The Black and the White Bride: Dualism, Gender, and Bodies in European Fairy Tales

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Fairy tales are one of the most important folklore genres in Western culture, spanning literary and oral cultures, folk and elite cultures, and print and mass media forms. As Jack Zipes observes: 'The cultural evolution of the fairy tale is closely bound historically to all kinds of storytelling and different civilizing processes that have undergirded the formation of nation-states.'[143] Studying fairy tales thus opens a window onto European history and cultures, ideologies, and aesthetics.

My goal here is to examine how fairy-tale characters embody dualistic traits, in regard both to gender roles and to other dualisms, such as the divide between the mind and body, and the body's interior and exterior (as characterized by the skin). These and other dualisms have been theorized from many quarters. As Elizabeth Grosz states: 'Feminists and philosophers seem to share a common view of the human subject as a being made up of two dichotomously opposed characteristics: mind and body, thought and extension, reason and passion, psychology and biology.'[144] Further, 'Dichotomous thinking necessarily hierarchizes and ranks the two polarized terms so that one becomes the privileged term and the other its suppressed, subordinated, negative counterpart.'[145] Thus, any discussion of dualisms is automatically also a discussion of power relations. This article begins by summarizing the trajectory of dualism in Western intellectual history and culture, including how dualism fits within folkloristic and feminist scholarship. I then address the ways in which dualism is upheld or subverted in fairy tales, including topics such as transformations and skins, especially as they appear in the internationally known tale 'The Black and the White Bride' (ATU 403).[146]

This project utilizes a database containing body descriptions from six collections of tales: *Beauties, Beasts, and Enchantment: Classic French Fairy Tales* translated by Jack Zipes (covering the classical French tradition from the 1690s onward), *The Collected Fairy Tales of the Brothers Grimm* translated by Jack Zipes (based on the 1857 edition of the Grimms' tales), *Italian Popular Tales* compiled and translated by Thomas Crane (spanning Italian literary and folk tales primarily from the 1800s), *Folktales of France* edited by Geneviève Massignon (tales that she and others collected in the 1950s), *Folktales of Germany* edited by Kurt Ranke (compiled from fieldwork collections from approximately 1850-1950), and *Folklore by the Fireside* by Alessandro Falassi (tales that he collected

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[143] J. Zipes, *The Irresistible Fairy Tale: The Cultural and Social History of a Genre* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2012), p. xi.
[144] E. Grosz, *Volatile Bodies: Toward a Corporeal Feminism* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1994), p. 3.
[145] Ibid., p. 3.
[146] For those unfamiliar with the ATU designation, it refers to the Aarne-Thompson-Uther tale type system, a means by which folklorists keep track of international folktale plots as they circulate through different regions and cultures. Widespread tales like 'Cinderella' do not bear the same title in every community that tells them, so assigning each tale a number helps facilitate comparative research.

in Tuscany in the 1970s and translated).[147] In each collection, I use only proper fairy tales or *zaubermärchen* in my analysis (those numbering 300-749 in the ATU tale type system, with a few exceptions for tales that fall outside that category but are still clearly tales of magic), discarding the legends and animal tales that appear in some of these collections. My selection balances between tales collected by single scholars, and tales written by single authors; folk and literary versions of tales, and classical and contemporary versions of tales.[148]

The goal of creating this database, containing 233 tales, was to be able to extract information about how the body is represented in European fairy tales in general.[149] Yet I also incorporate details from the texts under study (particularly versions of 'The Black and the White Bride'), in an effort to combine close reading with distant reading.[150] Culture has both qualitative and quantitative elements, and thus I believe our scholarship must emulate it wherever possible by seeking quantitative correctives to subjective interpretations. Here, quantitative elements find expression in simple statistics as well as charts that visually display the relationship of fairy-tale body parts to one another. Some of the findings discussed below – such as the correlations between men and the mind, and women and skin and beauty – point toward the dualisms discussed in the first sections of this paper. The corpus utilized here (and especially the fact that it draws on a hand-coded database) is unique, as are the combination of a digital humanities methodology with feminist concerns with the body, gender roles, and dualism in fairy tales.

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[147] I work with the tales in English translation, using translations by folklorists or overseen by folklorists (as in the *Folktales of the World* collection, a project spearheaded by American folklorist Richard Dorson) where possible in order to ensure attention to cultural specificity. I chose to work with tales in translation in part because I am interested in the spread of international fairy tales through the English-speaking world, and in part to ensure that I had the ability to compare common body part terms such as heart, hair, and tears. I am aware that some of these terms may have been altered in translation, but since variation is the essence of folkloric transmission, I am able to take this into account. Working with large numbers of texts also helps offset the impact of small-scale variations.

[148] These six collections provide a beautiful balance: the literary French tales in the Zipes collection come from multiple authors, while the orally-collected French tales from Massignon's book were gathered by a handful of collectors under Massignon's supervision; the Grimms' tales were collected orally but reflect the brothers' literary and nationalistic agendas, while the German tales from Ranke's book were gathered from more recent folkloristic archives; and Crane's Italian tales were selected from the folkloristic collections of scholars like Giuseppe Pitré and Laura Gonzenbach who were nonetheless influenced by the literary innovators from Italy, while Falassi's book of Italian tales were collected folkloristically in a contemporary context.

[149] This question provided the framing focus for my dissertation, "Gender and the Body in Classical European Fairy Tales," completed at Indiana University in 2012. Many of the ideas under discussion here are expanded upon in the dissertation (such as the overall count of women's and men's bodies in my sample of fairy tales, as well as more in-depth analysis of tales with protagonists of different genders). My use of quantitative methods was inspired in part by Ruth Bottigheimer's excellent work on gendered language use in the Grimms' tales. See, for example, her 'Silenced Women in the Grimms' Tales: The "Fit" Between Fairy Tales and Society in Their Historical Context.' In R. Bottigheimer (ed.) *Fairy Tales and Society: Illusion, Allusion, and Paradigm* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1986) pp. 115-131. I also wished to provide a corrective to quantitative studies of fairy tales done by scholars outside the discipline of folkloristics (such as Jonathan Gottschall) who seem ignorant of our discipline's contributions to the study of fairy tales. Donald Haase recently analyzed this phenomenon in his article 'Decolonizing Fairy-Tale Studies,' *Marvels & Tales* 24.1 (2010), pp. 17-38.

[150] See T. Tangherlini, 'Legendary Performances: Folklore, Repertoire, and Mapping,' *Ethnographia Europaea* 40 (2010), pp. 103-15.

