand Snow White over to the prince, because they realized they cannot help her anymore. He unintentionally reawakens her and marries her. In a patriarchal society, it is not only the women who have to submit to patriarchal society but also other men. These men are weaker and les masculine than the 'alpha male". So, they also have to submit to the 'alpha male'. Although the hunter and the dwarfs are male characters and help the princess in various situations, they cannot give her the greatest happiness or protection. The hunter works for the evil queen. He can temporarily deceive her, but cannot fight against her. He lacks the power and authority which are very important for a masculine man. Similarly, the dwarfs are not true masculine men because they are deformed. They are also helpless against the evil queen. A man has to be powerful, handsome, and wealthy and the prince owns all these features. Hence, he takes the responsibility to protect the princess. He punishes the evil queen for tormenting the heroine and the story completes. Alice Neikirk compares the prince in fairy tales with God-like characters. The God is responsible for saving or disposing of people (40). Consequently, the patriarchal hero saves the helpless maiden and chastises the evil women. When a woman refuses to remain passive and acts violently, she disrupts the patriarchal system. Drew Serres also talks about how the society controls the subordinate group in a society. He says:

> If a person or group challenges patriarchy in any form, then the patriarchal response is to increase control. In particular, this means increasing control over oppressed or marginalized groups. (n page)

Therefore, when the evil queens, fairies, and stepmothers act unruly, it is the responsibility of the masculine man to tame and control them to restore order.

In both "The Sleeping Beauty" and "Snow White", women are punished for being either curious or ambitious. Curiosity is a vice for women and virtue for men. The princes in both of the stories are curious to know about what is happening around them. Whenever they take action they are rewarded with beautiful brides. Men are rewarded for being curious, because they have the right to be. As it is a positive trait for men, it is not appropriate for ideal women. Hence, when heroines like Rosamond and Snow White show curiosity, they are punished with a curse. The same idea is followed in the story "Rapunzel". When the prince hears the lovely voice of Rapunzel, he wants to know more about her and goes to the extent of deceiving her. Yet again, it is discussed in chapter two that, deception is a negative trait for female characters. The prince is not judged for deceiving because he is a man. Moreover, the prince may have deceived Rapunzel at first, nonetheless his intentions are good. Resembling the rest of the princes, he also falls in love with the beautiful woman whom he meets for the first time. Repeating the same concepts of men falling in love with physical appearance supports that handsome young men are always attracted to beautiful women. This concept is not only common in fairy tales by Perrault or The Grimm Brothers, it is also common in Danish fairy tales by Hans Christian Andersen. In "The Little Mermaid", the prince gives the mermaid momentary affection just because she is beautiful and helpless. He is ignorant that the girl is the one who saved him from drowning in the sea. He always keeps the girl alongside him, because she reminds him of the woman he truly loves. The girl loves him dearly and does not complain when the prince uses her as mere object. Soon the prince finds the princess he loves and abandons the little mermaid. He declares his love for the princess and announces his marriage to her. He has never been emotionally attached with the

little mermaid in the first place. This is also considered as a common male trait according to patriarchal ethics. The male characters in fairy tales are always stronger than the female characters, therefore they lack emotional weakness or dependency.

Men in fairy tales are always active, brave, outspoken, and powerful. They openly declare their love for the heroines, they are brave and ready to punish the evil. Whatever they do bring happiness and good at the end of the story. Although some of their actions are questionable, they are forgiven because they are men. If we consider the time of the publication of the fairy tales, it can be seen that monarchs or kings used to rule the society. In respect to the rulers, the writers presented the royal class in a magnificent way. Society believed that the kings were ordained by the God, they were inevitably superior by birth. They were always right and never contested, even when many kings proved to be less than ideal rulers (Patel 50). Even though time has changed and many of these virtues of men are seen as a false image, the heroes in fairy tales remain the same. The image of 'Ideal Men" is still upheld by the patriarchal society.

