A Savior Complex and Household Chores: The Prince's Role in the Brothers Grimm's Cinderella

El complejo de salvador y las tareas domésticas: El papel del príncipe en la Cenicienta de los hermanos Grimm

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Resumen

Los cuentos han establecido el rol de género y los niños han crecido siguiendo estos estereotipos. El arquetipo de héroe propuesto por Jung muestra cómo está compuesto y da el origen de esos estereotipos. En los cuentos de Cenicienta, el arquetipo de héroe se representa mezclado con el complejo de salvador que tiene el príncipe. Además, muestra cómo se perpetúa mediante acciones del príncipe y la princesa. Además, muestra que la escapatoria del sufrimiento (las tareas domésticas) es el matrimonio.

Palabras claves: Arquetipo del héroe, Roles de género, Tareas domésticas

Abstract

Tales have established the gender role, and children have grown up following these stereotypes. The hero archetype proposed by Jung shows how it is composed and gives the origin of those stereotypes. In Cinderella tales, the hero archetype is portrayed mixed with a savior complex that the prince has. Furthermore, it shows how it is perpetuated by actions from the prince and princess. Also, showing that the escape from suffering (the household chores) is marriage.

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1. Introduction

I have had an interest in genre and social issues, but at the university, these topics were not discussed in depth. However, recently, a teacher created a discussion about how feminism is portrayed in some tales. It caught my attention, so I wanted to inquire about this topic and read Cinderella by the Grimm Brothers.

While I was reading, I noticed that there are gender roles for each character, and it surprised me because kids are not aware of it. Therefore, tales have shaped gender roles in society, creating standards and behaviors for each genre. For instance, princesses are soft, kind, generous, and have a connection with animals, but they are wretched at their household chores. On the other hand, the prince is the brave savior who rescues the princess by marrying her. This way, the prince appears and saves the princess's life even if they could have done it alone. This statement is portrayed through the Cinderella story.

 Thus, I will address how the gender roles are reflected in Cinderella`s story, especially in the prince's character. It is important to know the context of the story and the author's perception to understand it, so I will describe it from the formalism. Second, to identify the savior complex in the tale, it is necessary to comprehend the phenomenon of the archetype and how it is related. By revising Jung's archetypes and the theory of hero, I will explain the phenomenon and correlate it with the tale. Finally, in the analysis, the hero archetype and the savior complex will be exposed, portraying the Cinderella tale.

2. Cinderella from the formalism

Analyzing the formalism movement allows us to understand the story`s development and the dynamic of tension throughout the exposition, rising action, and climax moments. At the same time, understanding the topics of justice, transformation, and faith given by a narrative.

The Cinderella tale is a story about an orphan who lives with her stepmother, sisters, and father. There are around 700 versions of Cinderella in movies and tales, but the most famous version was written by Charles Perrault and the Grimm Brothers. The Grimm Brothers' version has interesting details that depict the magical elements.

Cinderella was written in 1812 by Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm and is part of a collection of tales called "Kinder". In that year, German Romanticism was focusing on nature, emotions, and folklore. This is why the Cinderella tale has elements such as a magical tree, birds, and collaborative animals. The Grimm brothers used to ask farmers about stories and experiences; in this way, they conserved the traditional folklore of rural Germany.

The Grimm brothers' version is a Christian representation of values in their tales, for example, hope, humility, working hard, justice, and faith. However, the era of 1812 reflects the patriarchal norms, women's roles, and the perception of marriage (Zipes, 2003). Taking into account this, the authors were inspired by Charles Perrault to write Cinderella, but with the emblem darker tone.

The Cinderella tale starts with the death of Cinderella's mother, thereby she has to live with her father, step-mother, and sisters. Her stepmother humiliates Cinderella and obliges her to do all the household chores, always insulting her using their dirty appearance. Despite this, Cinderella follows the instructions and does everything; she always cries and visits her mother's grave. The climax of the story is when the prince convenes a royal ball, and Cinderella wants to go;

however, her stepmother doesn't allow her and orders her to separate lentils from cinders. She asks the birds and they help her, then she uses the power of her mother's grave to obtain a beautiful dress and a piece of amazing jewelry. It is a key point that Cinderella has those tools as a power. She goes to the ball and catches the attention of the prince, so he immediately wants to take her with him. Nevertheless, Cinderella ran away and lost her heel. The climax arises when the prince looks for the pretty princess's heel owner, and he arrives at Cinderella's house. There, her sisters try to fix their feet by cutting them, even though they couldn't, and finally, Cinderella appears. Cinderella and the prince marry, and at last, she can be happy with the prince. Furthermore, the pigeon bites the sister`s eyes, and they end up blind.

