



Fairy Tales: The Depiction of Reality instills Persuasion.

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Abstract

This paper deals with the idea to describe and analyze fairy tales as a representation of reality. This paper mainly focuses on the perspective of fairy tales that imparts social conditions and perspectives of society on an individual, community, gender, social practices instill in the reader from childhood through magical components by critically analyzing two tales of fantasy. As fantasies have always been an inevitable part of childhood, this study is significant in dissecting how children investigate reality and society by looking at the most notable fantasies. *Rapunzel*, a tale of a disconnected princess by a cruel sorceress is taken to analyze in comparison with *Rumpelstiltskin*, a story that talks about a woman captivated by a king as she was believed to be able to change straw into gold. These two-pixie tales by the Grimm brothers are chosen for the research due to their extraordinary portrayal of societal credos in reality depicted in literary types by adding magical elements that were preceded by German oral traditions.

Keywords

Reality, society, constraints, persuasion, beliefs, children, magic, fantasy, Brothers Grimm.

Introduction

Children literature is a genre that has a variety of short stories, novels, poetries hymns, songs, etc. But Fairy tales are the most spellbinding works of all time that excite all ages of people to read. Fairy tales are widely read and are also transferred through narrations over centuries. These tales are widely recognized for their enchanting villages, fairies, elves, dwarfs, witches, wizards and so many other mystical characters that deliver mystery and exhilaration collectively. This paper primarily aims at dissecting fairytales, which are not just mystical stories but it is depiction of reality as it instills social persuasion, beliefs, and gender stereotypes. Even Though magical tales are whimsical, it also has high-quality functions in teaching kids. They often conclude in “happy endings” as if they are “fairy tales” but still it never escapes from the problems that represent reality. Often the plot builds a pattern where the hero or heroine was given a problem to solve through supernatural capabilities or to fight against it. Many of these brief fairy stories also communicate about social practices and ideologies through which they educate kids about societal behaviors at once or in a roundabout way.



Jacob Grimm and Wilhelm Grimm, German authors popularly known as the Brothers Grimm wrote a diffusion of myth memories and are well known for famous Germanic folktales that were later written by using them. Grimm brothers have picturized the mystical testimonies of various themes through their short stories that fascinate children to read and exclaim. These magical stories bring amusement and additionally impart ethics along with societal norm.

The tales are often set in the past as they usually begin with “a long time ago” or “Once upon a time” which represents the story and depicts the customs or roles which have already been followed in social structure and thus sets an example to follow in the future too. *Rapunzel* is a story of an archetype “Maiden in the tower” that represents a lot about mythologies and social settings it was written and published by Brother Grimms in 1812 as a part of *Children and Household tales*. The story was developed from the French fairy tale *Persinette* written by Charlotte-Rose de Caumont. The tale revolves around princess Rapunzel, the protagonist of the parable who was made to stay alone in a tower as she was made to believe by the sorceress that the world is cruel. Similarly, another short tale *Rumpelstiltskin* (Tom Tit Tat) published in 1812 in *Children and Household tales* by the Brothers Grimm also follows the same pattern where a maiden was captivated and threatened to death by a king because she was believed to change straw into gold, later saved by an imp in exchange of her child. Both the stories are taken as they excellently portray how women and men are treated in society over centuries and also the power of authorities played in the life of an individual.

Summary of Rapunzel and Rumpelstiltskin

Rapunzel is a tale of fantasy written by Grimms that begins when a married couple were childless and longs for a child. They were made to take care of a garden that belongs to a cruel witch but were never allowed to enter or step inside the garden. But due to the desire of the wife for the forbidden rampion, the husband peeps inside the garden and gets caught red-handed, and was threatened to punish. The man was made free by the witch in demand of his first child which is yet to be born. After the child was born, the child was imprisoned by the venomous witch taken away from its parents, and locked in a tall tower when she turned twelve.

The cruel sorceress named the child *Rapunzel* as she had beautiful long blonde hair glowing like the gold that has the magical qualities of the Rapunzel flower which her mother ate stealing from the witch’s garden when she was pregnant. The sorcerers made Rapunzel believe that the world is cruel. When the sorceress wanted to enter the long tower, she stood below and called out:

Rapunzel, Rapunzel,

Let your hair down to me (Grimm)

The plot develops as Rapunzel grows into a teenager and falls in love with a prince who had fallen in love with her as he heard her beautiful song resonating from the isolated tower. The brutal Witch separates the lovers and punishes the princess by making him blind. The prince went lamenting the loss of his beloved for years and later finds her in the woods with her kids as they are already involved in sexual intercourse. The lovers rejoin and the prince was cured of his blindness by Rapunzel's magical hair and lived ever.