Chapter V

Fairy Tales and Disney Representations

In the twentieth century, fairy tales continue to appear in the new medium. With the advent of technology and filmmaking, people can now see their favorite fairy tales in visual form. Walt Disney production is one of America's most popular mass media productions and it has adopted fairy tales as movie plots since the 1930s. Most of the time the target audience of this production are children who are in the stage of gradually understanding gender roles. They are exposed to the messages the movies are spreading, and learn to act according to their gender by observing the characters they see. Larisa Arnold describes that:

> Children adopt gender identity and gender role preferences very early in life,
> which is reinforced by gender roles that are portrayed to them through television
> and movies. Through mass media corporations such as Disney, children acquire
> gender information and understanding of themselves and how they should look
> and behave. (4)

Disney's animated films used to present stereotypical characters having a specific set of gender roles and behaviors. It exemplified what men and women should do, how they are supposed to look, and how they should act. However, Disney's weak and passive heroines lost attraction when women's right became a serious issue in America (Yerby, Baron, and Lee 4). With the change of time and social expectations, Disney is changing this trend of passive heroines and rich heroes. The recent movies like *The Little Mermaid*, *Tangled*, and *Frozen*, portray the classic heroines in a new light. They are not just beautiful women waiting for Prince Charming. They are individuals with agency and power. Nonetheless, these films are also criticized for promoting patriarchal principles in the disguise of women empowerment. Libe Garcia Zarranz discusses the

evolution of Disney's female characters in her article "Diswomen Strike Back? The Evolution of Disney's Femmes in The 1990s". She remarks that "Disney's fairy tales often manage to conceal a suspicious ideology concerning sexual, race and class politics (55).

In 1923, Walt Disney and his brother Roy started a cartoon studio in Hollywood: The Disney Brothers' Studio (Elnahla 114). The first animated feature-length film *Snow White andthe Seven Dwarfs* was released in 1937 from this studio. The film was produced during the Great Depression, but it still earned $8.5 million. It was the highest grossing film of that time, until the release of *Gone with the Wind* (Patel 54). The movie *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* featured a heroine who fits the domestic expectations of pre-World War II women. It was also an escape route from the "Great Depression" of that time (Stover 2). The film starts by showing Snow White living with her stepmother in a castle. She is forced to wear rags clothes and do household works. There were many changes in the movie, but they did not affect the main ideology of the film. Similar to the earlier version, the protagonist is beautiful and naïve. Animals are her friends and she is loved by everyone who sees her. Throughout the movie, she sings and does household works without complaint. On the other hand, the stepmother is vain and evil. She is jealous of Snow White's beauty and wants to kill her. Like the original story, she deceives Snow White, disguising as a paddler and Snow White falls unconscious after taking a bite of the poisonous apple. One major difference with the literary fairy tale is that, in the film, the prince does not kill the evil queen. The queen falls off a cliff while trying to escape from the dwarfs after poisoning Snow White. The prince appears twice in the film, yet he does not do much. He kisses Snow White without knowing her and awakes her. He had no emotion, does not work for anything, nor does he punish the evil. Nevertheless, the impression that men are the

savior and they are the protectors of women remains the same in the twentieth-century movie version because he ends the misery of the princess by marrying her.

From 1937 to 1950, Disney produced many escapist films. *Dumbo, Bambi*, and *The Three Caballeros* were very popular, however, there were no princess movies during these years. Disney did not produce any princess movies during the World War II period, because women were also significantly involved in the war. Cassandra Stover describes that, "Since women were leading the war effort at home and managing entire households and companies on their own, few would easily or readily identify with the passive damsel awaiting her prince" (2).

In 1950, Cinderella was released, and earned over $4 million. The movie was nominated for Oscar in various categories. The film was released after five years of the World War and people received it enthusiastically. Everyone was settling down after the world war and women were expected to welcome their husband with loving hearts. The society wanted women to take over their traditional roles of childbearing and homemaking once again. Some women refused to go back to their traditional role, because they were getting used to outside works. *Cinderella* reminded them of their duties and once again upholds the idea that a woman can be happy only at home and in a happy marriage. This film version of the tale mostly follows Charles Perrault's seventeenth-century fairy tale. Cinderella's mother dies and her good-hearted father marries a woman named Lady Tremaine. The woman has two daughters Drizella and Anastasia. They were ugly and greedy. Everything was going fine until Cinderella's father dies. Disney kills off the father only to show that the absence of a male figure in a family creates disorder and chaos. After the father's death, the evil stepmother orders Cinderella to do all the labor in the house. Similar to *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, animals are Cinderella's friends and they help her in many situations. Like the fairy tale, Cinderella is saved from her miserable life by a prince. He

marries her not because she is a hard working person. He fell in love with her because she is beautiful. Thus, order and peace are once again restored when a male character like the prince marries Cinderella and she becomes a princess.