The style of the tale uses a tripartite structure to organize the events. For example, her mother dies, she lives with her stepmother, sisters, and father, and consequently suffers being humiliated for the household chores. Secondly, at the ball, she impressed all the attendees with her beauty and her dress, danced with the prince, and escaped. Finally, the prince finds her, marries her, and her sisters become blind. This structure creates expectation every time a cycle happens, a new event. Moreover, this repetition shows the liberation of Cinderella when a new event happens, getting done marrying the prince.   This pattern creates expectation and intrigue in the reader, waiting for the resolution of each phase. Finally, the symbolic elements contribute to the darker and folklore tone of the Grimm brothers. For instance, the tree and the mother`s grave that grew by Cinderella`s tears show a spiritual connection with her mother. Furthermore, the helper birds were something like justice guardians when they helped the poor damsel and punished the malevolent sisters. Another tone of Grimm's tale is when one sister cut her feet to fix and be perfect for the prince.

3. Savior complex: Archetype by Jung

Carl Jung is a Swiss psychiatrist who established a school of psychoanalysis and wrote 51 books about the psyche and identity. Furthermore, Jung (1969) set up a theory about the archetypes that humans have are innate and part of social reproduction. Archetypes arise from the need to survive and follow representations to face the world's difficulties. Jung proposes 12 archetypes that have existed, and one of those archetypes is the Hero, which I analyze in this section.

The archetypes are patterns that compose a representation of an identity and assigned behaviors from each genre. Joined archetypes are innate, so that's why people are unconscious about the replication of them. Indeed, the unconscious is part of human nature, and Jung believed that we have instinctive patterns of behavior (Jung, 1969). However, consciousness is part of the ego that makes decisions to accomplish the standards of society. On the other hand, the unconscious is born from our experiences and memories that are repressed. In other words, there are personal and collective unconsciousness that are universal. Although when we are conscious of these archetypes, it is likewise a process of deconstruction, I mean, a change.

Now, referring to the hero archetype is a fundamental character that leaves a mark in history, that bestows cultural and moral functions. Indeed, Jung (1986) compares this archetype to a personal trip to discover consciousness as well as an individuation process. Some steps are part of the journey that heroes' archetypes fulfill and are represented in most of the tales, movies, and even in human history. Below, I explain each step given by Jung`s theory:

1. Challenges and crisis: the hero is challenged to save someone and face enemies, likewise, an adventure call where his abilities are proven. In this step, the hero confronts his internal conflicts that are part of the unconscious.

2. Meeting with a Magna Mater: here, the hero is doing catharsis and finding a purpose, confronting his unconscious, and being aware of his traumas.

3. The woman has a temptation: a temptation faced by the hero, which acts as a distraction from his purpose to be aware and finish his mission. Sometimes women are represented as a sin that the hero must overcome to fix the moral norms of society. Though in the majority of the cases, it represents the hero fighting against a dragon.

4. Final reward: the final step is where the journey ends and the hero reach his purpose. Now he is transformed into the best warrior, savior, or even an emblem of bravery.

Those steps are reflected in a collective staff, such as religion, popular tales, literature, art, and the collective beliefs, for instance, the stereotypes. This archetype is defined as a schema that we are used to because those materials teach us that it is normal. Besides the fact that archetypes allow people to fix in the world.

Now, I want to do a little exercise: think of the word "hero", what is the image that appears in your mind? Mostly, you think of a male hero. And now, think of the word household chores, possibly you think of a woman doing it. Don't feel guilty about it, if you notice it is part of the archetypes that we have stuck with. Fortunately, as Jung (1986) mentions, when you are aware, you can deconstruct it.

