


4-1-2013

# "If the Shoe Fits" -- The Evolution of the Cinderella Fairy Tale from Literature to Television

Margaret L. Lundberg

University of Washington - Tacoma Campus, margal3@uw.edu

Follow this and additional works at: [http://digitalcommons.tacoma.uw.edu/gh\\_theses](http://digitalcommons.tacoma.uw.edu/gh_theses)

 Part of the [Feminist, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Commons](#), [Film and Media Studies Commons](#), and the [Television Commons](#)

---

## Recommended Citation

Lundberg, Margaret L., "If the Shoe Fits" -- The Evolution of the Cinderella Fairy Tale from Literature to Television" (2013). *Global Honors Theses*. Paper 11.

This Undergraduate Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Global Honors Program at UW Tacoma Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Global Honors Theses by an authorized administrator of UW Tacoma Digital Commons.

# “If the Shoe Fits” – The Evolution of the Cinderella Fairy Tale from Literature to Television

Margaret Lundberg  
Arts, Media and Culture  
May 2013

Faculty Adviser: Dr. Divya McMillin

Essay completed in partial fulfillment of the requirements for graduation with Global Honors, University of Washington, Tacoma

Approved:

---

Faculty Adviser

---

Date

---

Director, Global Honors

---

Date

## Abstract

More than a millennium after the earliest-known version was committed to text, fairy tales continue to occupy our bookshelves and airwaves. The current popularity of fairy tale-based television programs such as *Grimm* and *Once Upon a Time* offer continued proof that the appeal of these tales is not lost on 21<sup>st</sup> century audiences. Beginning with the rise of fairy tales in the ancient cultures of China and India, this paper will follow their journey through Asia, long before these tales reached their traditionally recognized European birthplace. In this examination of the multicultural variations of a single tale—the *Cinderella* story—we begin to understand just how these stories have evolved. By means of textual analysis, I will examine the familiar French literary version (Perrault) of *Cinderella* using Propp's (2008) morphology of "function" and character, and semiotic theories advanced by Berger (2000). I will then apply this structure to three television adaptations of the *Cinderella* story: the 1957 live-television broadcast of *Rodgers and Hammerstein's Cinderella*, the 2006 pilot episode of ABC's *Ugly Betty*, and the 2007 Mexican production of *La Fea más Bella*. Likewise, I will examine the ways that the *Cinderella* tale has retained its relevance as it crossed cultures—a literary example of globalization through cultural flow—and how the sharing of its ideas has contributed to its historical persistence.

*Once upon a time, the famous physicist Albert Einstein was confronted by an overly concerned woman who sought advice on how to raise her small son to become a successful scientist.*

*In particular she wanted to know what kinds of books she should read to her son.*

*"Fairy tales," Einstein responded without hesitation.*

*"Fine, but what else..."*

*"More fairy tales," Einstein stated.*

*"And after that?"*

*"Even more fairy tales," replied the great scientist...*

*(Zipes, 2002, p.1)*

|

*Once upon a time...*

Those captivating words, spilling out from the pages of a book, let us know that something singular is about to unfold before us. We are whisked away to another place where a sense of timelessness exists; we are about to be introduced to *someone* who will teach us something about ourselves and the world *we* live in. We are crossing the threshold into the magical realm of a fairy tale...

Fairy tales hold a prominent place among humankind's oldest literary traditions. Even today, more than a millennium after the earliest version was committed to text, fairy tales continue to occupy our bookshelves and airwaves. The current popularity of fairy tale-based television shows such as *Once Upon a Time* (ABC), and *Grimm* (NBC), as well as recent Hollywood films like *Mirror, Mirror* (Relativity Media, 2012), *Hansel and Gretel, Witch Hunters* (Paramount Studios, 2013), and *Jack the Giant Killer* (Legend Films, 2013), offer continued proof that the appeal of these tales is not lost on 21<sup>st</sup> century audiences. Audiences outside the West also enjoy fairy tale-based films: China has produced a number of fairy-tale themed films, including *Sien Nui Yau Wan* (A Chinese Fairy Tale, 2011); and Korea has also produced a long list of horror films based on fairy tale themes. Scholars like Zipes (1988, 1992, 1997, 2002, 2006), Bettelheim (1986), Dundes (1988), Bottigheimer (1987, 2009), and others from around the world continue to study and discuss the origins and meanings of these tales, and with the advent of media such as film and television, these tales have gained an even wider audience.

The purpose of this paper is to discover how fairy tales have evolved as they transferred from written to television texts, and to determine whether they have made the move with their

original message and structure intact. In making this determination, I am particularly looking at portrayals of good and evil, moral messages, and the ways that cultural contexts change the presentation of the tale, but not necessarily its meaning. This distinction is significant because fairy tales tell us a great deal about the culture in which they exist, yet at the same time they also offer a look at the larger human experience through archetypes that, according to Groeppel-Klein, Domke and Bartmann (2006), "represent inborn and universal ways of perceiving the world," making them seem almost familiar, even at first read (p. 467).

In this consideration of the question, "How has the traditional Cinderella fairy tale evolved as it moved from literature to television?" I will use several different approaches. After a brief explanation of the structural methods applied, I examine the idea of fairy tales as "memes," a theory advanced by Dawkins (1989), Zipes (2006) and others, as a way to explain the perseverance of these tales. I will then move to an examination of the global history of fairy tales, and the Cinderella story in particular. Using the Aarne-Thompson Classification System (Ashliman, 1987), I will identify the two categories that the majority of Cinderella stories fall into, along with a brief discussion of both the similarities and differences in some of the cultural variants as they evolved over time. Looking at the archetypes present in the Cinderella story according to a "male and female perspective," I will also address Groeppel-Klein, Domke and Bartmann's (2006) definition of the male as one "who can master all challenges in life," and the female as "young, innocent and beautiful... [and] in distress or misery," just waiting for a prince to rescue her (p. 467), searching Cinderella's story to see if these archetypes hold true.

However, my inquiry does not end here. European writers adapted these fairy tales for purposes of entertainment or moral education, revising them for specific audiences and times. In the 19th and 20th centuries, the stories were again adapted into "short stories or film scripts" and

disseminated to an ever-growing audience (Rohrich, 2008; Zipes, 1988). I will conduct my examination of Cinderella's story through a single variant of the text—Perrault's 1697 French fairy tale, *Cendrillon*.

### **Method of Analysis—Using Narrative Structure Within a Cultural Context**

Having chosen the primary text because of its familiarity to many in the West, I will apply methodologies advanced by both Propp (2008), and Porter, Larson, Harthcock and Nellis (2002), as they studied the structure of narratives in literature and television. Continuing with the same analytical structure, I will then look for variations in the Cinderella tale as it relocates to three different television adaptations: the 1957 live-television production of *Rodgers and Hammerstein's Cinderella*, the 2006 pilot episode of *Ugly Betty* (US), and –to add a global slant—the 2004 telenovela *La Fea más Bella* (Mexico). Using semiotic theory as presented by Berger (2000), I will also examine some of the signs and symbols used to portray character in the absence of dialogue, to discover how these signs are used to create meaning within the television adaptations of the text.

As a result of this qualitative analysis, I will present my conclusion that the Cinderella fairy tale—having moved first from oral accounts to written texts, and now to television and film—has indeed evolved as it moved across cultures and time. Yet, it is its very ability to adapt chameleon-like to its current cultural “home” that has made its evolution and perseverance as a globally recognized fairy tale possible. Although the motifs, or themes, of the story may appear to be different due to surface changes brought about by a changing cultural context, nevertheless, the values behind the Perrault version of the Cinderella fairy tale have remained constant.

Cinderella's tale clearly tells us something about our culture and ourselves that we deem worthy to pass on. Its perseverance is a testament not only to the tenacity of the tale, but to its

cultural importance as well. Although fairy tales may adapt and change with each generation, "...the best of our tales do not die" (Zipes, 1988, p. 7). We are a species that lives through our stories—passing on the knowledge we have gained and the things that we value, sharing our concerns for the future with each repetition of a tale.

### **Collective Memory—Why Fairy Tales “Stick”**

Fairy tales, handed down through various cultures and over many generations, carry a great deal of cultural significance—and, according to Zipes (2006), as long as that continues to be true, fairy tales “will be regularly transmitted to provide relative stability to a culture” (p. 13). They are not just a product of culture, they are a source of constancy for that same culture, and it is because of that desire for stability that Zipes (2006) believes “fairy tales stick” (p. 12). It is through the transmission of ideas that culture is passed on and literature plays a very large role in the context of that transmission. Zipes (2006) goes on to define these ideas as “memes,” or “an informational pattern contained in the human brain...stored in its memory” (p. 4), and capable of transmission in a way similar to the transmission of genes—by copying themselves “into” the brain of another human being. Berger (2011) claims that emotional arousal—either amusement or anxiety—leads to a greater sharing of information. The context of folk and fairy tales as either amusing entertainment or anxiety-producing moral instruction could lead to their sharing at a much higher rate, which is consistent with the memetic theory originated by Richard Dawkins (1989).

