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This study is a content analysis of disenchantment in fairy tales. It examines fifteen fairy tales to see what sorts of methods of disenchantment are used, and what these methods say about the use of disenchantment in these stories.

As a result of this study, four methods of disenchantment were identified. They are disenchantment through love, disenchantment through removal of a foreign object, disenchantment through violence, and disenchantment through courage. By examining disenchantment in fairy tales, it is clear that this concept is a tool for conveying the importance of honor, goodness, acceptance and inner strength to readers.

Headings:

Fairy tales – Psychological aspects

Folklore and children

A CONTENT ANALYSIS ON THE MEANING OF DISENCHANTMENT IN FAIRY
TALES

by
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Introduction

Fairy tales, originally meant for adults, have long been a popular form of literature for children. The origin of fairy tales lies in the oral tradition, as most of these stories were passed down through generations before being recorded. Therefore, the messages that fairy tales convey are ones that retain meaning regardless of time or place. Not only do fairy tales provide entertainment for people of all ages, but they inherently teach wrong from right and good from evil. There are certain ways in which these messages are expressed to the audience, and one of these is the use of disenchantment. In a number of fairy tales, a character is enchanted throughout the story, only to be saved in some way at the end. This disenchantment usually serves the larger purpose of the story; it is a way of bringing about resolution and a happy ending. There are a variety of ways that a character can become disenchanted, and the analysis of these disenchantments is the focus of this paper.

Problem

While there is extensive literature about various interpretations of fairy tales, there is limited information that focuses primarily on the role that disenchantment plays in these analyses. When a character in a fairy tale becomes disenchanted in a particular way, what is the significance of that manner of disenchantment? The method of disenchantment must serve a purpose in the fairy tale, but there has been little study of what the purpose is.

Research Question

What does it mean to be disenchanted? How does the disenchantment of a character convey a fairy tale's meaning to readers?

Literature Review

Much of the literature on disenchantment revolves around psychoanalysis and how children will find meaning in fairy tales. Bruno Bettelheim has perhaps put forth the most comprehensive guide to interpreting fairy tales with his *The Uses of Enchantment*. In this work, he provides an in depth psychoanalytical discussion of what role disenchantment plays in various fairy tales. He discusses specific fairy tales, and his analysis relies heavily on psychosexual interpretations. For example, he devotes a chapter to the concept of animal-groom cycles in fairy tales. Bettelheim explains that many fairy tales, such as “Beauty and the Beast” and “The Frog Prince,” teach children that “for love, a radical change in previously held attitudes about sex is absolutely necessary” (282). In these stories, Bettelheim maintains, the female character must overcome her fear and repulsion at the thought of sex as she matures (288). The significance of the male character being enchanted and taking on the appearance of a disgusting creature is that he mirrors the child’s thoughts about sex. As the female character gets to know the creature better, she comes to love him, and therefore is no longer repulsed by him. Thus, her love has transformed something ugly into something beautiful (289).

Bettelheim also discusses the significance of love as the single most transformative factor in fairy tales. He suggests that the greatest fear of young children is separation anxiety, and the happy ending- marriage- that is present in most fairy tales is

ideal because it signifies a permanent solution to this anxiety. Bettelheim explains that “the prince and princess getting married and inheriting the kingdom, ruling it in peace and happiness, symbolizes to the child the highest possible form of existence because this is all he desires for himself: to run his kingdom-his own life- successfully, peacefully, and to be happily united with the most desirable partner who will never leave him” (147). This explanation accounts for why so many fairy tales revolve around a character becoming disenchanted when he finds true love.

Other literature supports Bettelheim’s theory that disenchantment in fairy tales is brought about by children coming to terms with sexuality. In an article entitled “The Frog Prince: Tale and Toxicology,” Siegel and McDaniel discuss the psychosocial interpretation of this popular fairy tale. Like Bettelheim, they are cognizant of the sexual implications of the story. However, they talk about the variations in this fairy tale. In one version, a young girl must sleep with the frog in her bed before he becomes a prince, while in another the girl throws the frog against a wall, at which point he becomes disenchanted. Siegel and McDaniel account for these discrepancies with the argument that the Grimm brothers, who wrote the fairy tale, edited the story “in order to reinforce certain mores and cultural biases. Thus, any explicitly sexual, erotic, or physically intimate portrayals were transformed so as to be acceptable to prevailing Victorian sensibilities” (Siegel and Mc Daniel 559). This article brings up an interesting theory about why violence is so often the key to disenchanting a character- that it is a reaction to the culture and time period in which the fairy tale was written.