Dualism in Western Thought and Scholarship

Before turning to 'The Black and the White Bride', in order to situate dualism as it relates to fairy tales, this first section of this article explores the main forms that dualism has taken in Western thought, including its evolution through different time periods and the main items that have been opposed to one another. These periods include the ancient world, the Middle Ages, and the Enlightenment. Keeping all these periods in mind while thinking through dualisms in fairy tales is helpful because many facets of folk culture retain aspects of earlier worldviews. The main terms of dualism I treat in this article include male/female, mind/body, and nature/culture, though I will mention others where relevant. Rather maddeningly, it is difficult to consider the various elements of dualism separately, which reveals how intertwined these concepts are in terms of their historical connection and ideological impact, an important point for my study.[151] As both categories of thought and assumptions that tend to go unexamined, these aspects of dualism can be difficult to separate. There is a tendency for people to assume that they 'know' the difference between male and female, for instance, even though the categories are confounded and challenged daily.

The split between mind and body is one of the oldest forms of dualism. Plato had a formative role in shaping mind/body dualism in the West. Elizabeth Spelman summarizes Plato's writings as promoting the idea that 'one has no hope of attaining [freedom] unless one works hard on freeing the soul from the lazy, vulgar, beguiling body.'[152] However, as Spelman demonstrates, Plato consistently equates the body with the feminine – one of the first of many inextricable links between various forms of dualism. For instance, Plato argued that concern for one's body rather than one's soul was womanly: 'When in our own lives some affliction comes to us…we plume ourselves…on our ability to remain calm and endure, in the belief that this is the conduct of a man, and [giving in to grief] that of a woman.'[153] The split between mind and body continued to be important to European Christians entering the Middle Ages. Grosz writes: 'Within the Christian tradition, the separation of mind and body was correlated with the distinction between what is immortal and what is mortal.'[154] This outlook contributed to the demonization of sexuality, which was thought to endanger the immortal soul by tempting the mortal body.

Letitia Meynell, in her introduction to *Embodiment and Agency*, states that the demarcation between body and mind is 'at the heart of the Abrahamic religious traditions. In these religions, persons are thought to survive bodily death and receive in the "afterlife" punishment or reward for their actions in their previous embodied lives. In this tradition, the person *is* the soul/mind, not the crude material stuff of the body.'[155] Embodiment and disembodiment thus form another ideological component of Western dualism. This dualism takes on a gendered dimension in medieval women's

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[151] In order to provide an overview of dualistic thought within a short space in this essay, I have had to rely on scholarly analyses of primary texts to convey the main features of dualism in condensed form. I direct readers to Susan Bordo's analysis of the main features of Western dualistic thought, which she supplements with examples from primary sources, in *Unbearable Weight* (especially 144-145).

[152] E. Spelman, 'Woman as Body: Ancient and Contemporary Views.' In Janet Price and Margaret Shildrick (eds.), *Feminist Theory and the Body: A Reader*. (New York: Routledge, 1999), pp. 32-41. p. 35.

[153] Quoted in Ibid., p. 37.

[154] Grosz, *Volatile Bodies,* p. 5.

[155] L. Meynell, 'Introduction: Minding Bodies.' In Sue Campbell and Letitia Meynell (eds.), *Embodiment and Agency* (University Park, PA: Penn State Press, 2009), pp. 1-21, p. 2, italics in original.

narratives of Christian spirituality, as in virgin martyr legends, wherein the more broken a woman's body becomes, the more whole/holy her spirit becomes.[156]

Moving forward in time, the Enlightenment was another significant period for the development of dualisms. Ludmilla Jordanova argues for the importance of this time: 'In this period the shifts in meaning and usage of words such as culture, civil, civilize, nature and life, provide indicators of deep changes in the way human society and its relations with the natural world were conceived.'[157] Alexandra Howson echoes this assessment: 'The period between the sixteenth and the end of the eighteenth centuries was characterized by rapid and extensive social change in relation to the nature of knowledge and the social position of women, as well as by broader shifts in the meaning of culture, nature, and civil society.'[158] Notably for this project, the period between the sixteenth and the end of the eighteenth centuries also marked the first wave of literary fairy tales, as writers Straparola, Charles Perrault, and Marie-Catherine d'Aulnoy were among the first to transform folkloric themes and types in their tale collections.[159]

The 17th century philosopher Descartes has left one of the largest intellectual legacies with regard to dualism at this time, even giving his name to 'Cartesian dualism.' As Grosz writes: 'Descartes instituted a dualism which three centuries of philosophical thought have attempted to overcome or reconcile.'[160] Any discussion of dualism simply must include Descartes, for as Grosz states: 'The Cartesian tradition has been more influential than any other tradition in establishing the agenda for philosophical reflection and in defining the terrain, either negatively or positively, for later concepts of subjectivity and knowledge.'[161] The value judgments present in the work of Descartes have provoked a response from many feminist scholars, while other scholars (such as folklorists) have taken up the conversation about dualism without specific reference to Descartes or other philosophers, instead taking as a starting point the presence of dualism within cultural materials.

Feminist and Folklorist Responses to Dualism

The attention that feminists and folklorists have given dualism helps set the stage for many of the concerns explored here. For feminists, acknowledging the role of Descartes and Cartesian constructions of the body is an important step in addressing the dualisms that have become ubiquitous in Western accounts of how the mind and body (and thus the genders) relate.[162] One of the reasons feminists have attacked dualism is that dualisms impose hierarchies that are often

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[156] Discussed in C. Marshall, 'The Politics of Self-Mutilation: Forms of Female Devotion in the Late Middle Ages.' In Darryll Grantley and Nina Taunton (eds.,), *The Body in Late Medieval and Early Modern Culture* (Burlington USA: Ashgate Publishing, 2000), pp. 11-21. p. 12-13.

[157] L. Jordanova, 'Natural Facts: A Historical Perspective on Science and Sexuality.' In Janet Price and Margaret Shildrick (eds.), *Feminist Theory and the Body: A Reader* (New York: Routledge, 1999), pp. 157-168. p. 158.

[158] A. Howson, *Embodying Gender* (London: Sage Publications, 2005), 65.

[159] Zipes, *Irresistible Fairy Tale*, pp. 14-15, 21-37.

[160] Grosz, *Volatile Bodies,* p. 6.

[161] Ibid., p. 10.