In order for a meme to survive, according to Zipes (2006), it must have three things: “fidelity, fecundity and longevity” (p.5). A meme must stay true to itself, exist in a form that is easy to pass on, and it must be able to survive relatively intact in its transmission from person to person, and culture to culture. Rohrich (2008) agrees, stating that fairy tales are a form of



“collective memory” which passes down the cultural beliefs or practices of the past, enabling them to continue into the future (p. 380). Haase (2003), rejecting the idea of a “pure fairy tale,” speaks instead of a “cross-cultural contamination” that contributes to the persistence of the fairy tale even as it crosses the boundaries of culture (p.65). Fairy tales may well evolve as they move through time and across cultures, but their importance is evidenced in their continued existence, their structure and their characters appearing in places we might never have imagined.

It is these tales' ability to survive the crossing of cultural boundaries that has allowed their spread around the world. Although many of the forms they have taken in their dissemination may be unfamiliar to us in the West, following their trails will lead us to the stories we know so well.

### **Global History of the Cinderella Fairy Tale—Oral Traditions to Written Texts**

The fairy tales that so many in western cultures grew up hearing, have come to us through a long and complicated history, and yet arrived here virtually “intact” with a limited number of cultural variants (Zipes, 2006). Rohrich (2008) tells us that the history of a fairy tale can be mapped out in two ways: first, through "datable texts," that can be traced to a particular culture and time. Second, there is the "antiquity" of motifs and themes that wend their way through otherwise historically and culturally disparate tales (p. 369). Rohrich (2008) assures us that the pattern we think we see as we examine these tales is indeed present, and it is this pattern that enables us to trace a tale's origin in spite of the lack of a 'paper trail.'

Cinderella, like all literary fairy tales, arose from an earlier oral tradition of stories (Zipes, 2006) that recurred in cultures around the world—but with certain cultural variations. Yet in spite of these cultural differences, they still show a great deal of similarity according to Cox (1893), in her discussion of 345 then-known variants of the Cinderella story. With the number of

known variants now numbering well over 700 (Dundes, 1988), the oldest known written account of the Cinderella story—found in China—is traced by Bettelheim (1986) through eleven centuries and numerous versions, as he discusses both cultural meanings and psychological implications of the stories on their audiences. Andrew Lang, a 19th century fairy tale historian, noted in his introduction to Cox's book the one thing that every version had in common was "a fundamental idea of Cinderella [as]...a person in a mean or obscure position, [who] by means of supernatural assistance, makes a good marriage" (in Cox, 1893, p. vii). This is not a tale from a "simple" people. "One thing is plain," Lang notes, "a naked and shoeless race could not have invented Cinderella" (qtd. in Cox, 1897, p. vii). Wherever Cinderella originated, the culture of her "birth" was clearly one with a certain level of sophistication and development. Her story gives us a picture of an inventive young woman who finds herself in harsh circumstances, yet overcomes them through intelligence and a variety of often-magical means.

Tatar (1999) agrees that Cinderella is not a single tale, but "an entire array of stories with a persecuted heroine who may respond to her situation with defiance, cunning, ingenuity, self-pity, anguish or grief" (p. ix). She goes by many names as well, including Yeh-Hsien in China, Cenerentola in Italy, Cendrillon in France, Kongjwi in Korea, Cat-Skin in England or Rashin-Coatie in Scotland, and Aschenputtel in Germany—and she is occasionally a he, as in the tale of "The Irish Cinderlad" (Tatar, 1999). Giardinelli (2001) claims that even the Harry Potter books were the result of a reimagining of the Cinderella narrative.

Yet, within this multitude of tales, there are common threads that tie them all together. In this next section, I will examine some of those images and story structures that are common within nearly all of the Cinderella tales.

### **Common Motifs of the Cinderella Stories—Supernatural Helpers and Identifying Objects**

According to Tatar (1999), there is a “basic plot structure” that each Cinderella version has in common (p. x), in spite of the differences of the actions. She (or he) alternately tends cows or sheep, cleans house, or picks lentils or peas from the ash of the fires she tends. Her story as it echoes around the world, Tatar (1999) contends, seems to be fated to receive endless exclamations of “that’s not how I heard it” (p. x), as one version after another is uncovered. A written version dating to 9<sup>th</sup> century CE China is the oldest discovered to date, and contains one of the most common of all the many motifs of Cinderella’s story (see Appendix A)—her impossibly small feet. Grimm’s 19<sup>th</sup> century German version pays homage to those small feet, as the stepsisters vie to cut off heel or toe to force their too-large feet into the tiny slipper. Believed to have originated during a time when the Chinese tradition of binding the feet of noblewomen was in its beginnings, this motif has followed Cinderella through most of her written history. In spite of the fact that China is the source of the oldest written version of the tale, it is clear that there is no known “original version” among the oral tales that preceded it.

Aarne-Thompson’s (Ashliman, 1987) numbering system for categorizing folk and fairy tales divides the Cinderella tales into two simple types. The first type (510A) begins in the way that those in the West find most familiar: a young girl who has lost her mother is robbed of her standing in her household by her father’s new wife, and becomes a servant to her new family. In the second type (510B), the young girl’s dying mother extracts a promise from her husband (typically a king) that he will only marry a woman who meets some certain criteria (is as beautiful as she, fits her ring, etc.), and when the daughter grows up she is the only one who measures up. When the father presses her to marry him, she runs away, disguising herself in rags,

and hiding as a servant in another king's castle. At this point, the story returns to the structure of type A, and continues along more familiar lines (Ashliman, 1987). All of these stories carry similar motifs (themes) in spite of their divergent initial situations, and according to Ashliman (1987), they constitute variations on the same tale. Propp (2008) claims that these same subjects and motifs are traceable to some extent through all of the variants of the Cinderella tale.

According to Lang (qtd. in Cox, 1897, p. vii), the motifs present in one form or another through nearly all versions of the Cinderella tale include: a dead mother and absent or inadequate father; a stepmother and stepsisters who mistreat the heroine; supernatural help to gain what is lacked; a vow that must be kept; an identifying object (typically a shoe or a ring); the revelation of a secret; the transformation of the heroine; and foes punished (or forgiven). Some of the major variants found for the story include: supernatural aid coming from her dead mother; the dead mother seen as an animal which helps; an animal sent by the dead mother to aid the heroine; and, as in Perrault's story, some of the newer versions have a fairy godmother.

Ancient stories, like the Cinderella tale, were later adapted by European authors such as Basile (Italy), Perrault (France), and the Grimms (Germany)—even Shakespeare's *King Lear* retells the story of *Cinderella* for a new audience (Dundes, 1988) — for the purpose of entertainment or moral education, for specific audiences and times, as were all such tales. From the late 19th century to the present day, the tales were again adapted into short stories or film scripts, and disseminated to an ever-growing audience (Rohrich, 2008). Through examination of the variations of this single tale, found in recognizable form in cultures around the world, we can begin to understand just how these stories began their evolution, establishing an analysis that will continue as fairy tales moved onto 20<sup>th</sup> century television screens.

### **The Texts: Three Hundred Years of Cinderella**

In this next section, I will introduce the four Cinderella texts I will be examining as I seek to discover how this story has evolved. Beginning with Charles Perrault's 17<sup>th</sup> century French fairy tale, *Cendrillon*, I will move on to the television text of *Rodgers and Hammerstein's Cinderella*, and finally, two 21<sup>st</sup> century adaptations of the tale—*Ugly Betty* and *La Fea más Bella*. By looking at these variations of this single tale—we can begin to understand just how these stories have changed according to their cultural situation, establishing an analysis that will continue as Cinderella is transported onto 21st century television screens.

#### ***Cendrillon*—Envisioning a 17<sup>th</sup> Century Girl**

Perrault's version of the tale<sup>1</sup> is based, like most from that era, on oral tales that had been passed down for eons; however, his was composed as entertainment for the 17<sup>th</sup> century French aristocracy. The "fairy" godmother is an addition to the story that arose from a 17<sup>th</sup> century French literary tradition advanced by a group of women writers who began to write *conte de fées*, or tales about fairies. Zipes (2011) states that this tradition arose as a response to Greek and Roman mythology, a dispute over the societal roles of women, and was an acknowledgement that this new "fairy tale" was considered "an eminently female genre in the seventeenth century consciousness" (p. 225). Although Perrault was not female, his tale falls directly in line with the ideals of the genre, as did the writings of other male fairy tale authors of his day.

Zipes (2011) further claims that these tales were intended by their authors to change the ways that men and women related to each other, particularly those of the upper classes. Like most of the fairy tales of the day, Perrault's *Cendrillon* is a story about female relationships: his hero is "as good as she is beautiful" (Tatar, 1999, p. 101), and ultimately forgives all of her

stepsisters' previous bad behavior toward her. She brings them to live with her at the palace, and arranges marriages with noblemen of the court, thus assuring their life-long comfort. Yet, she is also the impetus behind the prince's quest as she waits patiently for *him* to search for *her*.

Perrault's motif of the fairy godmother replaces the older motifs of the spirit of the dead mother through an animal helper. The rats, lizards and pumpkins that become Cinderella's transportation to the ball are also new elements not seen before. Unquestionably, the story shows signs of cultural evolution here.