Violence as a means of disenchantment has been discussed elsewhere in the literature as well. In “Disenchantment by Decapitation,” George Lyman Kittredge talks about the role that violent methods of disenchantment play in fairy tales. In many fairy tales, decapitation or some other means of killing, frees the character from his enchantment. Kittredge explains that the use of decapitation illustrates the belief commonly held in fairy tales that “the real (human) body was thought of as clad in the enchanted body or covered by it” (12). This article suggests that in these fairy tales where violence is the solution, “the bespelled person is a cruel monster until he is released from enchantment” (Kittredge 2). It is as if the decapitation or other violent method of disenchantment is necessary to rid the character of the evil part of his nature, leaving him with only the good that is inside him.

Jack Zipes, who has done extensive research on the subject of fairy tales, takes an entirely different approach to understanding fairy tales. He interprets fairy tales in terms of the socio-political context in which they were written. He believes that “enchantment equals petrification. Breaking the spell equals emancipation,” (*Spells of Enchantment* xv) and this view is one that is pervasive throughout his writings. He maintains that fairy tales are a product of the culture in which they were written, so they reflect the socio-political values of that culture. Zipes alludes to the use of disenchantment by stating that “in transcending the limits and springing the confines of their own society with magic, fairy tales provide insight on how the rationalization process of exploitative socio-economic systems need to be and can be humanized” (“Breaking the Magic Spell” 135). He views the use of disenchantment in fairy tales as a way of depicting how the lower

class can be transformed in order to seize power as monarchs (“Breaking the Magic Spell” 124).

Methodology

This study is a content analysis of fairy tales in order to examine the role that disenchantment plays, and to understand the significance of disenchantment in the story. Content analysis means “the study of recorded human communications,” (Babbie 320) and in this particular study these communications take place in the form of fairy tales. The data is analyzed both in terms of manifest content or “the visible, surface content” (Babbie 325) and latent content, or the “underlying meaning” (Babbie 325) of the fairy tales. Latent content, however, plays a more vital role in answering the question at hand, since it is the interpretation of disenchantment that is at the core of this study.

Procedure

The first step in designing this study was to define exactly what is meant by the term “disenchantment.” For the purposes of this paper, it is the process by which a character is released from a state that they have been magically placed into. The characters have been enchanted, for reasons they may or may not be aware of, and then events happen that enable them to break the spell under which they have suffered.

Fairy tales, for the purpose of this paper, are defined by the *Webster’s New World College Dictionary* as “a story about fairies, giants, magic deeds, etc.” (510). The fairy tales analyzed in this particular study were chosen with the help of *The Storyteller’s Sourcebook*, by MacDonald and Sturm. The stories chosen are not necessarily the most

common, canonized stories that are familiar to readers. These stories that fall under the subject of disenchantment in *The Storyteller's Sourcebook* were reviewed in order to make sure they meet the criteria outlined in this study. At times, various versions of the same story were included if the method of disenchantment was different in each one. The fairy tales that were selected for this study are as follows:

Ada, A.F. The Three Golden Oranges.

Arnott, K. The Golden Fish.

Cecil, L. The Frog Princess.

De Beaumont, M.L. Beauty and the Beast.

Grimm, J. & Grimm, W. Snowdrop.

Grimm, J. & Grimm, W. The Queen Bee.

Grimm, J. & Grimm, W. The King of the Golden Mountain.

Grimm, J. & Grimm, W. The Golden Bird.

Grimm, J. & Grimm, W. The Frog Prince

Jacobs, J. Tamlane.

Hastings, S. Sir Gawain and the Loathly Lady.

Lang, A. The Crow.

Manning-Sanders, R. The Sleeper.

Travers, P.L. The Sleeping Beauty.

Travers, P.L. Sole, Luna, e Talia.

After each tale was read, the method of disenchantment was recorded.