Rumpelstiltskin is a tale about a miller’s daughter who was beautiful and intelligent was taken away by a greedy king as the miller boasted about his daughter being able to change straw into gold. The woman was locked alone with her magic spinning wheel in a tower and threatened to die if she cannot make it to spin straws into gold overnight. Poor miller’s daughter wept all night and was scared for her life as her father lied that she was capable of turning straw into gold. Immediately a mystical dwarf creature appeared in front of her and asked why she was crying. The naive woman told all her story and the creature came forward to help her turn straws into gold in exchange for her necklace. The next day the king was so happy and demanded the woman to spin more gold as he was greedy and promised her that he would marry her if she did. Again, the dwarf creature appeared



and helped the woman but this time it demanded in exchange for her firstborn child. The helpless woman agreed to the demand and got saved again and becomes the queen. A year later when she gave birth to her first child the creature appeared in front of her and demanded to give her baby. As she wept a lot and pleaded that she don't want to lose her child the creature pitied her and asked to find its name within three days of time. The Queen went clueless and on the third day she heard around the corner of the woods that the little man was singing around the fire:

Today I'll bake; tomorrow I'll brew, Then I'll fetch the queen's new child, It is good that no one knows, Rumpelstiltskin is my name. (Grimm)

When the little dwarf creature appeared the next day asking what is his name, the Queen replied *Rumpelstiltskin*. The mystical imp grew in anger and cried,

"The devil told you that! The devil told you that!" (Grimm) and felt up his waist.

Depiction of reality

"If you want your children to be intelligent, read them fairy tales. If you want them to be more intelligent, read them more fairy tales." -Albert Einstein

Fairy tales are mostly read for astonishment and amusement so that people who read feel relief from reality by diving deep into a magical land. But Reality is more bizarre than fantasy. People often fail to acknowledge that even though the plot is made to include supernatural components; emotions, relationships, authority, social hierarchy, gender roles, family settings, and problems portrayed in the tales are so real. *Rapunzel* and *Rumpelstiltskin* are two tales taken for study have the themes of the pain of mothers in the separation of their child, loneliness, Dominance, authority, arrogance, and gender stereotypes are in common and these emotions, relationships, and struggles are present in reality.

The demand of exchanging the child in the tales *Rapunzel* and *Rumpelstiltskin* is in general as both the tales depict the emotions of a mother who is in pain lamenting over the separation of their child. The theme of isolation is present in the stories that both *Rapunzel* and Miller's daughter go through the tale, portrays the agony of women in reality who were made to stay in a chamber and denied freedom and to follow their passion. The character Witch from the tale *Rapunzel* and the character King from the tale *Rumpelstiltskin* is the personalities that illustrate the authorities and people of high order who show dominance and arrogance in society or on an individual. By looking at the outlook on the taken tales of the Brothers Grimm gender stereotypes are well depicted as both the protagonist *Rapunzel* and Miller's daughter are women who are depicted as beautiful, yet naive and under someone's control. Miller's daughter is portrayed as beauty with brain yet she is depicted as a woman who is helpless in the situation under the king who is a greedy male. *Rapunzel* is a beautiful long blonde-haired woman who actually possesses magical abilities never allowed to get out of the tower or never knows her self-worth. These characters of Brothers Grimm exactly portray the state of women who are controlled by the stereotypical world even though they have great potential. Fairy tales never stop just portraying reality it also has a great role in instilling social beliefs and ideologies through their plot and characters which are to be elaborated further.

Fantasies and Persuasion:

Ideologies and beliefs are the very basis of any society as they always stick on to function efficiently. Fairy tales are very significant in teaching those structures of society to people right from childhood. As fairy tales are the depiction of reality it also includes imparting societal constraints and beliefs that help the children to understand social behaviors, structure and stereotypes as well. This research on the tales *Rapunzel* and *Rumpelstiltskin* by the Brothers Grimm are best examples that picturize the social characters and influence of power that helps to condition people's thoughts on how society and people generally behave or function. The character *Rapunzel* from the tale *Rapunzel* is an extraordinary portrayal of young women in the 19th-century of Germany. Also, it is believed that the story is derived from the French play *presinette*, which belongs to 17th century, this shows that the character not only represents women of France or German society but talks about women in general of all ages in the social context. It depicts how women are expected to behave in their life as well as the abilities they possess yet are deprived of certain rights to exercise freedom. By reading the

tale of *Rapunzel* children can able to get an idea about how women are expected to act in society as well as their roles in a family and society. The sorceress is also a depiction of women in society who depicts a wicked-minded and misuse their power into arrogance.

Rumpelstiltskin is a tale that also has women as the protagonist, yet the other character King is significant in depicting the power of a leader who is able to make changes in the lives of people both positively and negatively. King in this tale is very significant as he is able to kill the miller's daughter and at the same time can able to marry her later by changing his decision. This instills the thought in children of the power of authority that the king possesses in society. The moral of the tale speaks about being clever and also includes various emotions of human nature that help people to understand the general human behaviors and social approval and disapproval of one's action.

Conclusion

Children who read these genre of literature finds the stories are interesting and exciting because the stories embed both the mystic feel as well as helps to explore the natural human nature and social structures. As the paper focuses on the idea that fantasies help to decipher reality by igniting the whimsical minds of the readers through supernatural dive, the taken tales of the Brothers Grimm justifies that fantasies never fail to showcase the idea of societal persuasion. It plays a vital role in imparting general social thoughts and structural behaviors in children and thus helpful in building social consciousness right from young age.

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