An additional sample of hero archetypes nowadays is seen in movies and series, for instance, all the superheroes or the rich man who falls in love with the woman. In this case, man is seen as a solution for their problems, mostly marrying. The Savior complex arises from the need to protect the weak woman who can't save herself, and it reinforces the gender roles. Connecting with that, masculinity is an essential characteristic for the hero archetype, and it is problematic because masculinity is an ambiguous construct. Reading an article, I noticed that it affects men, because they have the pressure to fit their identity with an unrealistic stereotype:

> "The saviour syndrome in boys is a real thing, and it is brutally manufactured and superimposed by the media. Men acting as 'saviours' in real-life or fiction is not so much a problem, as much as the fact that the role of the saviour is so normalised, and rather essentialized that boys who find themselves unable to relate to the mould of hegemonic masculinity land up in an identity-crisis, because there are just no alternate culturally available ways to become a man in this society" (Choudhary, 2020).

Following the last idea gender roles are strongly assign by the tales, reinforcing the idea that princesses are obedient and responsible. If they want that prince to approve of them, they need to be pretty, generous, and do the household chores correctly; if not, they are the villain of the story. The happy end always concretes with a marriage, where the princess has a tragic past, spending her whole life waiting for the prince to save her by marrying.

In addition, household chores correspond to women as a repressive way of control by men. Women can aim to have a good job or a powerful position, because she has to take care of the house and children. Women have grown up thinking that they need marriage to succeed, or they need to be good at household chores, and Choudary supports this statement in her essay:

"Our society teaches the single women of a certain age that considering yourself single is a deep personal failure. In change, a man of a certain age who is not married is because he has not yet chosen. I know a woman who hates domestic tasks but pretends like them because they have been taught that to be a good party host has to be -to use another Nigerian concept- one woman of your house" (Choudhary, 2020). Despite women being aware and feeling discomfort about it, society still has prejudices that perpetuate those roles. The household chores involve doing many things, which means that it is a real job without retributions as a salary.

4. Savior of the household chores

Now taking into account the last statement and Jung`s archetypes, the hero archetype is portrayed by the prince and the household chores for the princess in the Cinderella tale. Then, when I read the tale again, I could identify characteristics in each one that fit with those archetypes. But I compared the hero archetype with a savior complex because the prince does a different way of rescuing the damsel. Moreover, Cinderella suffers for doing the household chores and even for having the solution, she prefers to wait. Afterwards, I will be exposed to how the theory is correlated in the tale.

5. Savior and hero archetype

What is the main reason that the prince does a royal dance? to choose her wife from among many girls, as they were a catalogue. I think that is indignant the way the prince selects his wife, and for us it is present likewise, quotidian and lovely. When he sees Cinderella, he is impressed because she has a gorgeous dress and amazing jewelry. So, immediately, he chooses her among all the princesses, and

it is presented as a romantic decision. But he doesn't choose her for her personality, was for her physical appearance, and Cinderella knows that the only way to catch the attention of the prince was with her beauty. Actually, the princesses know it, and they follow the pattern of presenting themselves as empty beauty vessels. Additionally, the prince took Cinderella with him as though she were his property, showing his power. In the tale, this action is presented as he is doing a favor to Cinderella, which means that he is a savior. If you are a little girl reading that, you could think that it is loved, and I consider that is dangerous to see it in it way. You can see it in the following part:

"The King's son came to meet her, and took her by the hand and danced with her, and he refused to stand up with anyone else, so that he might not be obliged to let go her hand; and when any one came to claim it, he answered, "She is my partner." (Grimm Brothers, 1812).

The savior complex is seen clearly in the following paragraph, where the prince needs to take care of the damsel whom he just met one hour ago. He doesn't want to know Cinderella; he wants to know her house and his father to take her. Besides, the tale shows that Cinderella can run away and jump into a house, but the archaic prince thinks that she is in trouble. Nowadays, the situation is similar when men protect us from another man, instead of promoting the consciousness about it.

"And when the evening came, she wanted to go home, but the prince said he would go with her to take care of her, for he wanted to see where the beautiful maiden lived. But she escaped him, and jumped up into the pigeon-house. Then the prince waited until the father came, and told him the strange maiden had jumped into the pigeon-house." (Grimm Brothers, 1812).