Eventually, similarities between the different ways of disenchantment began to emerge, and the stories could be grouped accordingly. At that point, conclusions could be drawn about the purpose of disenchantment in fairy tales, and what it means to be disenchanted.

Results

It was interesting to watch as common themes and methods of disenchantment began to appear throughout the fairy tales read. By the end of the research process, four distinct methods of disenchantment had emerged from the fairy tales studied. It was possible to fit each fairy tale into a category depending on how the character in the story became disenchanted. The four categories that were identified are: disenchantment by love, disenchantment by removal of a foreign object, disenchantment by violence, and disenchantment by courage.

Disenchantment by Love

The method of disenchantment by love was unsurprising, given the existing literature about the uses of enchantment in fairy tales. Four fairy tales fall into this category: “Beauty and the Beast,” “The Frog Princess,” “The Loathly Lady,” and “Sleeping Beauty.” The first three of these revolve around the same central idea: the enchanted character must find true love in order to break the spell under which he has been placed. To look at it in another way, the main character must learn to love an unsightly and repulsive creature, and by finding this inner beauty he or she can disenchant the creature. This appears to be the moral of this type of fairy tale. For example, at the end of “Beauty and the Beast,” the fairy who had enchanted the Beast instructs Beauty to “ ‘come and receive the reward of your noble choice. You preferred virtue to beauty and wit and you surely deserve to find all these qualities in one person.

You shall become a queen”” (DeBeaumont 23). There is another element to this story, however, and it is the importance of honor and doing the right thing. In “Beauty and the Beast,” Beauty vows to live with the Beast so that her father’s life will be spared (DeBeaumont 10). Therefore, not only does she release the Beast from his enchantment, but she saves her father’s life.

“The Frog Princess,” by Laura Cecil follows along these same lines as well. In this twist on the Grimms’ original version of “The Frog Prince,” the frog can only take a human form once the prince has vowed to marry her despite her unappetizing appearance (Cecil 24). Once again, an emphasis is placed on fulfilling obligations and following through with promises. In this story, the author explains that the prince “did not want to marry a frog, but he could not bear to hurt her feelings” (22). Likewise, in “The Loathly Lady,” King Arthur has promised the Loathly Lady that one of his knights will marry her in exchange for her assistance with his quest. Unless he can fulfill this promise by getting one of the knights to agree to this arrangement, his honor will be at stake. Sir Gawain steps forward, saying ““grant *me* the quest, that I may be the one to save the honour of my King!”” (Hastings 17). It is for the sake of honor that Sir Gawain takes the Loathly Lady as his wife, but it is only by doing so that she is able to shed her horrible appearance. In these two stories, the disenchantment of the creatures is made possible by the honor and goodness of the other characters.

“The Sleeping Beauty” differs from the previous three fairy tales in that Sleeping Beauty is far from a repulsive creature. Instead, she is a princess who, after pricking her finger on a spindle, must sleep for a hundred years before she can awaken again. This

has been decreed by the wise women who were present at the celebration of the princess's birth. After these one hundred years have passed, the princess is awoken by a kiss from the prince who has made it his life's mission to find her. This story focuses heavily on destiny: the destiny of the princess to sleep for so long and the destiny to awaken her that the prince feels is his. When someone tries to warn the prince of the dangers of continuing on his journey to find the sleeping princess, he explains that "all my life, without ceasing, I have bent my thought to this quest" (Travers 33). The sleeping princess is disenchanted by love, and it is a love that is predetermined in this particular fairy tale.

The first three of these fairy tales discussed send a clear message to readers: love is a transforming agent. These fairy tales revolve around the duality of human nature; everyone is made up of both good and bad characteristics. Humans are imperfect, and this concept is depicted in the repulsive creatures of fairy tales. However, while these creatures are first described as disgusting and seemingly unlovable, their inner beauty and goodness is soon revealed as more is learned about them. It is through another's acceptance and growing love that the grotesque is able to melt away, leaving instead a human that is exceptionally beautiful in form. This emphasis on the transformation of outward appearance is symbolic of the shift that has occurred in the character that has fallen in love with the beast. It is significant that these three fairy tales comment on both the recognition of the beastly creature as sensitive and worthy of love, and on the other character's growing understanding of his own honor and duty to others. It is only when one has come to accept and love another not despite his flaws, but because of them, that disenchantment can occur.