[162] Grosz gives a detailed description of 'at least three lines of investigation of the body in contemporary thought which may be regarded as the heirs of Cartesianism' (*Volatile Bodies*, p. 8). These include the body as an object for the natural sciences, the body as machine or tool, and the body as a vehicle for expression (Ibid., pp. 8-10). While these formulations fall outside the purview of my project, they are still interesting to note, as such understandings may inform other genres of folklore about the body and gender, or more literary or novelistic rewritings of the fairy tale.

gendered, and almost always seem to place women in the devalued category. As Spelman writes, Plato's misogyny 'is part of his somatophobia: the body is seen as the source of all the undesirable traits a human being could have, and women's lives are spent manifesting those traits.'[163] This legacy of somatophobia is problematic for feminists. Moira Gatens writes: 'Recent feminist research suggests that the history of western thought shows a deep hatred and fear of the body. This somatophobia is understood by some feminists to be specifically masculine and intimately related to gynophobia and misogyny.'[164] Somatophobia has also left a very specific legacy that belittles and endangers women: the dualistic construction of the virgin/whore complex, which only allows goodness for women that are distanced from sexuality and embodiment. Similarly dualistic portrayals of women in fairy tales will be discussed below.[165]

While folklorists have not been as explicitly concerned with dualisms or somatophobia for the majority of the discipline's history, these concerns have still surfaced in the scholarship and informed major works and trends. 'Dualism' tends to be coded in folkloristic work as 'opposition,' which immediately brings to mind structuralist work. Rather than surveying all structural studies that touch on oppositional thinking – for, as Alan Dundes has pointed out, 'the bibliography has become almost unmanageable'[166] – I will discuss some of the most important structuralist works to discuss oppositions.[167]

The main divide in structuralist thinking is between the syntagmatic and paradigmatic schools.[168] In the former, the structure being examined is the linear structure of the narrative or other kind of text; Vladimir Propp's work is held up as an example of this type of structuralism. In the latter, the emphasis is on opposing structural units that are reconciled in the narrative text. The work of Claude Lévi-Strauss represents this school. At its most basic level, Lévi-Strauss's structuralist approach can be characterized thus: 'We need only to assume that the two opposite terms with no intermediary always tend to be replaced by two equivalent terms which allow a third one as a mediator; then one of the polar terms and the mediator becomes replaced by a new triad and so on.'[169]

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[163] Spelman, 'Woman as Body,' p. 39.

[164] M. Gatens, 'Power, Bodies and Difference.' In Janet Price and Margaret Shildrick (eds.), *Feminist Theory and the Body: A Reader* (New York: Routledge, 1999), pp. 227-234. p. 228.

[165] Dualisms have also found their way into feminist research as a constructive rather than a destructive force. Though currently dismissed as overly simplistic, in the heyday of second wave feminism, dualist categories were utilized to analyze practically all forms of culture. Sherry Ortner's classic 1974 paper 'Is Female to Male as Nature Is to Culture?' exemplifies this trend in examining linked dualisms. Similarly, Gayle Rubin's 1975 essay 'The Traffic in Women: Notes on the "Political Economy" of Sex' utilizes the nature/culture dichotomy as well as kinship structures and economic and psychological theories to posit a dichotomous construction of sex (the biological) and gender (the cultural). These studies and others of their cohort, while important, represent the enthusiasm of a particular era, the second wave feminism of the 1970s and 1980s, for the tools that dualistic categories represented. Later feminists, however, have largely regarded dichotomous concepts as too essentializing and reductionist to be of use unless in culturally specific contexts.

[166] A. Dundes, 'Structuralism in Folklore,' in Simon Bronner (ed.), *The Meaning of Folklore: The Analytical Essays of Alan Dundes*. (Logan, Utah: Utah State University Press, 2007 [1976]), pp. 126-144. p. 126.

[167] Also, as Dundes writes, 'there are already useful, fairly comprehensive surveys of the folkloristic structural scholarship available in print' (ibid., p. 126), which he discusses in note 9 of the same essay.

[168] For a discussion of these terms, see Dundes, ibid., p. 133.

[169] Quoted in Dundes, ibid., 126. Other oppositional structuralist approaches to folklore include Axel Olrik's epic Law of Contrast and the folktale oppositions explored by Pierre Maranda and Elli Köngas Maranda, which are relevant when dealing with oppositions in fairy tales specifically.

The majority of well-known structural studies of folklore have been performed on narratives such as myth, folktale, and epic, though Dundes makes a convincing case that 'If structural analysis works at all, then it should work as well with minor genres as with major genres.'[170] Among other reasons, minor genres are easier to investigate and break down into constituent structural units, whether syntagmatic or paradigmatic, by sheer virtue of their length (or lack thereof). Additionally, once one gets started enumerating the oppositions occurring in folkloric forms, it is hard to stop. As Dundes writes, 'it is tempting to argue that all folklore, not just myth, consists of forming and attempting to resolve oppositions. The oppositions may concern life/death, good/evil, truth/falsehood, love/hate, innocence/guilt, male/female, man/god, large/small, child/adult, etc.'[171]

In an effort to avoid universalizing statements, emic and etic distinctions allow folklorists to attend to the nuances of *whose* dualisms are being discussed. As Dundes writes: 'Native categories, from inside a culture, are always worth studying; but they may or may not constitute accurate empirical descriptions of data as sought by objective analysts from either inside or outside that culture.'[172] A rigorous attention to whether native categories or scholarly categories are being described is thus necessary for a discussion of dualism. Letting the words of fairy tales speak for themselves is a step in the right direction – and thus the next section of this article focuses on how the scholarship on fairy tales explores dualistic concepts within their cultural contexts.

Fairy Tales and Dualism: The Theories

I believe that fairy tales offer a wealth of information about how dualism is regarded and adapted by folk and literary sources. That dualism might *not* be important to the understanding of fairy tales never occurred to me. Among other reasons, certain tale titles foreground dual identities, such as 'Brother and Sister,' 'The Two Brothers,' 'The Thief and His Master,' 'The Two Travelers,' 'The Two Kings' Children,' 'Faithful Ferdinand and Unfaithful Ferdinand,' 'The Little Lamb and the Little Fish,' and 'Snow White and Rose Red' (all from the Grimms).[173] We have already seen that dualism was important during the Enlightenment, when fairy tales rose to prominence. Moreover, during the nineteenth century, folk and fairy tales alike were collected and written (and sometimes re-written) all over Europe; Gillian Rose is among the feminists to discuss how 'the nineteenth century in particular witnessed an enormous amount of ideological work which strengthened the masculine/feminine dualism, both establishing gender difference and assuming heterosexuality.'[174] Jennifer Schacker has made similar observations, based on the translation of folktale collections into English during the nineteenth century, which reified cultural dualisms by using folktales as a mirror to show how modern the English were in comparison to the primitive taletellers: 'Against a background of orality, superstition, and rustic simplicity emerges a portrait of modern, literate, cosmopolitan Englishness.'[175]

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[170] Ibid., 127.
[171] Ibid., 135.
[172] Ibid., 129.
[173] To be fair, many fairy-tale titles also feature tripling, which is unsurprising as the number three is a well-known motif in much folk narrative.
[174] G. Rose. 'Women and Everyday Spaces.' In Janet Price and Margaret Shildrick (eds.), *Feminist Theory and the Body: A Reader* (New York: Routledge, 1999), pp. 359-370. p. 360.
[175] J. Schacker, *National Dreams: The Remaking of Fairy Tales in Nineteenth-Century England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003), p. 12.