With the ongoing success of princess movies, Disney produced another movie based on a popular fairy tale. *Sleeping Beauty*, was released in 1959. The movie tells the story of Princess Aurora. She was born to King Stefan and Queen Leah, and was destined to marry Prince Philip. Similar to the fairy tale, good fairies gather to bless her with beauty and virtue. Maleficent, an evil fairy, feels so offended for not being invited to the ceremony that she curses Aurora. In the original fairy tale the evil fairy does not appear again after cursing the princess, but in the Disney film, the evil fairy vows not to stop until Aurora dies. When the prince attempts to awake Aurora from the curse, Maleficent takes a form of a dragon and fights him. The good fairies help him by providing a sword and a shield. He defeats the dragon and awakes Aurora with a kiss. Throughout the film, Aurora does nothing to protect herself. She grows to be exceptionally beautiful and naïve. She only waits for others, such as the good fairies and Prince Philip to save her. Yet, she is rewarded with a happy marriage, which was considered to be the greatest reward of contemporary time. Disney tried to promote the traditional ideals of femininity through this film. Unfortunately, the changing generation did not appreciate it. The film was unsuccessful, because many women refused to identify with the passive heroine (Stover 3). By that time the feminist movement was ongoing, and women were becoming aware of their rights. In 1949, Simone de Beauvoir published her book, *The Second Sex*, which describes ideas such as how men use hegemonic power to treat women as subordinates. In the article "Women's Liberation Movement", Nancy Sink describes that Simone de Beauvoir's book has been a great influence for feminist movements. Beauvoir explained that there was a hierarchy and for stereotyping,

women were on a lower level. It also stated that women had a sense of "mystery" around them and depicted as "other". She also went on to state that this was true in other areas, such as race, class, and religion. By the late 1950s, women were becoming dissatisfied with their place in society (Sink, 1). They realized that they deserved equal rights as men, which lead to a strong movement. Thus, any kind of presentation that depicted women as passive and an inferior group were bound to be criticized.

Disney made few major changes in the earlier film adaptations of fairy tales. Moreover, the fairy tales he adapted were patriarchal tales which taught gender role and social norms. Kay Stone comments on the three fairy tales discussed above which Disney used as plots of its films. She said, "All had passive, pretty heroines, and all three had female villains, thus strongly reinforcing the already popular stereotypes of the innocent beauty victimized by the wicked villainess" (44). The characters remained unchanged in the films. The women were still either good or evil and Men also remain as heroic princes. They have no faults and are less emotional than the female characters. They have more screen time that gives them more power and importance. Jack Zipes comments on this point saying:

> The disenfranchised or oppressed heroine must be rescued by a daring prince.
> Heterosexual happiness and marriage are always the ultimate goals of the story.
> There is no character development because all characters must be recognizable as
> types that remain unchanged throughout the film. Good cannot become evil, nor
> can evil become good. The world is viewed…as a dichotomy, and only the good
> will inherit the earth. (93)

Disney upholds the patriarchal idea of the gender-appropriate role and social norms.
Furthermore, the production added colors and costumes according to the sexual orientation of the

characters. Thus, it is creating more stereotypes such as pink are for girls and blue for boys. It also shows that white is the symbol of good and black is evil. For Example, in all three films, the evil women were wearing black dresses and the female lead most of the time wore pink, white or blue.