“The Sleeping Beauty” differs from these stories, as has already been mentioned. While all four of these fairy tales fit with Bettelheim’s theory about separation anxiety, this one illustrates it most clearly. Bettelheim claims that, for a child, the ultimate union between two characters symbolizes “that separation anxiety is forever transcended when the ideal partner has been found with whom the most satisfying personal relation is established” (146). In “The Sleeping Beauty,” this union has been destined to happen seemingly since the Sleeping Beauty first became enchanted by pricking her finger. The fact that it is her destiny to be awoken by love is significant, because it supports the idea that all children will one day find true love and reach this perfect union that has been idealized as the pinnacle of their lives. It leads the reader to believe that it is merely a matter of time before love comes along to disenchant one; that is to transform one’s ordinary life into something full of magic, comfort, peace, and of course, love.

Disenchantment by Removal of a Foreign Object

Three of the fairy tales that were examined for this study involve disenchantment through removal of a foreign object. The stories that fall under this category are “The Three Golden Oranges,” “Snowdrop,” and “Sole, Luna, e Talia.” In all three of these stories, enchantment results from an object physically affecting the character in some way. “Snowdrop,” by the Brothers Grimm is probably the most well-known of the three, as it is a version of “Snow White and the Seven Dwarves.” In this fairy tale, the radiant Snowdrop is poisoned when she eats a magic apple given to her by the Queen who is jealous of her beauty. Consequently, Snowdrop is enchanted and seems to be dead until

one day a prince stumbles upon her glass coffin. The prince is so taken with Snowdrop's beauty that he takes the coffin so that he may always gaze upon her. However, as the prince's servants are carrying her coffin along, "it happened that they stumbled over some brushwood, and the shock dislodged the piece of apple from Snowdrop's throat. In a short time she opened her eyes, lifted the lid of the coffin, sat up and came back to life again completely" ("Snowdrop" 16). The two are then married and live happily in the prince's castle. While the prince does play an instrumental role in this story, it is not love that breaks the spell of Snowdrop's enchantment. It is not until the piece of apple obstructing Snowdrop's throat is removed that she becomes disenchanted.

"The Three Golden Oranges" tells the story of three brothers who are in search of wives for themselves. They ask an old woman for assistance, and she tells them to find three golden oranges and bring them to her. As it turns out, the three golden oranges of which the woman speaks are the three sisters who have been enchanted by a wizard (Ada 9). While the two oldest brothers are greedy and selfish, the youngest brother, Matias, is generous and helpful. The selfishness of the oldest brothers ensures that they will not be able to disenchant the oranges so that the beautiful sisters return to their natural form. However, a white dove flies out of one of the oranges and seems to follow Matias around for days. One day, as Matias strokes the dove, he discovers a thorn that is buried deep in its neck. When he removes it, the dove turns into a young woman (Ada 23), and the two are eventually married. As with "Snowdrop," this story ends with a marriage and the promise of a couple living happily ever after in love, but the actual disenchantment occurs when a thorn is removed from the dove's neck. It is the physical removal of a

foreign, apparently magical, object, not love, that is responsible for the woman's disenchantment.

"Sole, Luna, e Talia" is an Italian version of "The Sleeping Beauty" that was originally written by Benedetto Croce and then translated into English by N. M. Penzer. In this fairy tale, Talia is enchanted after a splinter gets under her fingernail. One day, a king comes upon the castle where Talia lies in a deep sleep. He is so taken with her beauty and "being on fire with love, he carried her to a couch and having gathered the fruits of love, left her lying there" (Travers 86). Nine months later, Talia, still enchanted, gives birth to twins. They would nurse at her breast, and "once, when one of the babies wanted to suck, it could not find the breast, but got into its mouth instead the finger that had been pricked. This the baby sucked so hard that it drew out the splinter, and Talia was roused as if from a deep sleep" (Travers 86). In this unusual retelling of "The Sleeping Beauty," Talia is disenchanting not by romantic love, but from the removal of the object that originally enchanted her. It should be noted that this fairy tale, too, ends with the marriage of Talia to the king, but only after he has disposed of his wife.