From a folkloristic perspective, fairy tales as a folk narrative genre have a structural relationship with dualisms. Dundes suggests that the Lack/Lack Liquidated functions of Propp's morphology are what most narrative structures boil down to, using Native American folktales as his test case. This fundamental opposition – a problem and its solution – is in fact at the heart of narrative, as something must occur for a plot to be considered such. Upon that opposition, and all the intervening motifs and plot devices that expand and complicate it, whole narrative genres are built and distinguished. Dundes acknowledges that European folktales have a greater 'motifemic depth' than their Native American counterparts, hypothesizing that this depth 'might reflect an important principle of European culture and that is the whole notion of deferred gratification or reward.'[176] The important thing to note is that 'the structure of narrative is closely related to principles or elements of world-view.'[177] For my purposes, the oppositional structure inherent to fairy tales – lack and lack liquidated in Propp's terms – as well as their complication through intervening narrative functions is deeply connected with the content of the tales, as well as the ideologies they express. Further, although Dundes did not take his structural analysis to this extent, I believe that the structural oppositions in fairy tales (lack/lack liquidated at the most basic level, along with test/response, difficult task/solution, and so on) are intertwined with the primary ideological oppositions in fairy tales: male/female, high/low, youth/adult. Dundes's observation about European folktales being more structurally complex to reflect a more socially complex (some might say needlessly complex) worldview about gratification and other social norms can be thus extended to posit a relation between the different kinds of oppositions in the texts (not merely the structural) and the worldviews they express.

Bengt Holbek's work on fairy tales has been important in establishing the structural and symbolic importance of oppositions in fairy tales. He writes that the efforts of fairy-tale characters are 'dominated by three sets of thematic oppositions: (1) that of the conflict between the generations, (2) that of the meeting between the sexes, (3) that of the social opposition between the "haves" and the "have-nots."'[178] Each of these oppositions is mediated in the wedding, the final act of many fairy tales, explaining for Holbek why 'The triumphant wedding dominates the tale from beginning to end and no analysis can succeed which does not take this into account.'[179] Structurally and symbolically, the opposite poles of fairy-tale identities are thus reconciled through the unique conventions of the fairy-tale plot. Nancy Canepa has also suggested that oppositions are central to the genre: 'it is characteristic of the folk- and fairy tale, too, to present absolute aesthetic and ethical categories: the characters that populate its world are either beautiful or ugly, good or bad, helpers or antagonists.'[180] Even in modern literary renditions of fairy tales, dichotomies are notable; as Laurence Talairach-Vielmas discusses, Victorian author George MacDonald in his fairy tales 'furthers such an ambivalent body/mind dichotomy in his portrait of a light-bodied and light-minded woman.'[181] Thus, while some fairy tale scholars have highlighted continuity rather than opposition when discussing how fairy tales operate (Max Lüthi comes to mind, with his emphasis on the

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[176] Dundes, 'Structuralism and Folklore,' p. 138.

[177] Ibid., p. 138.

[178] B. Holbek, *Interpretation of Fairy Tales - Folklore Fellows Communications Series* (Helsinki: Academia Scientiarum Fennica, 1998), p. 410.

[179] Ibid., p. 411.

[180] N. Canepa, *From Court to Forest: Giambattista Basile's* Lo Cunto de li Cunti *and the Birth of the Literary Fairy Tale* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1999), p. 176.

[181] L. Talairach-Vielmas, *Moulding the Female Body in Victorian Fairy Tales and Sensation Novels* (Aldershot, England: Ashgate Publishing, Ltd., 2007), p. 39.

interconnectedness of fairy-tale characters), I believe that, for the reasons discussed above, it is necessary to take into account how dualisms function in fairy tales.

In terms of fairy tales' content in general, the beautiful/ugly and good/bad distinctions discussed in the above paragraph also find expression in the white/black dichotomy. Colors in fairy tales are already a somewhat problematic topic, as only a few colors tend to show up periodically, while the rest are neglected. Francisco Vaz da Silva, for instance, focuses on the well-known triad of white, red, and black, characterizing ideal fairy-tale heroines as white (which symbolizes purity) splashed with red, whereas blackness is related to death and enchantment.[182] However, Max Lüthi writes: 'Only a few things and persons are distinguished by a color term, and so they contrast all the more strongly with those that are colorless.'[183] Clearly, in the aesthetics of the fairy tale, it is possible for people to be described simply and in few words, and hence be 'colorless'; however, the social reality of the Western world does not allow for colorlessness. Whiteness is often the invisible, privileged state, whereas any other skin color is marked and laden with ideological judgments. In many cases, this type of racism is unconscious and does not mean that the writer bears ill-will toward people of color, rather, that they have not thought through the ramifications of race in society. This unconscious racism is subtly apparent in Lüthi's discussion of how color descriptions apply to folktale heroes: he mentions that folktale heroes and heroines are coated in gold or silver, or occasionally in pitch if they are to be punished, and their skin can be white as with Snow White or black as with 'black men – in Bulgarian folktales, as in the *Arabian Nights*, the Negro is a figure much favored.'[184] In other words, heroes and heroines can have white skin, but 'Negroes' (who are frequently villains) have black skin. Even though this may be unintentional and unconscious racism on Lüthi's part, the social meanings of dualistically distinct skins in fairy tales ought not go unremarked. The sheer number of black men and women who are represented as imposters and traitors ought to reinforce this point.[185]

Finally, I am not the first scholar to explicitly suggest such links between fairy tales and dualistic views of the body, though I am the first to address these links in a general analysis of European fairy tales rather than a specific cultural context. Combining feminist and folkloristic concerns, Elizabeth Tucker describes how Cartesian mind/body dualism, which was utilized to restrict French women from intellectual realms based on their bodies' reproductive functions, in turn influenced the tales they composed and shared.[186] Patricia Hannon locates French fairy-tale writer Marie-Catherine d'Aulnoy as bucking mainstream dualism: 'In contrast to what has been described as the closure of the Cartesian subject, the *conteuse* invents a baroque self-in-process, an experimental site for the exploration of identities related to the body's enhanced status as a conduit for knowledge.'[187] Hannon contextualizes her discussion of dualism with a nuanced account of how seventeenth-century French writers interact with the writing of Descartes and other dualistic authors, noting, for instance: 'Women's inferior position in the marriage hierarchy results from their

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[182] F. Vaz da Silva, 'Red as Blood, White as Snow, Black as Crow: Chromatic Symbolism of Womanhood in Fairy Tales,' *Marvels & Tales* 21.2 (2007): pp. 240-252, pp. 245-48.