After the failure of *The Sleeping Beauty*, Disney did not produce princess movies for a long time. Feminism rose in America, thus, many changes were taking place regarding the role of a woman in society. Disney also followed the movement and concentrated on creating more active heroines (Baron, n page). In 1989, Disney released *The Little Mermaid* which was a free adaptation of Andersen's classic tale. The film was a huge success and marked the rebirth of the Disney Corporation as one of the largest multinationals in America (Zarranz, 56). The Little Mermaid is a tale of Ariel, the youngest daughter of the sea king Triton. Ariel is different than the other classic princesses because she is not a passive character. She is active, ambitious and adventurous. These characteristics belonged to the male or evil characters in classic fairy tales which were considered masculine characteristics. She also constantly disobeys her father and refuses to follow the traditional law. She is courageous and determined. Ariel does not wait for a prince and attempts to fulfill her own dreams. Moreover, at the initial part of the movie, Ariel saves the prince from drowning. Normally, in Disney films, the prince rescues the princess, but Disney changed this concept in this film giving more power to Ariel. Yet, no matter how much the film production changed, some stereotypical ideas are still the same. In the new Disney films, the personality of the female lead characters may have changed, but their physical characteristics are similar. Disney added some physical feature to the princess which are considered very attractive and sexist. For example, Ariel is modeled after "slightly anorexic Barbie doll" (Giroux, 99) and had "thin waist and prominent bust" (O' Brien, 173). Although the movie shows that

Ariel does not wait for a prince, she is determined to marry one. This film also supports that the ultimate bliss for a young woman is to marry a handsome man. Ariel is always under male protection. She is her father's favorite daughter, so, he is always concerned with her safety. He asks Sebastian, a male crab to follow her wherever she goes. Therefore, Ariel has to live in constant pressure. One more noticeable fact is that Ariel or any other princesses in Disney have no female friends. They have male companions, who help and protect them in various circumstances. Ariel strives to do more in her life, but she cannot imagine a world without men. She escapes from her father's dominating world, only to run towards other men. Roberta Trites discusses the politics Disney used in *The Little Mermaid* film and says,

> The value system that controls the plot has been established; Ariel must choose between these two men. Ariel never considers running away to a life that does not include male protection; she rejects her father's culture to embrace Eric's culture. She seems intelligent, resourceful, and courageous but incapable of autonomy. (2)

Thus, Disney makes it natural for a woman to submit to men. Ariel might have been different than the classical princesses, but she cannot deny the need of male characters in her life. Men are confident, authoritative and brave characters. It is their duty to protect the princesses. Without their approval and help, the heroine cannot fulfill her dreams. At the end of *The Little Mermaid*, the prince kills Ursula and saves both Triton and Ariel. Also, without Triton's consent, Ariel could never unite with the prince.

Another fact that Disney did not bother to change is the portrayal of the villain. The villain in this film is also an older female character. Ursula is a power hungry manipulative sea witch who uses Ariel to trick both Triton and Prince Eric. She successes in deceiving Triton and holds the trident, which is the symbol of patriarchal law (Zarranz 57). Ursula is given an

overweight and ugly body. Trites argues that Ursula's intimidating body reflects Disney's negative construction of older women as predatory villains (6). In *The Sleeping Beauty*, Maleficent takes a form of a Dragon and the prince slays her. Similarly, when Ursula becomes gigantic and tries to kill Ariel, the prince kills her. As it is discussed in the third chapter, it becomes a man's duty to tame a woman when she becomes unruly. Thus, when Ursula become Greedy for power and tries to take over the male-dominated kingdom from Triton, she is punished by Eric. Furthermore, the movie emphasizes male power as positive and female power as negative (Trites 6). Disney presents that evil and chaos are bound to come whenever a woman tries to take control. To maintain order and peace male power must be restored.

The most significant changes in Disney films can be found in recent releases. *Tangled*, produced in 2010 is a remake of Grimm Brothers' "Rapunzel". Disney took liberty and changed almost the entire story to meet Disney's standards. They even experimented with the film's title. It was supposed to be titled after the original fairy tale, but the production decided to rename it to less gender specific name. This time, they targeted both male and female spectators (Eller n page). The production believed the title Rapunzel will give the vibe that it is a princess movie. They wanted to prove that it is not just a princess movie. The film tells the story of how a young woman achieved her dreams and how a bandit like Flynn Ryder also finds his aim in life. Disney keeps the heroine with long golden hair and the evil witch known as mother Gothel, but changed the plot and added many characters. The movie starts with Flynn Ryder's voice. He is the narrator of the story and tells how he meets Rapunzel. He begins by introducing Gothel who uses a magical flower to stay young forever. When the flower is taken away to heal the ailing Queen, Gothel becomes agitated. Fortunately, the Queen gives birth to a princess who possesses the power of the flower. Gothel kidnaps the child and raises the child as her own in a locked tower.