These three stories all revolve around the enchantment of characters by the infliction of some sort of painful foreign object. Whether it is a piece of apple that is obstructing one's air passages, a thorn jabbing into one's neck, or a splinter that has embedded itself under one's fingernail, all of these characters are changed by these objects. The apple can be viewed as symbolic for a blockage that is occurring in one's life; an obstacle that is keeping the character from living life to its full potential. Likewise, the thorn and the splinter are symbolic of irritations, sometimes causing pain,

that stand between the characters and true happiness. The characters are unable to regain their true forms until the magical objects are removed; that is, they are free to live life the way they want to without any hindrances. When the foreign object has been removed, or the irritating or painful presence in their life gone, the characters in each of these three fairy tales are able to marry their true loves and live happily ever after.

The removal of these objects marks a turning point in the fairy tales; the removal signifies a new beginning for each character. In “Snowdrop,” the beautiful young woman is leaving behind her painful past where she was haunted by a wicked stepmother jealous of her beauty. The young woman in “The Three Golden Oranges” is leaving her family to begin a new life with a husband. Talia of “Sole, Luna e Talia” wakes up only to find two new babies at her breast. These stories speak to the disenchantment these characters begin to feel as they grow older and realize that their lives, as they are, are unsatisfactory. Snowdrop cannot continue to live with seven dwarves, just as the young woman in “The Three Golden Oranges” and Talia cannot live forever with her parents. When the foreign object enchanting these characters is removed, they are released from their often painful pasts and free to start life anew, with nothing hindering them for the time being.

Disenchantment by Violence

“The Frog Prince” by the Brothers Grimm differs significantly from other versions of the same story which end with the frog being disenchanted by love. The Grimm version of this fairy tale follows a similar plot: a princess is playing with her cherished golden ball when she drops it into a well by accident. The frog vows to retrieve it for her if she will promise to do whatever he wishes (Grimm 287). The

princess immediately regrets this decision, but her father insists that she keep her promise. She grows increasingly frustrated as she realizes that the frog wants to come to the palace, eat off her plate, and even sleep in the same bed with her. At this last request, the princess “felt beside herself with rage and, picking him up, she threw him with all her strength against the wall, crying, ‘Now will you be quiet, you horrid frog?’” (Grimm 289). This act of violence disenchants the frog, and he suddenly appears as a handsome prince in the princess’s bedroom.

“The Golden Bird,” also by the Brothers Grimm, is another fairy tale that employs violence as a means of disenchantment. This story describes the adventures of a Prince who is assisted in his journeys by a Fox. The Fox constantly provides the Prince with sound advice, and eventually his trials are over and he is able to marry the Princess he has long desired. The Fox then “implored the Prince to shoot him dead, and to cut off his head and his paws” (Grimm 128). It is only then that the Fox is able to break the evil spell that has long been cast on him and regain his true form, that of the Princess’s brother. This violent act is the last step in achieving happiness for all of the characters in this story- the Prince, the Princess, and the Fox.

The last fairy tale that falls into this category is “The Golden Fish,” which actually involves the threat of violence as a method of disenchantment, rather than the violent act itself. This is the story of an imprisoned man, Khayyun, who pines away for his lover, Aliya. One day a magical golden fish is brought to a pond in the prison compound as a gift to Khayyun. However, he can see that the fish is unhappy being imprisoned, so he sets him free in the stream just outside the prison gates (Arnott 233).

The golden fish happily swims off to find her lover, another golden fish, and the two are so grateful to be reunited that they decide to use their magic to help Khayyun. One of the golden fish transforms himself into a dervish and whisks Khayyun away to where Aliya lives. However, when the two find Aliya, the dervish announces that he is going to cut her in half. Upset, Khayyun begs him not to, but just then, a snake slithers out of Aliya's mouth (Arnott 238). The dervish explains that the snake

‘enters a girl at dead of night, and waits inside her body until she marries. Then it poisons her blood, so that instead of the kind gentle wife a man thinks he is getting, he finds he is married to a nagging, bad-tempered shrew. I could not bear that this should happen to you, O prince, and so I pretended I was about to kill the princess, knowing that the snake would leave her if it thought it, too, was about to be cut in half by the sword’ (Arnott 238).