### ***Rodgers and Hammerstein's Cinderella* – A “Mid-century Modern” Musical Hero**

On March 31, 1957 at 8 pm, a then-record 107 million Americans tuned into the CBS network to watch a live in-studio broadcast of *Rodgers and Hammerstein's Cinderella*<sup>2</sup>, a Broadway-style musical written especially for television (Wood, 2009, p. 109). Television was still a relatively young medium and the American public was eager to experience the sort of musical productions that were previously available almost exclusively on a theatrical stage.

Music serves to convey portions of the story and moves the narrative along as well. We know of Cinderella's wish to attend the ball, and her belief that magical help is possible because she sings it. We know that Cinderella and the Prince fall in love because they tell us in song, and we learn of the Prince's desperation to find her again through song as well.

Because television is a visual medium, there are things that can be portrayed in images that must be expressly written in literature, thus semiotics—or the science of signs—comes into play in a much greater way. These images allow the viewer to “read between the lines,” and gain a greater understanding of a character's personality or motives—often without anyone saying a word.

The same motifs that are present in Perrault's *Cendrillon* appear in *Rodgers and Hammerstein's Cinderella* as well. In this version, the mother and father are dispensed with before the narrative even begins, but Cinderella later tells us that she stays with her stepfamily because she believes her father would wish it—she feels obliged to take care of them. This story proceeds in much the same manner as Perrault's—with one major difference. Cinderella's transformation comes only at the time of her marriage—this prince recognizes her as soon as the shoe fits, even though she is still wearing her “rags.” For an audience that may not see her fine new clothes as symbolic of inner transformation, this recognition *before* transformation could be a sign in itself: character—not clothes—makes the woman.

The next two texts discussed are not straight retellings of the Cinderella fairy tale, but adaptations of the story for a new generation of viewers. Although the basic motifs may appear dissimilar at first glance, the narrative structure is tightly bound to the Cinderella fairy tale.

### ***Ugly Betty*- A Cinderella for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

The American television program, *Ugly Betty* (2007), was actually born in 1999, derived from a Colombian telenovela titled *Yo soy Betty, la fea* (I am Betty, the ugly one). Over the next decade, television outlets around the world jumped on the *Ugly Betty* bandwagon. In addition to rebroadcasts of both the original Spanish-language version and the American adaptation, there are numerous local productions as well, —with “re-interpretations”... “re-creations”... and “hybrid formats” (Mikos & Perrotta, 2011, p. 85)—in 19 nations as diverse as Germany, Turkey, Israel, Greece, Russia, Mexico, India, and China. As of 2006, *Ugly Betty*—in one form or another—has been “broadcast in 13 languages and 74 countries” (Kraul, 2006; qtd. in McCabe & Akass, 2013, p.4), growing into a global television phenomenon.

Rohrich (2008) claims that “the fairy tale is constantly renewing itself and replacing older cultural characteristics with newer ones (p. 380), and Sivado (2007) agrees, stating, “Fairy tales are continuously reborn...through movies, television shows, and other forms of media” (p. 1). In the same way that Perrault and Rodgers & Hammerstein adapted the Cinderella tale for the entertainment of their respective audiences, Sivado (2007) claims that the global *Ugly Betty* “franchise” is yet another re-telling of the fairy tale, composed for modern audiences. She compares the main characters of the Cinderella tale with those of the 2006 *Ugly Betty*, identifying both similarities and differences in the characters, plots and motifs present in both, discussing those differences based on the modern retelling. Sivado (2007) also states that *Ugly Betty* takes a story once told for the purpose of educating and “civilizing” children, and reworks it to become—once more—entertainment for adults.

Although *Ugly Betty* (2007) is not a straight retelling of the Cinderella story, it does carry a significant parallel in plotline, themes and motifs to the original tale, along with a curiously modern twist. Sivado (2007) draws parallels between the two narratives, but also sees a swap of traditional gender roles as Betty alternately takes on the role of “the rescuing prince” to Daniel’s (her boss) constantly-in-need-of-rescue, oppressed-by-his-family “Cinderella.” Cinderella’s stepmother and stepsisters—and even her fairy godmother—are paralleled in the characters of Betty’s co-workers Wilhelmina Slater, Marc St. James, Amanda Tanen, and Kristina McKinney, just as they are among the cast of characters within *Cendrillon*, as well as *Rodgers & Hammerstein’s Cinderella*. The character of Bradford Meade, Daniel’s father, also plays a role in both Betty’s hiring (seen as “help from on high” in the opening scene) and Daniel’s frequent need of Betty’s help, in order to keep his job.



### ***La Fea más Bella*- Betty's Mexican Counterpart**

*La Fea más Bella* (2007), also tracing its roots to the original Colombian telenovela *Yo soy Betty, la fea*, was produced in Mexico before it was later dubbed or franchised for distribution to Italy, Greece and China (McCabe & Akass, 2013). Enormously popular in Mexico, the hero of *La Fea más Bella*—Lety—is described as “a Mexican girl from a poor family, shy... very romantic, [and] intelligent” (Ortiz, 2006, p. 1)—yet she is “ugly.” Lety, in a storyline similar to Betty's, is hired by her boss' father, in spite of the office consensus that she is too unattractive. She also shares the Cinderella role with her boss, Fernando, as she comes to his rescue time and again in her job as his assistant. Like Betty, Lety also has to deal with the “villainy” of coworkers Ariel, Marcia and Alicia, but often gets help from her good friend Tomás, as well as her office's self-named “ugly girls club,” comprised of other unattractive workers. Lety has an obvious crush on Fernando and marries him at the end of the telenovela's run, unlike Betty whose relationship with Daniel is strictly platonic—although by the final episode, the future of Betty and Daniel's relationship is arguably ambiguous after he follows her to London as she prepares to begin a new job.

Lety's family make-up is a bit different from Betty's (and the other Cinderella characters) as her mother is still living, and she has no siblings. Like Betty, some of Lety's co-workers take on the roles of the stepsisters (Propp's false heroes). Her father, like Betty's, is over-protective, yet is somewhat ineffectual and always in need of her help in paying the rent, or to enable the purchase of a new car.

### **Analysis—Defining the Underlying Structure of the Texts**

Bernheimer (2009) describes the form of a fairy tale as “the skeleton of a story,” which offers a sense of familiarity to the reader and makes them so easily recognizable (p. 65). Propp's

(2008) morphology works from the same premise, theorizing that fairy tales are fashioned with a series of characters and “functions” that form the structure of the tale, and describe the most basic actions taken by a series of characters within it. Propp (2008) also describes a cast of characters (*dramatis personae*) found in every fairy tale, which I also applied to the four texts. I then applied the Scene Function Model advanced by Larson, Porter, Harthcock and Nellis, (2002), not only to the three television texts but to Perrault’s story, as well. Berger (2000) asserts that you can apply Propp’s functions to almost any story, and “many television programs and films...can be seen as fairy tales and analyzed [using] updated versions” of Propp’s functions (p. 45).<sup>3</sup>

Beginning with *Cendrillon*, there is an “initial situation” which explains the makeup of her family, including her dead mother, ineffectual father, evil-tempered stepmother and stepsisters. *Rodgers and Hammerstein’s Cinderella* makes no mention of either her mother or father in the opening. Her good heartedness in the face of the mistreatment of her family is chronicled, along with her thwarted desire to go to the ball. In a display of cultural differences, the two 21<sup>st</sup>-century adaptations of *Ugly Betty* and *La Fea más Bella* replace the desire to go to a ball with the desire for a job—both of which allow the hero an increase in social mobility and financial security. These four versions closely fit Propp’s defined functions (see Appendix B).

Propp (2008) also discusses what he terms the “*dramatis personae*” (p. 79)—or cast of characters (see Appendix C). Although the fathers differ in character or sufficiency across the four Cinderella adaptations, the rest of the cast of characters present in the Cinderella fairy tale fit snugly into Propp’s structure. Wilhelmina Slater, in *Ugly Betty*, takes the part of the villain to heart, attempting to undermine both Betty and Daniel’s efforts at every step, even to the point of trying to marry Daniel’s father in her effort to take over the family business. In the same way,

Ariel in *La fea Más Bella* also tries to commandeer Fernando's position as President of *Conceptos* and to get rid of Lety at every opportunity, continually plotting against them both.

Using Larson, Porter, and Harthcock and Nellis' (2002) Scene Function Model as another instrument to “discover“ the relationship between television stories and our culture's values (p.1), I then looked at the story which consists of events, characters and setting. I also examined the discourse, which is concerned with how the story is arranged and presented. The events are further divided into two categories: kernel scenes, which are “the narrative moments... [the] critical juncture[s] in the story,” and satellite scenes, which offer explanation or continuity between episodes or scenes, or bring clarity and “fullness” to the story (Larson et al., 2002, p. 5).<sup>4</sup> Although— like Propp's functions— not all kernels and satellites are represented within all of the four texts (see Appendices D&E), I find a clear relationship between the two structures. This structure of kernels and satellites appears to be a more inclusive version of Propp's functions; each kernel corresponds to several functions, and the satellites serve to fill in the details of the story. In comparison to the skeletal structure of the fairy tale, the three television texts offer greater prominence to the satellite scenes.