When Rapunzel grows up, she becomes curious about the floating lights, which appears every year in her birthday. She does not know that the floating lights are let up in her memory, and she is a princess. She expresses her wish to see the lights to Gothel, but does not get permission to leave the tower. Right before her eighteenth birthday, a thief Flynn Rider, climbs the tower to hide a tiara which he stole from the castle. Rapunzel takes his help and other bandits to see the source of the light. She disobeys Gothel and goes on an adventure. Her disobedience and leaving the tower symbolically presents the breaking of gender barriers (Garabedian 24). The protagonist is no doubt more active and dynamic than the heroines of previous fairy tales. Unlike Ariel, whose motive of leaving her familiar place was to marry a prince, Rapunzel's only motive to leave the tower is to fulfill her dreams and learn things that are unknown to her. She has no plan to marry a prince like Ariel. Rapunzel can sing, write poetries, read books, paint, cook and she even has knowledge of astronomy. Moreover, she is athletic and adventurous.

Unfortunately, this film also follows many traditional features of a Disney princess movie. In the original version Rapunzel is not a princess; she is a peasant's daughter. The film production changes her to be a princess only to follow the tradition of Disney films. At first glance, it may seem that Flynn is a companion to Rapunzel's journey instead of a rescuer, but he is actually not different than the traditional heroes. At the end of the movie, Ryder risks his life to save Rapunzel from witch. In the process he is attacked by Gothel and Rapunzel saves him from Gothel promising that she will do anything in exchange of his life. Until this part, Rapunzel is different than the classic princess, because she is taking the role of a protector. However, the role of the protector goes back to the hero when Flynn cuts off Rapunzel's magical hair and Gothel loses her power. Flynn may not be a prince, nevertheless, he is young, handsome, and above all a man. Habitually, he is given the final power of punishing the evil.

Like most of the Disney films, *Tangled* also has a conventional villain. Gothel, is an evil sorceress. She is an older women with black hair and eyes. Following the model of Snow White's evil stepmother and Ursula from The Little Mermaid, Gothel is obsessed with physical beauty and eternal youth" (Elnahla 123). She is so afraid of losing her youth and beauty that she selfishly locks a young girl in a tower depriving her of human rights. Disney once again failed to stay away from stereotyping older women and depicting them as cruel characters.

There are only two active female characters in the film who are either good or evil. Similar to Ariel, Rapunzel has no female companions to trust. She has a pet named Pascale and befriends a horse named Maximus on her journey. Both are male creatures. She meets many other bandits in her journey who supports her. This shows that Rapunzel has to constantly rely on the male characters. Disney is once criticized for making few active female character compared to male characters, when women are already maintaining equal positions in job sectors in the real world.

Frozen, released in 2013, is the 53rd animated feature film by Disney production. The plot of the film is inspired by Andersen's 1844 fairy tale "The Snow Queen". The movie is praised for breaking several traditional gender role concepts of Disney film. It is also considered to be one of the gender balanced films from the production (Elnahla 124). The film presents two strong female leads: Queen Elsa and Princess Anna. When Elsa loses control of her power and flees from Arendelle, her younger sister Anna takes the responsibility to bring her back. The main theme of the tale is love for family and not a romantic kind of love for a life partner. Similar to other tales, Anna gets help from three male companions, Kristoff, Olaf, and Sven. However, she does not completely depend on them. In the last moments of the movie, Anna protects Elsa from the evil Prince Hans, instead of kissing Kristoff, who could lift her curse.

Juliana Garabedian praise the changes in the film saying: "In the end, Anna's act of true love saves her rather than her love for a male lead, making her the enlightened hero that Disney has been progressing toward for nearly 80 years" (24). It is not a kiss from a man which saved Anna from dying, but the true act of love of both sisters. With this Disney breaks the rule of "True loves first kiss", which was in classical Disney films like *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* and *The Sleeping Beauty*.