In this way the dervish disenchants Aliya with the threat of violence.

Perhaps the threat of violence in “The Golden Fish” provides a key to understanding why violence is a common method of disenchantment in fairy tales. In this story, evil manifests itself as a creature that has actually overtaken a body. It takes on its own form, in fact, as a snake. It is possible to view this battle between the snake and the beautiful girl that it inhabits in terms of the struggle between good and evil, right and wrong, the beautiful and the ugly, that everyone must face at some point in their lives. It is only by killing off the entire existence of one of these opposing traits that the other may truly thrive. In “The Frog Prince,” the princess struggles with the knowledge that the frog is both a kind, helpful, and generous creature that retrieved her beloved golden ball for her, and, despite his innate goodness, a disgusting and repulsive looking

thing. When she violently throws him against the wall, she succeeds in killing off his ugliness, so to speak. What is left is his inner beauty, which takes its form in that of a handsome prince.

Disenchantment Through Courage

In a number of fairy tales that were analyzed for this study, a character's courage is what ultimately brings about the disenchantment of another character. Some of these stories require the main character to show no fear as a set of tasks is completed, and the enchantment is removed as a result of the character's courage. "The Queen Bee" is one such fairy tale, in which a Prince comes upon a castle where every person and animal has been turned to stone. The Prince meets a little grey Man who "led him to a stone table wheron were inscribed three tasks by means of which the castle should be freed from enchantment" ("The Queen Bee" 64). If he is unable to complete these tasks, the Prince will be turned to stone. The tasks that the Prince is given are tedious and difficult, but it is his perseverance that leads him to success. He does not give up, and he does not let his fear of becoming enchanted himself interfere with the task at hand. As a result, "the charm was broken and everything in the castle was set free, and those who had been turned to stone took human form again" ("The Queen Bee" 65).

It is noteworthy that in three of the five fairy tales that fall into this category, the character who must prove her courage is a young woman. "The Sleeper" is another fairy tale that requires the main character to complete a set of tasks before the enchantment can be removed. In this story, a young girl named Bridget sets out from home one day to begin her journey into the greater world. As she is walking, she comes upon an old

woman who offers her some advice. The woman instructs Bridget to “‘answer when you’re spoken to, do what you are dared to do; once on the track, never turn back’” (Manning-Sanders 27). That night, Bridget stops at a large house to ask for lodging for the night, and the lady of the house agrees on the condition that the girl watch over her son while he sleeps. As Bridget watches over the young lord, he wakes and explains to her that he is “‘going to cross the *Quaking Bog*, and climb the *Mountain of Glass*. Ah, and drop from the top of that mountain into the *Dead Sea*. And through all these perils I dare you to follow me’” (Manning-Sanders 28). Bridget, remembering the advice of the old woman, accepts the young lord’s dare. Although she is frightened and tempted to turn back, Bridget joins the young lord on these adventures, and eventually finds herself back in his house. When she awakes, the lord’s mother is “‘thanking her with tears running down her cheeks, telling her what a brave girl she was, and how the witch’s spell was now broken, and how the young lord was only waiting for his chance to marry her’” (Manning-Sanders 30-32). It is only through Bridget’s courage that the young lord can become disenchanted.

Another fairy tale that involves a female protagonist breaking an enchantment through courage is “The Crow.” In this fairy tale, a young princess is walking outside the castle one day when a crow comes to her and tells her that he is a prince that has been enchanted, and that the princess has the power to disenchant him. He explains to the princess that she would have to leave her family and live in his ruined castle. He tells her that she “‘will have to live all by yourself, and don’t forget that whatever you may see or hear in the night you must not scream out, for if you give as much as a single cry my sufferings will be doubled’” (Lang 119). The princess agrees to help the prince, and so

each night she endures the frightful things she witnesses in order that the prince may suffer less. The prince then tells her that before he can return to his natural form, the princess must serve as a maidservant for a year. The princess does so, “but in spite of her youth and beauty she was very badly treated, and suffered many things” (Lang 121). Nevertheless, the princess’s endurance ensures that the prince will finally be disenchanted.