In the television texts of *Rodgers and Hammerstein's Cinderella*, *Ugly Betty* and *La fea Más Bella*, we see symbolic images used to advance the narrative or to convey “personality [or] status” (Berger, 2000, p. 48), typically without saying a word. In the second scene of *Rodgers and Hammerstein's Cinderella*, Cinderella trails along behind her stepmother and sisters, loaded down with packages. As they chatter about how exhausted they are after their shopping expedition, the audience becomes aware that Cinderella is in a subservient position, and yet as she walks along smiling and awkwardly waving—balancing packages with her foot— at the dancing children who have crossed her path, we see that she is good-natured and sweet.

Conversely, her stepmother and sisters have walked right through the group of playing children who scatter as they pass—their faces showing annoyance at the children's presence. Without a word, the audience becomes aware of who the hero is and who the villains are in this tale.

Later, after the ball, as Cinderella shares her remembered “imaginings” about the ball with her stepfamily, she is scrubbing the floor while they soak their tired feet. However, drawn into her storytelling through song, Cinderella's stepmother and sisters end up picking up her mop and scrub brush as they dreamily re-live her story along with her; they have put themselves firmly in Cinderella's place, and we can see it through their actions. When they come “back to earth,” they contemptuously shove her cleaning tools back into her hands; we can see a symbolic foreshadowing of what will soon take place within the tale.

Berger (2000) discusses semiotics as a way to analyze “facial expressions, hairstyles and hair colors, teeth, fashions in clothing ...eyeglasses and jewelry... in terms of how they generate meaning and what they reflect about society and culture” (p. 35). Specifically he notes glasses as an example of a signifier (kinds of glasses) and the signified (meaning), offering a look at meanings held within the sign. In the pilot episode of *Ugly Betty*, Betty seems defined by her big, colorful glasses: she is perceived as playful, creative, eccentric, and not at all embarrassed by them. In the final episode of the U.S. series, her family gives Betty rimless frames as she leaves for a new job in London, signifying that she is no longer the frumpy girl she once was, but is now a competent woman.

Language itself can also be a “sign” when it doesn't follow social conventions—or displays a heavy accent, poor grammar or a certain affectedness in an effort to create the idea of a certain type of character (Berger, 2000, p. 42). In *Ugly Betty*, although Betty herself is Hispanic, she displays no accent when she speaks. The members of her family display various

speech patterns that are signifiers of character, however. Her father, who turns out to be an undocumented immigrant, has a stereotypical Mexican accent and sprinkles Spanish words into his conversation from time to time, especially in endearments to his family. Betty's teenage nephew, who self-identifies as homosexual in later episodes, shows a great deal interest in fashion, as well as affected speech patterns that are signifiers which identify him as gay. Well before he "comes out" to his family, the audience catches hints of his sexual orientation.

In a scene where Daniel joins a plot to get Betty to quit, the photographer who talks him into it has a heavy French accent. Somehow, we know that he will be up to no good when we first hear him speak. "Speaking" can also be a sign, including gestures and "such things as...facial expressions, and other forms of ... [nonverbal] communication," and can convey a great deal of meaning within a television text (Berger, 2000, p.42). The photographer's expression of disgust at Betty's looks allows us to know before he even opens mouth that he has gauged Betty's worth based on her appearance. Because we as the audience are already won over by Betty's goodness, it is clear that he is not a good person. We see this same signifier at work in the expressions of disgust displayed by Lety's coworkers and Cinderella's stepmother and stepsisters, letting us know that they also see her as beneath them and someone to be rid of, if possible. We see this same expression on Wilhelmina's face as she looks at Daniel (when he is not aware of it), and on Ariel's face as he plots against Fernando. Even without subtitles, Ariel's attitude toward Fernando is clear.

Berger (2000) speaks of yet another signifier at work in Betty's (and Lety's) story—her teeth. Berger, quoting Chase (1982), states, "Buck teeth imply people are dumb. ... [it's a] cultural standard" (p. 50). When a media text attempts to make the personality of a character known to the audience, it will use this sort of cultural sign to do it—and within the context of the

culture, the audience will understand. For Betty, this implies that although she may have been “dumb,” she is working to repair this through her braces, and her big, wide smile shows her friendly attitude and eagerness to please.

Still examining the signs and symbols used in the television texts of the Cinderella story to search for changes to the messages behind the texts, my focus turned to the topic of the morals portrayed within each.

### **Moral themes in Cinderella’s story—Perrault’s New Motif**

My focus in examining these four Cinderella texts was on discovering whether the morals and messages contained in the Cinderella fairy tale had survived the move to television intact. Due to a motif sported by Perrault’s incarnation of the *Cinderella* story—an entirely new addition to the tale—in the inclusion of two “morals” found at the end of the tale, I had a place to start my search. Perrault included these morals as teaching moments to end each of the seven tales in his *Histoires ou contes du temps passé* volume, included as a way to demonstrate the “moral superiority of French folktales to the amoral Greek myths” (Sierra, 1992, p. 150) which they otherwise paid homage to. The morals amount to statements<sup>5</sup> that graciousness is worth more than beauty, and intelligence, daring, good breeding and good sense are all advantages, but you must have help—from a godmother or godfather—to succeed. This is a very different sort of lesson from the implication of the Grimm’s version where Cinderella’s stepsisters—whose eyes are pecked out by the same obliging birds who supplied her ball gown—get their well-deserved comeuppance in the end, but it does tell us what Perrault saw as the important moral lessons of his story.

Sivado (2007) notes that core themes of the Cinderella tale include “kindness, humility and virtue” (p. 1-2), and we find these same attributes of “goodness” in the characters of

Cendrillon, Cinderella, Betty and Lety (see Appendix F). Examining the villains of each story, we find the opposing “bad” characteristics defined by both actions and signs. In *Cendrillon*, the hero’s physical grace and good taste in fashion were seen as evidence of her “goodness,” while the stepsisters’ inelegance and awkwardness in *Rodgers & Hammerstein’s Cinderella* were seen as portraying their “badness.” It is interesting to note how that sign has altered in the 21<sup>st</sup> century adaptations: Betty and Lety’s social awkwardness and poor fashion sense seem to signify their inner goodness, whereas their antagonists’ fashion sense seems instead to point out the shallowness of their characters. Signs clearly do change according to their cultural context.

Familiar archetypes also offer a framework for the texts, through the accustomed character roles developed in each. Yet, in the *Ugly Betty/La fea mas Bella* adaptations, the archetypal role of the hero is often gender-reversed, with both Betty and Lety frequently called on to rescue their oft-distressed male employers. Yet neither of them ever seems to lose the “innocence” or goodness of the Cinderella archetype as they take on the role of rescuer.

Much is made of her goodness and serenity as *Cendrillon* is portrayed servant-like among the ashes; many of the variants of Cinderella’s story present her as a “keeper of the hearth.” Yet, Bettelheim (1976) sees something more than servant status in her identification with ashes. He sees her tied to the ancient Greek and Roman mythologies of Hestia and Vesta, and the Vestal Virgins who were charged with caring for Rome’s sacred fire—the most noble role obtainable for a young female in Roman culture (p. 254). Perrault tells us that *Cendrillon* chooses to sleep amidst the ashes; it is not forced on her. Both *Cendrillon* and *Rodgers & Hammerstein’s Cinderella* offer images of their heroes tending the household fire, and in the *Ugly Betty*-type adaptations, both Betty and Lety are frequently tasked with “keeping the home fires burning.” Betty, in the pilot episode, is charged with buying her father’s birthday cake for a family party,

and is later seen arguing on the phone with his medical insurance provider who is refusing to cover the costs of his heart medication. Lety takes the responsibility of helping to pay the rent on her family's home and making payments on the new car that her father wants to purchase. These twenty-first century Cinderellas are still concerned with meeting their families' needs.

These images bring another possible message to the forefront: Cinderella as a silent victim who works uncomplainingly, and needs rescue by others before she can gain the notice of her Prince. Some feminist scholars have argued that the Cinderella story presents young girls with the negative role model of a beautiful but powerless young woman, one who desired nothing more than a Prince who would carry her away from her miserable life to live "happily ever after." Baum (2000) echoes this idea, stating that "Feminist phenomenology reveals Cinderella as a primer for moral and gender conventions... train[ing] little girls in anti-social behaviors and antipathetic family relations" (p. 69). However, I would ask, is this truly what the story teaches, or what our 21<sup>st</sup> century sensibilities choose to see?

Maass (2009), in her critique of the slipper motif found in many of the Cinderella variants, declares that Cinderella's slipper was the "critical measure" of her "fitness to be chosen by the prince" (p. viii). Yet, what she fails to recognize is that the slipper does not originate with the prince, but in fact belongs to Cinderella herself. It is not an arbitrary measurement of her fitness, but is an object that she left behind as a clue to her identity. It is an item whose sole purpose is to lead him back to where Cinderella stands ready—with the other shoe in her pocket.

Even the sexual imagery that many scholars see in the slipper—a symbolic stand-in for the female vagina (Bettelheim, 1976) —is less a patriarchal symbol for marriage to the prince than it is a representation of Cinderella's choice. If the slipper symbolizes sex, Cinderella is



offering it to the prince of her own volition; her retention of the other slipper, which she then places on her own foot, seems an indication that she is a willing and equal partner.