Finally, the way to rescue Cinderella was to marry her because, according to the tales, it ended the suffering of the princess. According to Barber (2015), Cinderella is a proper princess because she is absolutely pretty, obedient, responsible for her house, and also waits for the "love" (the prince marries her). Moreover, the prince is perfect because he chooses the damsel, looks for her, and rescues her immediately.

6. Household chores

At the large of the tale, Cinderella is suffering because she has to mop, clean, wash the dishes, sweep, and separate the lentils for the cinder. To top it all, she was humiliated for her family, and she could only cry... ah! and ask the birds to help her. It is interesting how Cinderella is resigned to do this work when she was able to escape. I see that the tale presents the household chores as suffering, and as I mentioned before is the reality of many women. And the fact is that nobody wants to do it alone, and many women hate to do it, but society teaches us to be good at it (Choudhary, 2020).

> "She was obliged to do heavy work from morning to night, get up early in the morning, draw water, make the fires, cook, and wash." (Grimm Brothers, 1812).

7. Savior of the Cinderella and her suffering: household chores

Something that caught my attention is that Cinderella was able to talk with the animals and had a magical tree. I feel mad because she never uses their resources to escape or have a better life; she confines herself to waiting. For instance, she could ask the tree for gold and riches and get lost in a new place, in her place. Or she can defend herself when her stepmother mistreats her, or present herself as

she was in front of the prince. She limits her power to ask for a dress and jewelry to impress the prince.

> "O gentle doves, O turtle-doves, And all the birds that be, The lentils that in ashes lie Come and pick up for me!. (.......) "Little tree, little tree, shake over me, That silver and gold may come down and cover me." (Grimm Brothers, 1812)

Moreover, Cinderella isn`t the only one who thinks in that way, for example, her sisters wanted to marry no matter what:

"The next morning, he went to the father and told him that none should be his bride save the one whose foot the golden shoe should fit. Then the two sisters were very glad, because they had pretty feet. The eldest went to her room to try on the shoe, and her mother stood by. But she could not get her great toe into it, for the shoe was too small; then her mother handed her a knife, and said, "Cut the toe off, for when you are queen, you will never have to go on foot." So, the girl cut her toe off, squeezed her foot into the shoe, concealed the pain, and went down to the prince" (Grimm Brothers, 1812). But I can`t judge them because it is a sample of the reality of those women in 1812. The tale never tells us about Cinderella`s thoughts or her aspirations, and is limited to describing her as a beautiful and sad girl. Women had to aspire to not only marry but also be pretty and good at the household chores; their intelligence was left over.

What`s more, nowadays women are valued for their softness and beauty even when they have a powerful position. I was shocked when I read that Cinderella married him, because her feet fit into the heel. The prince based his criteria for a wife on fitting a heel! Cinderella was of her father and stepmother, and now is the possession of the prince. Has something changed? No, now she hasn't done the household chores, but she is the trope of men. Where are her aspirations, her

abilities to talk with animals, her spiritual connection with the tree at the mother`s grave?

Finally, now I know the power of those tales and the reason why they perpetuate archetypes as stereotypes. We have grown up with the idea of finding our prince who rescues us by way of marriage. The idea of love and marriage is distorted, and we think that if someone chooses us for our beauty is real love or being a property of a men is it. Men think that they must save girls all the time and that we can't liberate ourselves. Also, society looks at feminism as rebel girls who hate men and are as malevolent. Instead of seeing the reality and considering that it is a way of liberty and a necessary change.

Remember that Jung (1969) said that archetypes are innate and are part of collective thinking. However, we can deconstruct archetypes, being conscious, which means stopping the prejudice. We can deconstruct stopping seeing the household chores as the responsibility of women, instead of tasks that are for all of us. Furthermore, stop believing that love implies a man who rescues us, and a weak, pretty woman.

My invitation with this essay is to deconstruct this tale and the roles and stereotypes hidden by the lines. Moreover, to be aware of it and feel uncomfortable with the stereotypes to destroy. Let's think of all the genres as equal and leave it at fluent with their characteristics. Men and women can be heroes of themselves, not for another person, because we can improve by ourselves. Finally, it is important from our positions to support the new generations to deconstruct the archetypes and provide them with new input. From my position as a future teacher and translator, I wanted to deconstruct and construct a society conscious of the prejudice that affects us.

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