[183] Lüthi, M. *The European Folktale: Form and Nature*. Trans. John D. Niles (Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1986 [1982]), p. 28.

[184] Ibid., pp. 27-28.

[185] Discussed in Cardigos, I. *In and Out of Enchantment: Blood Symbolism and Gender in Portuguese Fairytales* (Helsinki: Academia Scientiarum Fennica, 1996). Pp. 65; 128-130.

[186] E. Tucker. *Pregnant Fictions: Childbirth and the Fairy Tale in Early-Modern France* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2003).

[187] P. Hannon, *Fabulous Identities: Women's Fairy Tales in Seventeenth-Century France* (Amsterdam; Atlanta, Georgia: Rodopi, 1998), p. 17.

identification with the body as opposed to the mind, which, since Plato and Aristotle, had been equated with men.'[188] One of the main means by which writers such as d'Aulnoy could challenge the status quo was through the use of the fantastic; her 'metamorphosed characters seem to look back toward a pre-Cartesian worldview wherein the boundaries between self and universe, human and natural, are less clearly drawn.'[189] The body for Hannon is thus a political ground on which ideologies battle for dominance, in a war that ultimately empowers or disempowers women, depending on who is writing the body.

Lewis Seifert, also working on the French aristocratic tales, has a great many insights about how dualism influences the construction of the body, gender, and sexuality in the late 1600s and early 1700s. He proceeds on the assumption that 'fairy tales are a particularly apt means of studying the construction of sexuality and gender differences' as they are 'are highly economical and widely diffused, they present many of our most central myths about what divides the sexes and what constitutes desire.'[190] According to Seifert, the dualistic portrayals of women in fairy tales are due to patriarchal projections onto women, such that the rivalries between opposed women (such as the good/natural mother and the bad/step-mother), 'combined with the existential oppositions imposed on folk- and fairy-tale women (mind versus matter, intelligence versus beauty, imagination versus virtue, among others) make femininity a site of bitter internecine and internal psychological conflict.'[191] Thus, the dualisms portrayed in fairy tales and projected onto women's bodies are largely effects of patriarchy, which projects the uncertainties and contradictions of normative masculinity onto femininity, making women 'the deficient flipside of men.'[192] Seifert's observation of this dualistic construction of gender, complemented by a dualistic construction of good and evil roles in fairy tales, is relevant to my project as it may be marked on the body.

The tales in my study can be used to address the presence or absence of dualism in various facets of fairy tales. Like any area of expressive culture, fairy tales are complex and diverse enough that one would not expect them to reify any particular worldview exclusively. However, for the reasons discussed above, I believe that fairy tales are structured by, and respond to, dualistic thought, just as they also interact complexly with patriarchal notions of gender, exploitative class roles, and so on. However, even as much as gender and class roles are built on dualistic notions, identifying restrictive gender and class roles in fairy tales has proven easier than explicitly dealing with dualism, judging by the works on the former and not the latter.[193]

Fairy Tales and Dualism: The Data

Turning to my corpus of 233 tales for a specific analysis, gender came to the forefront early on. The first area that I thought to tackle in regard to dualism was male-female dimorphism, or whether male and female bodies are actually quite different from one another, to the point of having

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[188] Ibid., p. 27.

[189] Ibid., p. 81.

[190] L. Seifert, *Fairy Tales, Sexuality, and Gender in France, 1690-1715: Nostalgic Utopias* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 2-3

[191] Ibid., p. 218.

[192] Ibid., p. 218.

[193] For works on class and fairy tales, see the writings of Jack Zipes, particularly *Breaking the Magic Spell*. Zipes has also addresses gender roles in fairy tales, as have a host of feminist scholars whose contributions have been summarized in D. Haase, 'Feminist Fairy-Tale Scholarship.' In D. Haase (ed.), *Fairy Tales and Feminism* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2004), pp. 1-36.

opposing or complementary attributes, strengths, and weaknesses. It is worth noting that the entire corpus was evenly distributed among tales with male protagonists and tales with female protagonists, so there was no reason to believe that there would be drastically different numbers of men's or women's bodies; however, the descriptions of them might differ. I found that men's bodies and women's bodies in fact share many of the same descriptions, both in terms of nouns and adjectives. This is represented visually below using a mosaic chart (created using a Google web tool). Specifically, each square in the chart is proportionate to the number of times a word is represented in the overall corpus. A mosaic depicting all of the body part nouns used with women alongside a mosaic depicting all of the body part nouns used with men shows that there are not many differences between the two, with the women's chart (Figure 1) on the top, and the men's chart (Figure 2) below:
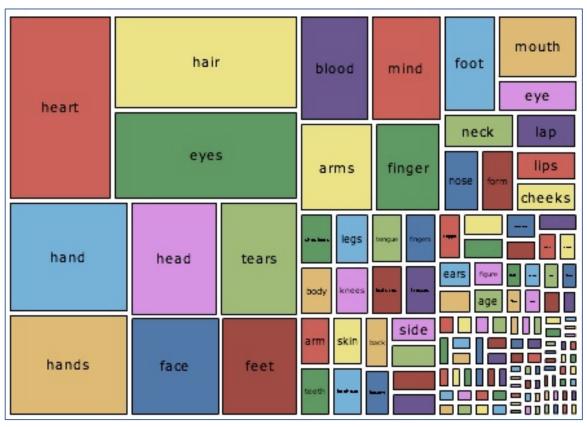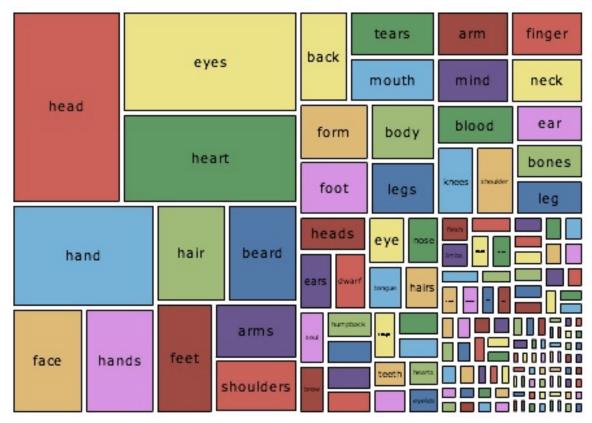
Figure 1