This requirement to keep quiet throughout hardships is one that recurs often in the fairy tales in this category. This indicates the value that is placed not only on bravery and courage, but on the ability to endure without complaint whatever sufferings life may deal out. In “The King of the Golden Mountain” by the Brothers Grimm, a young man comes upon a serpent that is truly an enchanted maiden (Grimm 256). She tells him that it is possible for him to save her if he follows her instructions. She explains that

‘tonight twelve black men hung with chains will appear, and they will ask what you are doing here. But do not speak a word, whatever they do or say to you.

They will torment you, strike, and pinch you, but don’t say a word...at twelve o’clock their power goes, and if you have born it and not spoken a word, I shall be saved’ (Grimm 256).

The young man does as he is told, and the maiden is disenchanted by his bravery and his ability to remain quiet regardless of his pain.

“Tamlane” is a unique story in which a young lady, Burd Janet, can only save her beloved Tamlane by holding him as he undergoes a number of transformations. The Queen of Elfland has made Tamlane her knight, and this is the only way that he can be

released from his enchantment (Jacobs 91). Tamlane explains that as he rides by on his horse with the Queen of Elfland and her court, Burd Janet is to grab him and hold on as the elves work the magic on him. Janet does as she is told, and she seizes Tamlane the elves

‘turned him in Janet’s arms like frozen ice, then into a huge flame of roaring fire...then they turned him into a snake that reared up as if to bite her, and yet she held on. Then suddenly a dove was struggling in her arms, and almost flew away. Then they turned him into a swan, but all was in vain, till at last he was turned into a red-hot glaive, and this she cast into a well of water and then he turned back into a mother-naked man’ (Jacobs 92-92).

In this way, Janet is able to save Tamlane from the Queen of the Elves and ensure that he is hers forever. She endured what was surely an unpleasant and frightening experience so that Tamlane would no longer be enchanted by the elves.

There are a few common themes running throughout the stories in this category that should be examined. One of these is the necessity of completing a set of tasks before an enchantment can be lifted. This concept, seen in stories such as “The Sleeper” and “The Queen Bee,” illustrates the importance of perseverance throughout life, even when experiences may be frightening and unpleasant. Some of these stories, such as “The Crow” and “The King of the Golden Mountain,” also stress the importance of enduring hardship in silence. These stories emphasize courage, because that is what it takes to survive in the harsh realities of the world. In order to live in a world that one finds acceptable, one must come to terms with the fact that life will never be free from hardship and obstacles that must be overcome. In these fairy tales, the characters come to

the realization that they must be fearless in order to survive. In some cases, they must realize that suffering is better done in silence, since complaining never helps matters. Once they recognize this, the enchanted being finally becomes disenchanted, or in the case of “The Queen Bee,” the entire castle is disenchanted. This disenchantment is symbolic of the changes the fearless character has undergone; she now understands the reality of life and can see the world and the people in it for what they are, in their true forms.

As has been mentioned, a number of these fairy tales tell the story of female protagonists who are forced to overcome hardship so that the male character can be disenchanted. “The Sleeper,” “The Crow,” and “Tamlane” are all such stories. Historically considered the weaker sex, the females in these fairy tales prove that they are courageous and strong. In the case of “The Crow,” the young princess must endure in silence in order to disenchant her prince. The females show that they too can be the saviors- the ones that are capable of releasing men from enchantment. This seems to illustrate the fact that it is often a woman’s quiet strength and endurance through hardship that proves to be a saving grace. In “Tamlane,” Burd Janet breaks the spell placed on Tamlane by holding onto him as he goes through a number of disturbing transformations while in her arms. This can be viewed as a metaphor for a woman’s constant strength as the world around her, including her partner, undergoes change throughout life. Both men and women must learn to cope with the obstacles of life, and it is the recognition of inner strength and courage that enables them to survive.