One of the major changes in this film is choosing the non-traditional villain. Instead of an evil witch or stepmother, Disney portrayed Prince Hans of the Southern Isles, as the main villain (Elnahla, 124). This time, it is not an older woman who deceives everyone, but a young prince who was supposed to save the day. His conspiracy to kill Anna and take over the throne fails and he is sent back to his kingdom.

Queen Elsa is also one of the most controversial characters Disney has ever created. In "The Snow Queen", the Snow Queen was a negative character, on the contrary, Elsa is one of the protagonists in the film. She is not evil or unkind. She is only confused with her powers. While escaping from the kingdom, she realizes that she should use her powers instead of hiding them. The Oscar-winning song sang by this character in the movie is about liberation, empowerment, and celebrating the release for those who have been living in fear or bondage ((Elnahla 124). Hence, with the song she is announcing that she will break every rule of society which binds her.

Frozen, was a huge success in 2013. It was praised by both critics and audiences. Similar to *Tangled*, Disney also released this film with a non-gender specific title to attract both male and female audiences. Nevertheless, Disney is still not making many changes in physical appearance of the heroines. From *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* to *Frozen*, every single movie discussed in this chapter has thin and white beautiful princess. Disney is creating a fixed

idea that one has to be young, beautiful and attractive to become successful. In the article "Nine Harmful Stereotypes that Our Favorite Disney Movie Taught Us", Michelle Juergen listed many stereotypes which Disney films have promoted. In the part 'Being Thin and White is What Makes Women Beautiful' He says:

> There's nothing wrong with being white and/or skinny, but growing up, we were exposed to heroines who all looked remarkably similar. This has a host of implications: That thinness and whiteness make you valuable, prosperous, moral and beautiful. This also implies that the opposite is true: Non-whiteness and non-thinness are unwanted, undesirable, evil and unattractive. (n page)

Now the question is, why does Disney still presents such physical structures and similar roles for women in its films over and over again?

Laura Mulvey says that "the gender power asymmetry is a controlling force in cinema and constructed for the pleasure of the male viewer, which is deeply rooted in patriarchal ideologies and discourses". She proves that the male viewers are the target audience of most of the visual representations. Thus, the male-driven society first satisfies the men's desires by presenting women sexually attractive and desirable. Laura Mulvey's "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" was published in 1975 and her theories are applicable still now.

Her theory supports the Male Gaze theory. She says that women in the media are viewed from the eyes of a heterosexual man and that these women are represented as passive objects of male desire (Sampson n page). No matter what audiences' sexual orientation is heterosexual or homosexual, they are forced to see characters from the heterosexual male point of view. So, the women in Disney has prominent chest, thin waist, and a white skin, because the patriarchal society finds these features attractive. Disney has tried to attract the male audience by presenting

sexually attractive female characters. On the other hand, when women see the characters from the male point of view, they think that their thoughts or point of view are not important buts men's are. Therefore, man is not only an audience, but also the controlling group. Consequently, women become obsessed with having a body which will attract the powerful group.

Thus, just like fairy tales of the previous century, Disney is promoting the concept that women who are beautiful have good moral values and unattractive people have evil intentions. Also, they show that women cannot rely on each other and men are always ready to help them. No matter how much Disney is changing the role of traditional female characters, it is still creating racism and stereotypes.

Chapter VI

Conclusion

Fairy tales are not just simple tales for children; they can also be called historical

documents. They reflect the cultural and social values of the dominant group of a society. The

patriarchal society designs these tales to teach appropriately gendered behaviours and norms.

Although fairy tales are not solely responsible for teaching gender roles and behaviours, the

messages they spread contribute in the development of gender appropriate performances.

The original fairy tales of the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries contain particular gender

stereotypes. The ideal men and women in fairy tales are portrayed as brave, strong and assertive,

or beautiful, kind, innocent and passive, respectively.