Figure 2

Men and women do not seem to be constituted of very different parts, though there are certain parts that received emphasis for one or the other (as with blood and hair referring more to women than to men, and beards appearing solely with men). The difference between hair being a top noun for women and head being a top noun for men might seem superficial, but the head in Western culture is the seat of cognition, while hair has little to do with thought, and much more to do with beauty. We gain another perspective, however, when the mosaics are generated to include not only explicitly named body part nouns, but also the themes such as death and beauty, which sometimes appear explicitly in the texts and sometimes must be implicitly drawn out.[194] Below is the mosaic representing women's body nouns and themes (Figure 3), followed by the mosaic representing men's body nouns and themes (Figure 4):

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[194] In order to mark the difference between explicitly named body part nouns and those that are implied within the story, I used an exclamation mark when coding my database. So when the word 'death' actually appears, it is entered as 'death' in my database, but when a character dies without the word 'death' appearing, it is entered as 'death!'
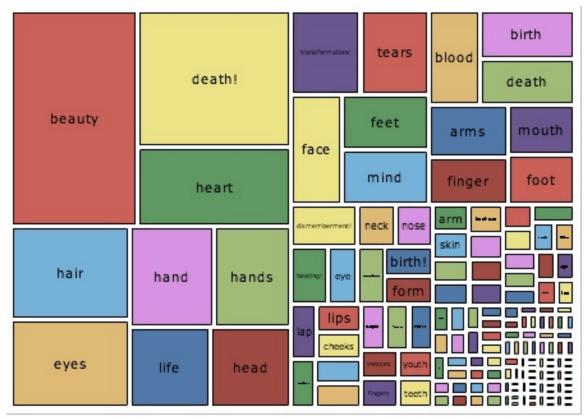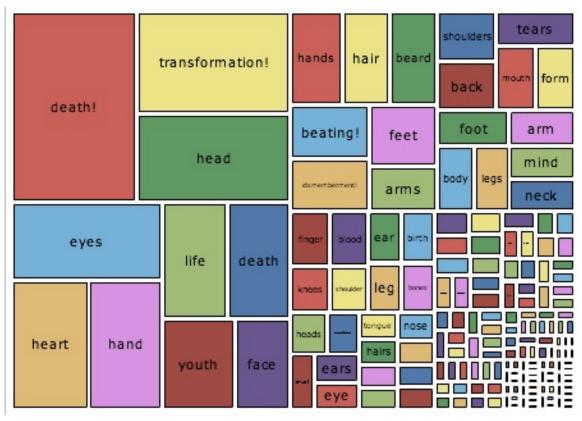
Figure 3

Figure 4

This skewing of beauty when representing women's bodies is echoed in the adjectives applied to women's bodies as opposed to the adjectives applied to men's bodies. The mosaics below depict, first, all of the adjectives used with women's bodies in the dataset (Figure 5), and second, all of the adjectives used with men's bodies in the dataset (Figure 6).
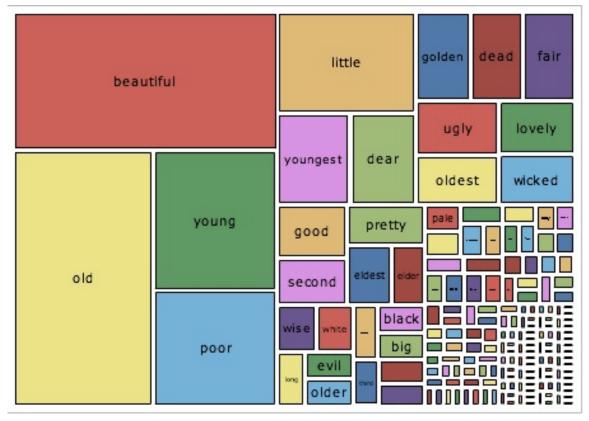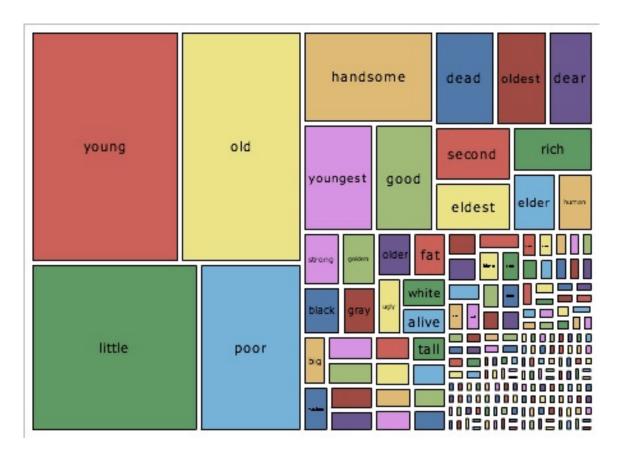
Figure 5

Figure 6

Beauty is thus one of the most important characteristics in representing women in fairy tales. This in itself is not a new insight,[195] though quantitative evidence for this association, as well as the importance of skin (discussed below), is a major innovative contribution of this study. Men's and women's bodies may be narratively composed of largely the same body parts, but the other nouns associated with their bodies create a dimorphic view of them. Hannon makes some incisive remarks on how beauty has become more important in seventeenth-century French writings on women regarding how 'women are synonymous with the body' and how 'the exclusive focus on female beauty and sexuality' is notable.[196] The use of beauty as a marker of difference is thus notable in an era known for producing fairy tales (many of which went on to influence other influential collectors and collections, as with the French informants who conveyed their tales to the Grimms).[197] This emphasis on beauty is profoundly gendered and dualistic, for as Hannon writes: 'Feminine beauty, eminently corporeal, is at once opposed and subordinated to masculine intellect.'[198] The emphasis on beauty for women is thus a marker of related dualisms – mind/body, intellect/ beauty – present in the construction of bodies in fairy tales. Undoubtedly the precise meanings and associations of

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[195] For more on the historical of feminist engagement with beauty in fairy tales, see Donald Haase's 'Feminist Fairy-Tale Scholarship.' In D. Haase (ed.), *Fairy Tales and Feminism* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2004), pp. 1-36.

[196] Hannon, *Fabulous Identities,* p. 33

[197] The French origins of many of the Grimms' informants have been thoroughly documented, perhaps most convincingly by Heinz Rölleke. See Linda Dégh's discussion of this evidence in 'Grimms' *Household Tales* and Its Place in the Household: The Social Relevance of a Controversial Classic.' *Western Folklore* 38.2 (1979): pp. 83-103.

[198] Hannon, *Fabulous Identities,* p. 29.

these dualisms changed depending on cultural context – where, when and by whom the tales were told, retold, and written – but the basic fact of dualism is so pervasive in the West as to influence this and other narrative forms.

