

Charlize Polanco

FQWIS

Professor Huebner

Exploratory Essay

When one thinks of a fairy-tale, there are usually a couple of characteristics that are prevalent such as being set within a medieval time frame, containing magical attributes, and having a happily ever after. However, throughout the years, different practices, cultures, and normality's have resulted in a variety of adaptations of well-known stories. This thus has created differentiations within these stories while still keeping similar aspects that classify it as a fairytale. Within the story of *Ashputtel*, actions of brutality and harm are mentioned as a means to evoke fear while it is seen quite differently in the Walt Disney adaptation of Rapunzel where negative ideas are censored. Within the story *Ashputtel* created by The Grimm Brother's, the story takes a more gruesome and punishable approach as a means to test and question one's morality, while the story Rapunzel created by Walt Disney builds upon the notions of optimism and fantasy that are served to entertain rather than inform.

Within both stories, we are introduced to the main notions and ideas of what a fairy-tale is. This is shown by there being a character portrayed as a Damsel in distress which must be saved by a chivalrous knight as a means to live a happily ever after. Firstly, within the story of *Ashputtel*, her mother dies at an early age and leaves her with the message to 'Always be a good girl, and I will look down from heaven and watch over you.' Thus, from that day forward, she would go to her mother's grave and cry and "was always good and kind to all about her." This further develops within the story when *Ashputtel* would like to go to a party but it denied by her evil stepmother. However, through her sense of purity and acts of kindness, she is aided by animals

which allow her to attend the ball and dance with the prince. The prince is then encapsulated by her beauty and essentially hunts her down through her shoe that she had dropped and ultimately marries her. Within this story, Ashputtel's neglect from her family results in her being saved from a male character of higher power. Additionally, within the story of Rapunzel, Rapunzel is captured by an evil sorceress who uses the magic properties of her hair to stay young and beautiful. Rapunzel is thus trapped from all other forms of life and consequently, yearns to experience a new world that she is unfamiliar to. Coincidentally, a knight stumbles upon the castle which she is hidden in and takes her out to experience the world. He then, kills the evil sorceress and returned Rapunzel back to her home where she is granted princess once again. Within this story, once again a woman is helped by a male figure of power which leads to her falling in love and living happily ever after. While the endings are ultimately good, the portray the notion that women seem to be incapable of liberating themselves/getting out of trouble. This then poses the question of what such stories are teaching the young audience that is receiving such information. Therefore, while the endings end on a good note the idea and how it reaches this goal should be analyzed for its true meanings and teachings.

While both stories may end on a happy ending, they are done/achieved quite differently as a means to teach different lessons. To elaborate, within the Brother's Grimm telling of Ashputtel, there are details that are more gory/ sadistic as a means to teach children lessons. Within the latter half of the story of Ashputtel, her evil step-mother and sisters devise a plan to make sure they win the spot as the prince's wife. To achieve this, the mother pressured her daughter's into slicing their feet stating that "when you are queen you will not care about toes; you will not want to walk." However, both attempts were unsuccessful when the prince realized he blood streaming from both sister's feet. As Brother Grimm stories were meant to teach morality lessons

to children, their harsh descriptions and language help achieve this as they instill fear within the child's mind to attempt them doing dishonest actions. Unlike the telling of Brothers Grimm, Disney conclude their stories within a more positive aspect. Although there was depiction of some negative occurrences, this is done subtly. For example, when the evil sorceress is killed, it is simply shown as her falling through the window while her cloak fell into the abyss. While this poses the question of if Disney is distorting the morality lessons of the original stories, it should be taken into account that since the renditions are more visual and for children, this is most likely the best way to entertain without scarring young children.

Lastly, while both stories chose to express the story in quite opposite ways, they both include a moral as this is an essential aspect of a fairy-tale. Within Ashputtel, themes of honesty and kindness are prevalent as a means to tell the audience that honesty is the best policy and kindness will get you farther than being mean. Again, while this may be seen as a stereotypical gender role as these themes are more so catered to women, it undoubtedly teaches the idea that a positive outlook on life will result in a more positive outcome. Furthermore, within the story of Rapunzel, themes of liberation and bravery are noted. While Rapunzel wondered what the outside world was like, with the help of the knight this is then possible. By Rapunzel having the courage to leave what she was accustomed to and break away from the conformity put onto her, she emanates courage which can be admired by all. Thus, no matter how the story is told, all have lessons that one can take away.

Overall, both telling's of these classic stories pose similarities that ultimately make a fairy-tale a fairy-tale and differences that display how changes of time periods and cultures effect a make a book different. While older stories are more gruesome too teach children hard lessons or modern

stories are made more so for the purpose to entertain, all stories result in a fairy-tale that end in something magical.