Bottigheimer (1987) states that Cinderella is obedient and submissive at home and “silent at the ball, speechless among the ashes, mute when trying on the tiny slipper” (p. 53). It is clear however, Bottigheimer could not have been reading Perrault’s *Cendrillon*. Although his Cinderella was indeed forgiving in the face of her stepsisters’ ill-treatment, she was not voiceless. While at the ball, Cendrillon purposely sought out her stepsisters, sharing the prince’s gifts with them, almost challenging them to recognize her, yet they did not. She was canny and clever, artfully asking to borrow a stepsister’s dress to go to a second ball to see the beautiful stranger of whom they spoke, all the while knowing that *she* was the stranger (I can almost see her smirking as I read). Later, she shrewdly waited for the appropriate moment to call for her right to try on the slipper—after both sisters had proven fraudulent in their claims to it—and spoke her mind when the moment arrived. Once the shoe was comfortably positioned on her foot, she confidently drew its mate from her pocket, proving that she was the true owner. This Cinderella was no silent victim.

Baum (2000), in his examination of the Cinderella story, finds it to be a tale of patriarchy run-amok, causing the negative female issues of jealousy and mistreatment found in the story, and revealing a lack of female agency. Yet, my appraisal of Cinderella’s story—as presented by Perrault—is that at its heart it revolves around the relationships between women: mothers and daughters, sisters, even the fairy godmother and Cendrillon. Although the relationships of mother, daughters, and siblings are for the most part portrayed in a negative light, Cendrillon’s supportive relationship with her godmother, and virtuous qualities of patience and graciousness

triumph in the end, and are offered as illustrations of positive relationships to the female audience for whom they were written.

The two male characters in the story—Cinderella's father and the Prince—appear only briefly, almost as plot devices meant just to move the narrative along. The father appears only to explain the stepmother's presence, as well as offering the reason that the stepmother's behavior toward Cendrillon continues unchallenged; he is portrayed as an inadequate wimp who won't stand up for his daughter in the face of his wife's mistreatment. The Prince's part in the action takes two equally simple forms: first, he is the one who gives the ball that everyone wants to attend; second, he is the one who is desperate to find Cendrillon after she runs off. Perrault tells us the prince "would give all the world to know who she was" (Perrault, 1800, p. 23). His desire to find her is the impetus that moves the narrative toward Cendrillon's final actions.

When discussing feminist critiques, even within a literary genre like fairy tales, the dangers of "colonialism" and cultural imperialism must be taken into consideration. As readers, we must be sure that we are not "colonizing" a tale through our insistence on reading it through the eyes of our own culture. Haase (2010) tells us "fairy tale textuality is a complex state of affairs that defies simplification, and demands...attention to textual history" (p. 31). It is imperative—as we work to discover the messages within a text—that we realize knowledge of its original cultural context is vital to its interpretation, and as readers we should not attempt to "read into" a text through our own cultural biases. It is not reasonable to attempt to draw 21<sup>st</sup> century attitudes from a 17<sup>th</sup> century text, and then hold that text guilty for the faults we believe that we have found. As readers, we dare not force a text to speak our language. Even across the centuries, cultural context is important.

Although Cendrillon is indeed hindered by her stepsisters' attitudes and actions, she eventually acts according to her own wishes, aided in her quest to attend the ball by another woman—her fairy godmother. Obviously, in other times and incarnations, Cinderella's story does often reek of patriarchy (fathers insisting on marrying their daughters, or punishing them by banishment for not loving them enough due to a misunderstood metaphor), yet in Perrault's version I find the best of humanity overcoming some of the worst—goodness and forgiveness overcoming jealousy and hardheartedness. I see the humble elevated, and the elevated being humbled. True merit is recognized despite a bad wardrobe, and the reader discovers that fine clothes can mask a complete lack of substance. Cinderella's story is proof that what you see isn't necessarily what you get!

In the television adaptations of *Ugly Betty* and *La Fea más Bella*, we also find that Betty and Lety's virtues overcome the malicious mistreatment of the "false heroes" Marc and Amanda/Marcia and Alicia. Betty talks her way into a job at a fashion magazine, a job that—based on her unfashionable appearance—she is entirely unqualified for. Su and Xue (2010) note that in spite of the opposition of her co-workers, Betty is successful at her job due to her "perseverance, optimism and hard work" (p. 748). Daniel and Fernando, taking their turns in the "Cinderella role," may not be portrayed as virtuous but they have done nothing to deserve the treason or revenge seeking of Wilhelmina/Ariel. Both simply have what the other wants or thinks they deserve.

Even in the tasks that each is given within the narrative, these Cinderella characters find parity. Cendrillon and Cinderella are tasked with bringing the materials that will become their "price of admission" to the ball: they gather the pumpkins and garden pests that will expedite the excursion. Betty and Lety are also given unwelcome responsibilities to perform that bring them

what they most desire—their “dream job” and the approbation of their bosses. Daniel and Fernando must each put together a business plan of sorts to keep their jobs and gain the praise of their fathers. For all of them, the completion of the task ultimately leads to the fulfillment of their wishes, just as Propp (2008) would suggest.

In the quest for their ultimate desire, these four Cinderellas (and even their male counterparts) are still the same at heart. When they run away—whether from the ball, or their bosses—they are signifying a desire to be chosen “for who [they] really [are], not for splendid appearance” (Bettelheim, 1976, p. 264), or in the cases of Daniel and Fernando, not because they were born to the job, but because they are good at it. Betty runs from Daniel after her humiliation at the photo shoot and then deliberates whether she will return, even after his apology and acknowledgement of the importance of her work. Although Lety is clearly smitten with her boss, she still waits for him to come to her with his realization of her valuable contribution to the business environment. Daniel and Fernando both desire acknowledgement from their fathers for the tasks they have accomplished. Cendrillon waits for the prince to look for her, even knowing that she has the second shoe—the key to her identity—in her pocket. *Rodgers & Hammerstein’s Cinderella* is the only one who hangs back and seems to be discovered almost by accident as her fairy godmother “arranges” her discovery. Cinderella is recognized still wearing her rags; this prince sees her worth in spite of them. In the final analysis, all four Cinderella figures gain what they want the most.

### **Conclusion—Tracing Cinderella’s Travels Toward a New Audience**

In my examination of the Cinderella tale, it became evident that there is no single “definitive Cinderella” text; there are hundreds of variants from around the world. The cultures

where Cinderella has travelled have clearly left their mark on her story, changing the ways we view it today, as well as the methods by which we study it.

Using structuralism as advanced by Propp (2008) and Larson et al. (2002), and semiotics as advanced by Berger (2000), I studied a sampling of texts to explore possible changes between them, focusing on their portrayals of good and evil as well as the morality advanced within each. To adequately address an examination of the “morals” within the tales, I also drew in the critique of feminist scholars who have long denounced the Cinderella character as a female role model.

Some may see Cinderella as a silent victim who needs rescue by others, and such a construction is entirely reasonable through a 21<sup>st</sup> century lens. However, Cendrillon is a 17<sup>th</sup> century girl, and a product of a culture that—like every other incarnation of her story—is not like the world we live in today. As I considered Perrault’s text, as well as the works of feminist scholars such as Maass (2009) and Baum (2000), I came to recognize that an anthropological approach to Cinderella’s story is necessary to avoid the colonialist attitudes that Haase (2010) warned against: attitudes that would censure her actions simply because they do not fit with 21<sup>st</sup> century American beliefs. Cendrillon may have been living in a patriarchal society and forced to live within the constraints of a culture we do not quite approve of—but she worked within those constraints and used them to her advantage. A woman may have stood in the way of what she most wanted, but another woman helped her to get it. Cendrillon artfully teased her unwitting stepsisters with her secret about attending the ball. She left her slipper behind as a way of sanctioning the prince’s pursuit—and made sure that she had her chance to try it on after both stepsisters were proved false in their claims. Her mid-century modern counterpart—*Rodgers and Hammerstein’s Cinderella*—may have been a bit less smug, but she still sang of her meeting

with the prince to her sisters, though they never guessed her secret. *Cendrillon* may have waited to make her claim for the glass slipper, but she waited knowing she had its mate in her pocket.

Our 21<sup>st</sup> century “revised” Cinderellas were no pushovers either. Although it was a job they desired, rather than a prince, Betty and Lety worked hard—with a little help from their friends—to gain the same financial security and personal fulfillment as their predecessors.

In the global marketplace, we find that “re-visioning” the old is nothing new. Finding new ways to tell an old story is an idea whose time has come—again and again. Hegel states, “Philosophy is its time grasped in thought” (cited in Botz-Borstein, 2006, p. 159), and I would extend that idea to folk and fairy tales, amending it to say, “A tale is its time grasped in words.” The stories we hold to also hold *us*—grasping within their texts a bit of their time, their culture and their position within the larger human story. They link us to our past even as they are passed on once again. Zipes (2006) tells us that fairy tales seize our attention because we unconsciously understand their relevance. We hear and interpret, and share them with one another, hoping that what we found relevant within the tale is “caught” by those we tell. Cinderella’s story has persevered for centuries through its ability to make a home within every culture it entered—where it has found a new generation of listening ears.