Another area in which fairy tales reinforce mind/body dualism is the transformation of the body and retention of the mind and identity: specifically, how men undergo more transformations than women do. Women still undergo transformations in fairy tales, but they are less likely to be bodily transformations than superficial transformations in appearance (such as obtaining magical clothing, supernaturally enhanced beauty, and so on). This fact is also observable in the mosaic above depicting the body part nouns and themes that apply to men's bodies. I believe this to be a function of the association of men with the mind and women with the body. There is a long Western history, in popular as well as philosophical realms, of splitting the mind or soul from the body in cases of disembodied transformation. Meynell reminds us:

> 'While one might think such heady stuff is the purview only of philosophy, it is not uncommon for members of the public to think of themselves in dualistic ways – as minds that happen to be in particular bodies. Hence it seems quite natural to read science fiction stories of transplanting brains and downloading minds or ghost stories in which people's lives of thoughts, desires, and feelings continue after their deaths. In these stories the body is treated as a mere vessel.'[199]

The association of the body with a 'mere' vessel does not happen in a cultural vacuum, either. It is as though it is women that are 'mere' vessels, whereas men can transcend all that.

The ability of the mind or soul to separate itself from the body is reminiscent of the doctrine of the transmigration of souls from the Greco-Roman world.[200] However, as Graham Anderson notes, 'The main difference is that fairytales, while acknowledging multiple metamorphosis, do not embody transmigration as a philosophical doctrine, a natural cultural feature in Graeco-Roman educated literature.'[201] In other words, the transformations that occur in fairy tales are not religious or spiritual in nature, at least on the surface. Still, the recurrent mentions of transformations make it an important facet of the genre to study, even if their meaning has changed in nature.

Skin, Gender, and 'The Black and the White Bride'

Skin descriptions provide an important clue to the gendered nature of transformations in fairy tales. In my overall dataset, far more information was provided about women's skin than men's skin, though this finding is difficult to interpret. The meanings of skin, medically and culturally, were shifting around the same time that the fairy tale as a genre crystallized. Claudia Benthien and Thomas Dunlap note: 'In the premodern era, the skin still constituted a structurally impenetrable

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[199] Meynell, 'Introduction,' p. 3.
[200] Indeed, Francisco Vaz da Silva connects ethnographic pan-European notions of the 'economy of souls' with ancient Greek cyclical notions of death and fertility as embodied in the figure of Persephone, noting that this is 'the same idea that we have found at the core of shamanism, European ecstatic representations, and fairy tales' in *Metamorphosis: The Dynamics of Symbolism in European Fairy Tales* (New York: Peter Lang, 2002), p. 40.
[201] G. Anderson, *Fairytale in the Ancient World* (London, New York: Routledge, 2000), p. 108.

boundary to the invisible and mysterious inside.'[202] This description, coming from a medical summarization of the body and skin, stands in stark contrast to the permeable and penetrating descriptions of the grotesque body analyzed by Mikhail Bakhtin. To shift time periods to another important era in fairy tale creation and writing, the rise of dermatology around 1800 helped institute a change in how the body was perceived as well: 'Another important factor was the change in mentality that substituted the perception of the body as porous, open, and at the same time interwoven with the world in a grotesque way with one that viewed it as an individuated, monadic, and bourgeois vessel that the subject was considered to inhabit.'[203] Thus, because the skin's meanings were shifting in medical as well as cultural spheres during the centuries when the fairy tales in my dataset were collected or written, it is difficult to generalize about what skin might have meant in these various cultural contexts, so I have only the data to guide me.

Owing to my prior interest in skin in fairy tales, I decided while coding the database to include a column on skin descriptions, where I could note whether the noun, adjective, or theme from the text had any kind of skin description attached to it. Filtered through the lens of gender, I found that men had 43 instances of skin description in the dataset of 233 tales, while women had 78 instances of skin description. Thus, women's skin is described almost twice as frequently as men's skin. The descriptions were often adjectives denoting skin color, though of course skin color also has aesthetic connotations according to culture. The three most commonly used skin descriptions do, in fact, refer to color: 'black' appears 34 times (12 times with women, 22 times with men), 'white' appears 23 times (19 times with women, 4 times with men), and 'pale' appears 20 times (15 times with women, 5 times with men). 'Black' is one of four skin descriptions that appears predominantly with men, and the remainder are very few in number and appear exclusively with men: 'brown' appears twice, 'gold' appears twice, and 'golden' appears four times. In contrast, the remainder of the skin descriptions appears more with women than with men, and there are more of these skin words that describe women than describe men. The descriptions that appear solely with women are: 'blackened' (five times), 'fresh' (four times), 'lovely' (three times), 'white and beautiful' (twice), 'whitened' (twice), 'alabaster' (twice), 'beautiful complexions' (twice), 'dark' (once), and 'spotted' (once).[204]

The association of women with skin descriptions particularly focused on color is also interesting. In many cases, women are portrayed with pale skin. This could be due to various factors. As Nina Jablonski notes, it has been generally observed that women and infants tend to have lighter skin than adult men, regardless of or within a particular race or ethnic group. She theorizes that there is 'lighter skin evolved in females to mimic the paler skin of infants, who in all populations have the lightest skin. By imitating the infant condition…females could garner some measure of the same social protection afforded to infants.'[205] Relying on similar associations but placing causality elsewhere, others believe 'that lighter skin in females can be traced to a history of conscious choices by males who prefer more lightly pigmented females as mates, possibly because of the association

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[202] C. Benthien, T. Dunlap, *Skin: On the Cultural Border Between Self and the World* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), p. 10.

[203] Ibid., p. 37.

[204] The other skin descriptions not yet mentioned, which do not occur that frequently and are split between men and women, include: 'red' (used once with men, five times with women), 'fair' (used twice with men, once with women), and 'yellow' (used once with men, twice with women).

[205] N. Jablonski, *Skin: A Natural History* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 2006), p. 88.

between light skin and infancy.'[206] Whatever the origin(s) of the association, it has been taken up in multiple forms of expressive culture, not limited to the fairy tale. Benthien and Dunlap observe of skin color: 'Literature in general, but especially the psychologized realistic novel of the nineteenth century, employed the classical color code of painting in its pathognomic and physiognomic descriptions (for example, women usually have a lighter skin tone).'[207]