Conclusion

The four different methods of disenchantment identified in this paper fall into two broad categories: disenchantment by subtraction, either by killing off or removing something, and disenchantment by addition, either finding love or courage. When disenchantment occurs through violence or removal of a foreign object, the negative aspects of a character or his life are being taken away, in a sense. The fairy tales that rely on these methods of disenchantment show that change is necessary in the enchanted character's life. In order to bring about this change, certain obstacles must be removed, as in the fairy tales that use removal of a foreign object as the method of disenchantment. In the fairy tales that use violence as the method of disenchantment, it is the killing off of the enchanted character's negative qualities that results in transformation. With disenchantment by the addition of love or courage into a character's life, it is the process of becoming whole that frees the character. The character must accept that love and courage have the power to transform his life by making him a better and more complete person.

All of these methods of disenchantment- love, removal of a foreign object, violence, and courage- symbolize a recognition of a new concept or idea. Both the enchanted character and the character responsible for the disenchantment must come to terms with themselves and their worlds in the fairy tales analyzed here. With the fairy tales that revolve around disenchantment through love, it is usually the character

responsible for the disenchantment that undergoes an emotional transformation. He or she must recognize the inner beauty and goodness of the enchanted being, regardless of appearance. He must also come to terms with his own sense of duty and honor. It is only after making this shift from selfish to selfless that the enchanted being can break the spell and undergo a physical transformation. When all of these concepts collide- honor, openness to love regardless of physical appearance, recognition of inner goodness, and acceptance- eternal love and happiness results.

The fairy tales that utilize violence as a means of disenchantment fit well with those that incorporate love as a means of disenchantment. In the fairy tales that employ an act of violence to break an enchantment, this violent act is symbolic for the ridding of man's dark side. It is necessary for the characters in these stories to understand that no one is perfect; everyone is capable of good and evil, everyone is at times beautiful and other times ugly. These fairy tales require that the characters come to accept this duality, and see that by focusing on the positive, good, and beautiful aspects of one, it is possible to eliminate the alternatives, for the most part.

In the fairy tales that incorporate the removal of a foreign object as a method of disenchantment, the disenchanted characters recognize that there is a need for change in their lives. The foreign object hindering them is symbolic of the less than satisfactory life they are living which stops them from reaching their full potential. When the character is disenchanted and freed from this hindrance, she has the opportunity to start a new and hopefully better life. These stories also mark the transition from childhood to adulthood, when the disenchanted characters wake up, so to speak, and realize they can no longer be

happy living under the current rules. As a result, they strive for the independence and freedom they feel is their right.

The fairy tales that rely on courage as a means of disenchantment require their characters to recognize the importance of courage in the face of adversity. Life is not easy, and these fairy tales reinforce the idea that it is vital to look inside oneself and find the inner strength necessary to deal with whatever life deals out. The disenchantment in these fairy tales symbolizes the understanding that reality is imperfect and harsh, but that one's inner reserves of strength will be enough to make it through the hard times. Bearing burdens quietly, regardless of sex, is also something to be valued.

Disenchantment in fairy tales ultimately leads to a better outcome for each of the enchanted characters. What do the disenchanted gain? Usually, the disenchanted character lives happily ever after with his true love. He is loved for who he truly is inside, by someone who loves him regardless of outward appearance. Furthermore, he is loved by someone who understands that he is imperfect, but that chooses to focus on his goodness. Many disenchanted characters have the chance to start over and forget all the trials of a difficult childhood. Their new life is full of hope and promise. However, when life does not go smoothly and the often harsh reality sets in, disenchanted characters know they, and their loved ones, have the courage and strength it takes to overcome hardship. Ultimately, disenchantment in fairy tales is a tool for showing the importance of honor, goodness, acceptance, and inner strength.

Further Research

It is important to keep in mind that the fairy tales discussed in this paper are just a small sample of all the fairy tales involving disenchantment. Enchantment is an extremely common theme in fairy tales, so naturally there will be many more that focus on this concept. However, the methods of disenchantment as outlined in this paper are representative of those in other fairy tales. This paper focuses primarily on the ways that characters are disenchanted in fairy tales, and pays less attention to other aspects of the stories. There is ample opportunity to research the significance of commonalities that run throughout many fairy tales. For example, while analyzing the fairy tales for this study, it came to light that the majority of the protagonists in these stories, or the characters that are responsible for disenchanting another being, are youngest children. The role of youngest children in disenchantment would be an interesting research topic, but it was not within the limitations of this study. The concept of disenchantment in fairy tales is one that brings up a number of questions, many of which are worthy of research.

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