In the end, these stories survive because they strike a chord in all of us. Whether circulated through literature or television, in fairy tales told for a 17<sup>th</sup> century French court or through a 21<sup>st</sup> century Mexican telenovela, the tales may change to fit a new audience, but the meanings within them have remained constant. Cinderella’s story is still one of redemption and the triumph of good over evil, in spite of all that is taken from her or the abuses she receives along the way. *Cendrillon* is truly a success story, where the underdog wins in spite of all odds. The message and morals presented in *Cendrillon* have held constant through the television texts

of *Rodgers & Hammerstein's Cinderella*, *Ugly Betty* and *La Fea más Bella*, in spite of the changes in cultural context. There is clearly something within this tale that is relevant even to 21<sup>st</sup> century audiences in cultures around the globe—a universal archetypal structure that is so familiar *deep down* that it draws us to the story in spite of our intellectual issues with things like fairy godmothers, princes and glass slippers.

In the end, we are also enticed by the promise of a single line

*...and they lived happily ever after.*

## References

- Ashliman, D. (1987). *A Guide to Folktales in the English Language—Based on the Aarne-Thompson Classification System*. New York: Greenwood Press.
- Baum, R. (2000). After the ball is over: Bringing Cinderella home. *Cultural Analysis*, 1, 69-83.
- Bettelheim, B. (1986). *The uses of enchantment: The meaning and importance of fairy tales*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.
- Berger, A. (1997). *Narratives in popular culture, media and everyday life*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
- Berger, A. (2000). *Media and communication research methods: An introduction to qualitative and quantitative approaches*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
- Berger, J. (2011). Arousal increases social transmission of information. *Psychological Science*, 22, 891-893. Doi:10.1177/0956797611413294
- Bottigheimer, R. (1987). *Grimms' bad girls & bold boys: The moral & social vision of the Tales*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Bottigheimer, R. (2009). *Fairy tales: A new history*. Albany: State University of New York Press. Kindle version.
- Botz-Borstein, T. (2006). Ethnophilosophy, comparative philosophy, pragmatism: Toward a philosophy of ethnoscaples. *Philosophy east and west*, 56 (1). 153- 171. Doi: 10.1353/pew.2006.0006
- Cox, M. (1893). *Cinderella: Three hundred and forty-five variants of Cinderella, Catskin and Cap O'Rushes, abstracted and tabulated, with a discussion of mediæval analogues and notes*. London: Chas. J. Clark.
- Dawkins, R. (1989). *The selfish gene*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.



- Dundes, A. (Ed.). (1988) *Cinderella: A casebook*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.
- Giardinelli, A. (October 2001). *Harry Potter is male Cinderella*. Newswise.com. Retrieved from <http://www.newswise.com/articles/harry-potter-is-male-cinderella>
- Groepel-Klein, A., Domke, A. & Bartmann, B. (2006). Cinderella and Sleeping Beauty: Conscious and unconscious evaluation of archetypes used in advertising and movies- results from an experimental study. *European Advances in Consumer Research*, 7: 467-68.
- Haase, D. (2010). Decolonizing fairy-tale studies. *M&T Marvels & Tales*, 24(1), 17-38.
- Hohr, Hansjörg. (2000). Dynamic aspects of fairy tales: Social and emotional competence through fairy tales. *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research*, 44(1), 89-103.
- Kafalenos, E. (1997). Functions after Propp: Words to talk about how we read narrative. *Poetics Today*, 18 (4), 469-494.
- Maass, V. (2009). *The Cinderella test*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, LLC.
- McCabe, J. and Akass, K. (Eds.). (2013). *TV's Betty goes global: From telenovela to international brand*. London: I. B. Tauris.
- Mikos, L. and Perotta, M. (2012). Traveling Style: Aesthetic differences and similarities in national adaptations of *Yo soy Betty, la fea*. *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, 15(1), 81-97. Doi:10.1177/1367877911428116
- Nelson, R. (Director). (2004). *Rodgers and Hammerstein's Cinderella* [DVD]. (Available from Image Entertainment, 20525 Nordhoff St., Suite 200, Chatsworth, CA 91311)
- Olegnow, R., Jiménez, S. (2007). *La Fea más Bella* [DVD]. Mexico:Televisa S.A. de C.V. Reservados.

- Ortiz, K. (2006, April 14). Version of 'Ugly Betty' to Univision. *El Diario La Prensa* . Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com/docview/368513606?accountid=14784>
- Perrault, C. (1800). *Cinderella: Or, the history of the little glass slipper*. Philadelphia: Printed for Mathew Carey, no. 118, Market-Street.
- Porter, M., Larson, D., Harthcock, A. (2002). Re (de)fining narrative events: Examining television narrative structure. *Journal of Popular Film and Television*, 30 , 23-30.
- Propp, V. (2008). *Morphology of folktales*. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Rohrich, L. (2008). "And they are still living happily ever after": *Anthropology, Cultural History and interpretation of fairy tales*. (W. Mieder and S. Wienker-Piepho, Eds.). (P. Washbourne, Trans.) Burlington: The University of Vermont.
- Scholes, Robert. (1982). *Semiotics and Interpretation*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Shepard, R. (2007) *Ugly Betty* [DVD]. United States: Buena Vista Home Entertainment.
- Sierra, J. (1992). *The Oryx multicultural folktale series: Cinderella*. Phoenix: Oryx Press.
- Sivado, L. E. (2009). *Six Ugly Betty characters stolen from beautiful Cinderella: The modern woman and telenovela*. Thesis (M.A.)—University of Louisville.
- Su, T. and Xue, Q. (2010). The analysis of transition in woman social status—Comparing *Cinderella* with *Ugly Betty*. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 1(5), 746-752.
- Wood, G. (2009). Ten minutes and fifty (two) years ago: the three TV versions of Rodgers and Hammerstein's *Cinderella*. *Studies in Musical Theater*, 3(1), 109-116.
- Zipes, J. (December 01, 1988). The Changing Function of the Fairy Tale. *The Lion and the Unicorn: a Critical Journal of Children's Literature*, 12(2), 7-31.
- Zipes, J. (Ed.). (1992). *Spells of enchantment: The wondrous fairy tales of western culture*. New York: Penguin Books.

Zipes, J. (1997). *Happily ever after: Fairy tales, children and the culture industry*. New York: Routledge.

Zipes, J. (2002). *Breaking the magic spell: Radical theories of folk & fairy tales*. Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky.

Zipes, J. (2006). *Why fairy tales stick: The evolution and relevance of a genre*. New York: Routledge.

Zipes, J. (2011). The meaning of fairy tale within the evolution of culture. *Marvels and Tales*, 25(2). 221-243.

**Appendix A**  
**Common motifs in many Cinderella tales**

| <b>Motif</b>                    | <i>Cendrillon</i> | <i>Cinderella</i> | <i>Ugly Betty</i>     | <i>La Fea más Bella</i> |
|---------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| <b>Dead Mother</b>              | X                 | X                 | X                     |                         |
| <b>Absent/weak father</b>       | X                 | X                 | X                     | X                       |
| <b>Ill-treatment by enemies</b> | X                 | X                 | X                     | X                       |
| <b>“Supernatural” helper</b>    | X                 | X                 | X<br>Not supernatural | X<br>Not supernatural   |
| <b>Identifying object</b>       | X                 | X                 | X                     | X                       |
| <b>Revelation of a secret</b>   | X                 | X                 | X                     | X                       |
| <b>Transformation</b>           | X                 | X                 | X                     | X                       |
| <b>Foes dealt with</b>          | X                 | X                 | X                     | X                       |

**Appendix B**  
**Propp's Functions as seen in all four texts**

| <b>Function</b>   | <b>Cendrillon</b>  | <b>Cinderella</b>                                  | <b>Ugly Betty</b>   | <b>La Fea Más Bella</b>   |
|---|--|--|---|---|
| 1. <b>Absence of family member(s)</b>                       | Dead mother, "useless" father  | Father and Mother both "missing" from story        | Dead mother Loving, but needy father  | Living mother; Loving, but needy father   |
| 2. <b>Interdiction</b>                                      | "You cannot go to the ball"  | "You cannot go to the Ball"                        | "The job has been filled"   | "You are not qualified"   |
| 3. <b>Violation of Interdiction</b>                         |  |  | Mysteriously hired for job  | Mysteriously hired for job  |
| 4. <b>Reconnaissance (villain tries to get information)</b> | Stepsisters ask whether Cendrillon would like to attend ball                       |  | Amanda tries to get information about Betty's hiring  | Alicia and Marcia try to get information about Lety's hiring                        |
| 5. <b>Delivery (villain gets information)</b>               | Cendrillon admits she'd like to go   |  | Amanda discovers how Betty was hired  | Alicia and Marcia discover why Lety was hired                                       |
| 6. <b>Trickery (villain tries to deceive victim)</b>        | Stepmother and sisters trick Cendrillon with tasks if she'd like to go to the ball |  | Wilhelmina, pretending to help, takes over meeting; tries to sabotage Daniel's plans; Daniel tries to get Betty to quit | Marcia and Alicia convince Lety to give them her report                             |
| 7. <b>Complicity (victim is deceived)</b>                   | Cendrillon is denied the chance to attend the ball                                 | Cinderella is denied the chance to attend the ball | Daniel and Betty are lied to by Wilhelmina and their work is dismissed; Betty is ill-treated by co-workers and Daniel   | Alicia takes credit for Lety's work; Lety is ill-treated by co-workers and Fernando |
| 8. <b>A. Villainy or B. lack</b>                            | Cendrillon lacks a way to the ball   | Cinderella lacks a way to the Ball                 | Daniel lacks an ad campaign to keep Wilhelmina from taking his job  | Fernando's need for business plan to keep Ariel from taking his job                 |
| 9. <b>Mediation- lack made known and hero dispatched</b>    | Cendrillon. Admits desire to attend ball   | Cinderella admits desire to attend ball            | Betty sent to retrieve costume for photo shoot  | Lety becomes aware of Fernando's need   |
| 10. <b>Counteraction- hero agrees to counteraction</b>      | Cendrillon agrees to do what she's asked to do                                     | Cinderella agrees to do what she's asked to do     | Betty agrees to help with campaign  | Lety decides to write business plan   |
| 11. <b>Departure</b>  |  |  |   |   |