It was the female writer such as Madame d'Aulnoy and L'Héritier de Villandon who took

the first initiatives to write magical tales during the seventeenth century. Many of their tales had

unconventional characters. The tales could not make it to the twenty-first century because they

were published less and less over the years. The rendering of these tales was ambitious and

attempted to break the norms and standards of patriarchal society, thus, they were not allowed to

exist.

However, the tales written by male authors which upheld the patriarchal norms and value

system survived and are still represented in many different forms such as movies, songs, picture

books and video games. The tales, especially by Charles Perrault, The Grimm Brothers and Hans

Christian Andersen are still popular throughout the world. In these tales, the heroines like

Cinderella, Sleeping Beauty and Snow White are hardly mentioned without their physical

appearance and gentle behaviour. As it has been discussed, fairy tales often associate beauty with

good behaviour. It shows that a beautiful person is bound to be good and kind. On the other

hand, it creates the idea that unattractive people are evil. The tales present the competitors of the heroine as either ugly or less attractive. For example, in "Cinderella" by Perrault, the sisters are always not as beautiful as Cinderella, no matter how much they try. Also, in "Snow White" by the Grimm Brothers, the evil queen is less beautiful than Snow White which is the main cause of all the problems in the tale. She could not accept the fact of being less good looking than the heroine and attempts to kill her. Furthermore, stepmother and older women in fairy tales are repeatedly categorized as evil and malicious characters. They have masculine characteristics such as ambition, curiosity, and power. As the society believes that women are not supposed to have qualities that men possess, thus, they are evil.

Male characters in fairy tales, however, are more active and independent than the female characters. They appear for a brief moment in the fairy tales, but have great influence on the plot and other characters. Without their help, a female character cannot achieve their dreams. The men are valiant, courageous and good people. When female characters fail to trust each other, they take help from men in fairy tales. In chapter three, it is discussed how male characters such as the hunter and the dwarfs from "Snow White", protect the heroine until the prince appears. Again, no matter how much these side characters are capable of protecting the heroine, they do not deserve her. Only the prince who has the ideal masculine characteristics can have the heroine. In the case of classic fairy tales, it is most of the time a prince because he has everything such as wealth, youth, and power. Older men in fairy tales are also negatively portrayed like older women. The father figures of many heroines are often absent, and even if they appear, they can do nothing for the protagonist. For example, the father in Perrault's "Cinderella" is so weak in front of his second wife that he cannot even acknowledge Cinderella in public. The older men like the kings have great power in fairy tales. They order and things happen because they are rich

and powerful. Furthermore, male characters in fairy tales are given professions which require power and logic. They are rulers, hunters, labourers, soldiers, and knights, whereas women are princesses, housewives, cooks, and perfect homemakers. Thus, the fairy tales depict the exact roles that patriarchal society expects from men and women. These tales also teach moral lessons such as what happens when people do not follow the rules of a patriarchal society.

Fairy tales continue to amaze people in the modern era as well. Since 1937, Disney has picked the most patriarchal tales and added colours, songs and visual effects to them, which make the fairy tales realistic for a modern audience. For a very long time, Disney remained true to the original stories and presented traditional feminine and masculine characters, however, in recent years the films are becoming less gender biased. The female characters are stronger and more independent characters than the previous female leads. They no longer wait for the prince to rescue them and do not hesitate to have their own adventure.

Since 1980, Disney has broken many traditional concepts of gender stereotypes and gender role, but it is somehow creating other types of stereotyping. The films are criticized for presenting sexually attractive Disney princess such as The Little Mermaid. They propagate the idea that one has to be rich, beautiful and attractive to achieve one's goals. The male characters in the modern representations become even more powerful and dominating as they are more present in the films than the stories. Also, the recent films such as Tangled and Frozen may not have ended showing a happy marriage, but there are indications of the upcoming marriage. This shows that a woman can only have her happy ending in the arms of a perfect man. She might be independent or liberated, but she cannot imagine a world without men. Thus, the fairy tales have always reflected social norms and cultural values of a male dominated society. The tales always glorify the action of men and diminish the roles of women. When children come across this type

of representations, they pick up the gender roles and behaviours portrayed by stereotypical man

and woman in the fairy tales and act according to their gender.

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