|  |   |   |   |  |
|--|---|---|---|--|
| 12. <b>Donor</b>                             | Fairy Godmother suggests help                                 | Fairy Godmother suggests help                                 | Kristina gives Betty the Costume  | Tomás helps Lety create the business plan  |
| 13. <b>Hero's reaction</b>                   | Cendrillon is surprised by suggested help                     | Cinderella is surprised by suggested help                     | Betty is surprised by Kristina's support                                | Lety is surprised by Tomas' help   |
| 14. <b>Receipt of Change</b>                 | Cendrillon accepts help                                       | Cinderella accepts help                                       | B. accepts Kristina's suggestions                                       | L. accepts Tomas' suggestions  |
| 15. <b>Spatial Change</b>                    | Cendrillon goes to the Ball                                   | Cinderella goes to the Ball                                   | Betty goes to photo shoot   | Lety goes to office with Business plan   |
| 16. <b>Struggle between hero and villain</b> |   |   |   |  |
| 17. <b>Branding</b>                          |   |   |   |  |
| 18. <b>Victory for hero</b>                  | Cendrillon is the "belle of the ball;" prince is smitten      | Cinderella is the "belle of the ball;" prince is smitten      | Daniel gets his project finished  | Lety's business plan is found and given to Fernando                                  |
| 19. <b>Lack is liquidated</b>                | Cendrillon gets to attend the ball                            | Cinderella gets to attend the ball                            | Model's spot is filled  | Fernando gets his report   |
| 20. <b>Hero returns home</b>                 | Cendrillon runs from Ball                                     | Cinderella runs from Ball                                     | Betty runs away crying  | Lety cries at Fernando's bad treatment after he fires her                            |
| 21. <b>Hero is pursued</b>                   | Prince pursues Cendrillon                                     | Prince Pursues Cinderella                                     | Daniel chases after Betty   | Fernando   |
| 22. <b>Hero is rescued</b>                   |   |   | Daniel apologizes to Betty, and is ultimately rescued by Betty's return | Fernando apologizes to Lety, rehires her, and is ultimately rescued by Lety's return |
| 23. <b>Unrecognized arrival</b>              | Cendrillon arrives home, and no one knows she was at the ball | Cinderella arrives home, and no one knows she was at the ball | Betty's work is not recognized  | Lety's work is not acknowledged  |
| 24. <b>False hero presents claims</b>        | Stepsisters insist it is their slipper                        | Stepsisters insist it is their slipper                        | Wilhelmina claims she has created new campaign                          | Alicia tries again to claim she wrote plan   |
| 25. <b>Difficult task proposed to hero</b>   | Fit foot into slipper to prove identity                       | Fit foot into slipper to prove identity                       | Betty and Daniel must create a new ad campaign in 1 day                 | Lety must find her lost plan before Alicia does                                      |

|   |   |  |   |  |
|---|---|--|---|--|
| 26. <b>Task is resolved</b>                 | Shoe fits, and second slipper is displayed                | Shoe fits  | Betty/Daniel's idea is successful   | Lety's business plan is successful   |
| 27. <b>Hero is recognized</b>               | Prince recognizes Cendrillon                              | Prince recognizes Cinderella                                 | Daniel's father recognizes his work   | Lety's work is recognized  |
| 28. <b>Villain is exposed</b>               | Stepsister's recognized as liars                          |  | Wilhelmina seen as villain  | Ariel is exposed as villain  |
| 29. <b>Hero given new appearance</b>        | Fairy Godmother changes C. with new magical dress         | Cinderella's transformation seen at wedding                  | Song- "Suddenly I see;" Betty and Daniel are seen as competent and happy                                  | Lety and Fernando are both seen as competent and acknowledged in their jobs                          |
| 30. <b>Villain punished/forgiven</b>        | Stepsisters forgiven; Cendrillon gets them noble husbands | Stepmother and sisters help Cinderella get ready for wedding | Wilhelmina is denied her desire to become Editor-in-Chief of <i>Mode</i>                                  | Ariel's plan to take the company is foiled   |
| 31. <b>Hero married, ascends the throne</b> | Wedding; Cendrillon becomes Princess                      | Wedding; Cinderella becomes Princess                         | New friendly relationship between Daniel and Betty; Daniel acknowledged as Editor-in-Chief of <i>Mode</i> | Lety is promoted from secretary to assistant; Fernando <i>acknowledged as President of Conceptos</i> |

**Appendix C**

**Propp's "dramatis personae" as found in all four of the Cinderella adaptations**

| <b>Cast of Characters</b> | <i>Cendrillon</i>    | <i>Cinderella</i> | <i>Ugly Betty</i>          | <i>La fea más Bella</i>        |
|---------------------------|----------------------|-------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <b>Hero</b>               | Cendrillon           | Cinderella        | Betty/ Daniel              | Lety/ Fernando                 |
| <b>Father</b>             | Inadequate & unnamed | Absent            | Loving, but often helpless | Supportive, but often helpless |
| <b>Prince</b>             | Prince               | Prince            | Daniel/Betty               | Fernando/ Lety                 |
| <b>Villain</b>            | Stepmother           | Stepmother        | Wilhelmina                 | Ariel                          |
| <b>False Hero</b>         | Stepsisters          | Stepsisters       | Marc and Amanda            | Marcia and Alicia              |
| <b>Donor</b>              | Fairy Godmother      | Fairy Godmother   | Kristina                   | Tomás                          |

(Propp, 2008)



**Appendix D**  
**Scene Function Model-Kernel scenes**

| <b>Kernel Scenes</b>                  | <i>Cendrillon</i>   | <i>Cinderella</i>   | <i>Ugly Betty</i>  | <i>La Fea más Bella</i>  |
|---------------------------------------|---|---|--|--|
| <b>Disturbance (Initiating Event)</b> | Mother's Death/<br>Father's Remarriage                          | Mother's Death/<br>Father's Remarriage                          | Betty wants magazine job, but is initially turned down                           | Lety wants job with Conceptos, but is originally turned down                 |
| <b>Obstacle</b>                       | Stepmother and stepsister's mistreatment                        | Stepmother and stepsister's mistreatment                        | Wilhelmina's "treason" toward Daniel;<br>Marc and Amanda's mistreatment of Betty | Ariel's attempt to take Fernando's job, Alicia trying to take Betty's job    |
| <b>Complication</b>                   | The Prince gives a Ball; Cendrillon denied the chance to attend | The Prince gives a Ball; Cinderella denied the chance to attend | Daniel wants to make Betty quit;<br>Wilhelmina wants Daniels' job                | Alicia taking credit for Betty's work;<br>Ariel trying to get Fernando fired |
| <b>Confrontation</b>                  | Cendrillon has no way to get to the Ball and no clothes to wear | Cinderella has no way to get to the Ball and no clothes to wear | Betty faces ridicule at photo shoot; finds out Daniel is trying to make her quit | Alicia plots to get Lety's job   |
| <b>Crisis</b>                         | Cendrillon almost denied the chance to try the shoe             | Cinderella almost doesn't get to try the shoe                   | Betty and Daniel going up against Wilhelmina in ad campaign                      | Lety loses the disk with Fernando's business plan                            |
| <b>Resolution</b>                     | The shoe fits; she is transformed and marries the prince.       | The shoe fits; she is recognized by the prince. They marry      | Ad campaign is approved; Daniel's father approves; jobs secured                  | Business plan found and accepted; father's approval; jobs secured            |

(Larson, Porter, Harthcock and Nellis, 2002)

**Appendix E**  
**Scene Function Model – Satellite scenes**

| <b>Satellite scenes:</b>        | <i>Cendrillon</i>   | <i>Cinderella</i>  | <i>Ugly Betty</i>   | <i>La Fea más Bella</i>   |
|---------------------------------|---|--|---|---|
| <b>Exposition</b>               | Explanation of her mother's death/ father's marriage  | Explanation of her father's marriage (offered later)   | Explanation of Betty's family and job situation                         | Explanation of Betty's family and job situation   |
| <b>Dramatic Question</b>        | "Cendrillon, don't you want to go to the Ball?"   | "What are you doing? Don't you want to go?"  |   |   |
| <b>Intro/New Character</b>      | Fairy Godmother   | Fairy Godmother  | Kristina  | Tomás   |
| <b>Action</b>                   | "Bring me a pumpkin"  | "Bring me a pumpkin"   | Betty sent for the model's costume                                      | Lety told to write the report   |
| <b>Plan Revealed</b>            | "You are going to the Ball!"  | "You are going to the Ball!"   | "Go prove you were worth hiring!"                                       | "Show them how good you are at your job!"   |
| <b>Relationship Affirmation</b> | N/A   | N/A  | N/A   | N/A   |
| <b>Clarification</b>            | Leave by midnight, or else...   | Leave by midnight, or else...  | We need to get this account!  | We need to get this account!  |
| <b>Conflict Continues</b>       | Stepsister's mistreatment continues after the ball; trying to claim the slipper (thus the Prince) | Stepmother and Stepsister's mistreatment continues after the ball; trying to claim the slipper (thus the Prince) | Wilhelmina continues plotting against Daniel; trying to claim his job   | Marcia and Alicia plotting against Lety; Ariel plotting against Fernando, trying to claim his job |
| <b>Relief</b>                   | Cendrillon gets to try the slipper, transformation  | Cinderella gets to try the slipper; recognition  | Presentation goes well  | Presentation goes well  |
| <b>Theme</b>                    | Goodness always wins in the end   | Goodness and believing always win in the end   | "Good" always wins in the end   | Honesty always wins; Deceit always loses  |
| <b>Foreshadowing</b>            | Taken to prince, dressed in new clothes- foreshadowing changes inside                             | Stepmother and sisters waiting on Cinderella   | Wilhelmina plotting with mysterious stranger                            | Fortune teller's prediction about Lety and Fernando   |
| <b>Ambiance</b>                 | Stepsisters forgiven, wedding,  | Stepsisters forgiven, wedding  | Daniel and Betty working happily together; both have proven their worth | Fernando and Lety working well together; both have proven their worth                             |

(Larson, Porter, Harthcock and Nellis, 2002)

**Appendix F**

**“Good” and “evil” characteristics as displayed in the main characters of each of the four texts.**

| <i>Cendrillon</i>    |              | <i>Cinderella</i> |              | <i>Ugly Betty</i> |             | <i>La fea más Bella</i> |             |
|----------------------|--------------|-------------------|--------------|-------------------|-------------|-------------------------|-------------|
| <b>Good</b>          | <b>Evil</b>  | <b>Good</b>       | <b>Evil</b>  | <b>Good</b>       | <b>Evil</b> | <b>Good</b>             | <b>Evil</b> |
| Passive              | Demanding    | Passive           | Demanding    | Obliging          | Demanding   | Obliging                | Demanding   |
| Obedient             | Cruel        | Obedient          | Rude         | Dutiful           | Rude        | Dutiful                 | Rude        |
| Humble               | Arrogant     | Humble            | Arrogant     | Humble            | Arrogant    | Humble                  | Arrogant    |
| Dreamer              | Schemer      | Dreamer           | Schemer      | Dreamer           | Schemer     | Dreamer                 | Schemer     |
| Generous             | Greedy       | Generous          | Greedy       | Generous          | Greedy      | Generous                | Greedy      |
| Forgiving            | Bad-tempered | Forgiving         | Bad-tempered | Eager to please   | Heartless   | Eager to please         | Heartless   |
| Truthful             | Insincere    | Truthful          | Insincere    | Truthful          | Deceitful   | Truthful                | Deceitful   |
| Patient              | Complaining  | Patient           | Complaining  | Selfless          | Surly       | Selfless                | Surly       |
| Kindhearted          | Cruel        | Kindhearted       | Unkind       | Kindhearted       | Hostile     | Kindhearted             | Hostile     |
| Helpful              | Jealous      | Helpful           | Jealous      | Supportive        | Resentful   | Supportive              | Resentful   |
| graceful             | clumsy       | graceful          | clumsy       | awkward           | confident   | awkward                 | poised      |
| Good taste (fashion) | Poor taste   | Good taste        | Poor taste   | Poor taste        | Good taste  | Poor taste              | Good taste  |

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> ***Cendrillon***- (Charles Perrault, France, 1697) The daughter of a nobleman who has lost his first wife and married another, Cendrillon is portrayed as the neglected daughter of an ineffectual father and the maltreated stepchild of a malicious and jealous woman who favored her own callous daughters at Cendrillon's expense. The father does not stand up to the ill-treatment his child receives at the hands of the stepmother, and virtually disappears after his initial introduction. Subject to insults and mocking at the hands of the stepsisters, and forced into servitude by the stepmother, Cendrillon never loses her cheerful disposition or good-hearted helpfulness—even when denied in her plea to attend the Prince's ball. Through her tears after her family's departure, she is visited by her fairy godmother, who—using garden vermin and winter produce—makes magical arrangements for her attendance, seeing her off only with a warning to leave the ball by midnight. In this telling of the tale, Cendrillon goes to the ball on three successive nights, the second two at the personal invitation of the Prince. On the third night as the clock strikes midnight she barely escapes the Prince's pursuit before all of her finery returns to rags, yet leaves a single glass slipper stays behind. The Prince conducts a search for his beautiful dancing partner using the slipper to identify her and in the end, Cendrillon is revealed as she teasingly asks to try on the shoe, before pulling its mate from her pocket. Her clothing is transformed by her fairy godmother, and recognition by the prince is complete—just in time to begin her 'happily ever after.' She forgives her stepsisters, and brings them to court with her, marrying them off to two noblemen the same day.

<sup>2</sup> ***Rodgers and Hammerstein's Cinderella*** (1957) follows a very similar narrative to Perrault's tale, with an absent father, and haughty stepmother and stepsisters. Perhaps in the interest of time, the story begins *in medias res*, without explanation for either the father's absence or Cinderella's status in the family—her subservient status is merely presented as fact. The stepmother, although condescending and short-tempered is not malevolent, yet not even Cinderella herself considers her attendance as they plan for the ball. Even after the mother and sisters leave, Cinderella does not seem upset at not being allowed to attend—merely pensive as she contemplates the ball. When her secretly “fairy” godmother arrives, Cinderella finally admits her wish to attend the ball, and “officially wishes” to go—at which point the godmother works

her magic on the pumpkin and rats Cinderella has been sent to fetch. They become her transportation, and Cinderella is then magically clothed and ready to go to the ball.

At first glance, the Prince is instantly smitten with Cinderella, and they declare their love just as the clock begins to strike midnight. Cinderella runs off, dropping her glass slipper in the process. Finding it, the Prince declares that he will search the entire kingdom to find and wed the one who fits the shoe. When his search is unproductive (Cinderella is not at home when the searcher party arrives; she is hiding at the castle hoping for a glimpse of the prince), the fairy godmother arranges for Cinderella to be discovered by having her arrested for “lurking” at the palace. At a joke from the godmother, the shoe is tried, fits, and the prince is summoned. Even without her fine clothes, he recognizes Cinderella, and wedding bells begin to ring!

<sup>3</sup>**Functions**, according to Propp (2008), act as “stable, constant elements [of the narrative]... independent of how and by whom they are fulfilled” (p. 21). Defined as significant activities on the part of a character that work to advance the action of the plot—these functions create the working parts of the fairy tale, and Propp (2008) notes there are many different ways that these functions can occur within the plot structure of each individual tale. Propp (2008) claimed that although not every function is present in every tale, the order of these functions is always the same, as “one function develops out of another logically” (Berger, 1997, p. 27). Many of the functions also organize into sets, displaying what Lüthi calls the “bipolar structure” (1984; qtd. in Berger, 1997, p. 85) of “lack/lack liquidated” (Dundes, 1988, p. 85). Examples of this bipolar structure are oppositions such as “prohibition/violation [and] need/help,” which draw the functions into pairs, with one answering the situation of the other.

<sup>4</sup> The **six kernel scenes** consist of a disturbance, an obstacle, a complication, a confrontation, a crisis and the resolution of that crisis. The **twelve satellite scenes** include exposition, the dramatic question, the introduction of a new character, the action, a plan revealed, a relationship affirmed, clarification, continuation of the conflict, relief, theme reminder, foreshadowing and ambiance. In examining the structure, I considered the idea that this model created to analyze television texts might also be used on literary texts, just as Propp’s structure for examining literature transferred easily to many television texts. I have noted my analysis of all four texts using the Scene function Model of kernels and satellites in Appendices D and E.

<sup>5</sup> The “morals” that Perrault (Sierra, 1992, p. 14-15) added to the end of his tale:

**Moral**

“For a maiden, beauty is a rare treasure,  
Which one never tires of admiring.  
But what we call grace  
Is without price, and worth far more.  
This is what [Cendrillon’s] godmother gave her,  
Instructing her so well that she made a queen of her.  
(So says the moral of this story)  
Fair ones, this gift is greater than beauty.  
In the end, in order to win someone’s heart,  
Graciousness is the fairies’ true gift.  
Without it, one can do nothing;  
With it, one can do anything!”

**Another moral**

“It is surely a great advantage  
To have intelligence and daring,  
Good breeding and good sense,  
And other such qualities  
Which one receives from on high!  
Even though you have these,  
You will not have success,  
Unless, to make them count, you have  
A godfather or godmother.”