The connection between women and skin in fairy tales seems to have many causes or factors. First, the appearance of one's skin is valued in the West as an element of beauty. Thus, many of the descriptions of women's skin in the dataset are words that indicate beauty. This extends to descriptions of paleness or whiteness, which, although they may have evolutionary reasons, are also cultural. As feminist Joanna Frueh notes: 'Female perfection reeks of a high femininity molded out of racial purity and class privilege: white is the cleanest color, unflawed by the "defect" of darkness; and perfection, which the fashion and beauty industries try to persuade us will be ours if we work hard enough at it, is an upper-class possession.'[208] The class and race associations of white skin are explored explicitly in some fairy tales, as in 'The Black and the White Bride' and related tales of bride substitution wherein an ugly, blackened, and often lower-class woman takes the place of the beautiful, pale, and virtuous woman who is the king's intended. Class implications are not always overtly present, as in the Grimms' 'The White Bride and the Black Bride,' where the heroine and her competition are ostensibly of the same social class at the tale's start. However, during their encounter with the donor figure, 'the dear Lord' in the guise of a poor man, the stepdaughter and her mother spurn the poor man and are cursed to become 'black as night and ugly as sin.'[209] The good daughter is granted three wishes, one of which makes her 'as white and beautiful as the day' and the other of which gives her 'a money purse that is never empty.'[210] The purse is relegated to the tale's background and is never mentioned again, for it is the good daughter's beauty that causes the king to want to marry her, and her stepsister and stepmother to resent her to the point of trying to kill her. However, the very mention of the purse granting the good daughter unlimited wealth may indicate a connection with race found in other forms of false bride tales, such as Basile's frame tale in which the bride-to-be Zoza is replaced by a black slave girl.[211]

Skin color and gender are intricately interconnected in the fairy-tale tradition. Francisco Vaz da Silva makes the important point that whiteness (including white skin) is significant insofar as it is related to the other two colors that make up the chromatic tricolor symbolism of fairy-tale womanhood, red and black. He writes that 'in tales as well as elsewhere, white stands for luminosity and untainted sheen, thus for luminous heaven as much as for purity.'[212] Vaz da Silva explains that black fits into this paradigm as a time of cyclic enchantment and death, as 'part of a general

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[206] Ibid., p. 88.
[207] Benthien and Dunlap, *Skin*, p. 103. While it is outside the scope of this project to document the range of meanings skin has had in literary genres, it is interesting to note connections between lighter skin being associated with women and genres such as the novel and fairy tales which may share some of the same roots.
[208] J. Frueh, *Monster/Beauty: Building the Body of Love* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 2001), p. 251.
[209] W. Grimm and J. Grimm, *The Collected Fairy Tales of the Brothers Grimm. Third Edition,* trans. Jack Zipes (New York: Bantam Books, 2003), p. 440.
[210] Ibid., 440.
[211] See Canepa, *From Court to Forest,* for a greater elaboration on the role of the black slave girl in the frame narrative.
[212] Vaz da Silva, 'Red as Blood,' p. 245.

encoding of cultural values in sensory-based categories.'[213] White and black thus represent opposite poles of the spectrum of enchantment in fairy tales. The dyadic relationship between white and black constitutes a dualism, although according to Vaz da Silva, the symbolic associations are at their fullest when introduced into a triad with the color red. I would carry this principle of relatedness even further, asserting that the sensory-based categories that are written on the body display a deep interrelatedness with one another based on the ideological dualisms they employ. In other words, the body is not a neutral ground, and bodily descriptions carry meanings that become evident when taken in a larger context of the oppositions they display.

Feminists such as Leslie McCall have already argued for the analytical use of intersectionality, or the idea that 'the relationships among multiple dimensions and modalities of social relations and subject formations' ought to inform analysis.[214] Social class and skin color in fairy tales provide an example of intersectionality. The most commonly used skin description, 'black,' appears with high-class characters thrice, and with low-class characters 31 times in the dataset of 233 tales. The other skin descriptions are not as polarized, with 50 skin descriptions for high-class characters and 71 for low-class characters. In most instances, social class has not provided as useful a lens for analysis as I would have hoped, since the class of fairy-tale characters fluctuates as part of the function of the tales (in cases of social mobility, which is one of the main themes of fairy tales), and also because social class is inscribed on the body in less obvious ways than the other two identity oppositions I coded for, gender and age. Viewing skin and social class together, however, and seeing how blackness stands out as a co-indicator of low social class, is thus an argument in favor of the intersectionality of identity in fairy tales.[215]

Taken together, the key themes of skin and transformation express a bodily ideology in fairy tales that is found elsewhere in Western culture. Women, bound to their skins by standards of beauty and cultural expectations that also reinforce values according to class and age, are less free than men to shed their skins and transform into a new body, a new self. This reinforces basic tenets of mind/body dualism, wherein women are trapped in their bodies (here, their skin) whereas men, associated with the mind or soul, are not constrained by the boundaries of their skin. Transformations for women are more likely to entail becoming more beautiful (which is often enacted on the skin) rather than changing their physical being. To be sure, wearing fantastic disguises is one way of gaining empowerment in fairy tales, but I exclude those instances from discussion here because I am concerned with changes made to the body, not to whatever adorns the body. By this definition, my survey of bodies in fairy tales reveals that, whether for good or for ill, men undergo more transformations than women do. Marina Warner's work exemplifies one way to read the transformed male body, making the point that male characters who are enchanted into animal form often have their freedoms curtailed (such as the Beast from 'Beauty and the Beast,' ATU 425C)[216]. However, I would argue that in a society that upholds mind/body dualism and other forms of dualism, the ability to be transformed, to shed one's skin, has positive connotations even if in the immediate context of the plot, being transformed is undesirable. As Benthien and Dunlap write: 'It is

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[213] Ibid., 250.

[214] L. McCall, 'The Complexity of Intersectionality.' *Signs* 30.3 (2005): pp. 1771-1800, p. 1771.

[215] Similarly, age and skin reveal interesting correlations. Youthful characters have skin descriptions 87 times, to the 27 skin descriptions of aged characters. Aged characters are only described with four of the word or phrases classified as skin descriptions in the dataset (the top four most frequently used skin descriptions, 'black,' 'white,' 'pale,' and 'red'), while youthful characters have another additional 15 skin description words or phrases that apply to them.

[216] Ibid., pp. 283-284.

revealing for the history of gender, however, that fantasies of leaving and overcoming one's own skin are positive only in male poets, philosophers, and artists.'[217] Men, conditioned by thousands of years of mind/body dualism to believe that their minds are their identities, are perhaps freer to fantasize about escaping their bodies than women are, which we see expressed in fairy tales as frequent magical transformations.[218] This conclusion is the result of using empirical approaches to fairy tales combined with an awareness of feminist theory and how gendered ideologies pervade every aspect of life.

To narrow these observations down further, the final part of this article turns to the tale 'The Black and the White Bride' (ATU 403) which contains useful clues as to the interrelationship of skin, gender, class, and beauty in European fairy tales (and not just clues – many of the versions explicitly lay out these connections in the title). The tale appears four times in my set of 233 tales, twice as a stand-alone tale and twice as a hybrid with other tales. The first two tales are the Grimms' 'The White Bride and the Black Bride' and Thomas Frederick Crane's 'Oraggio and Bianchinetta,' while the latter are the Grimms' 'The Three Little Gnomes in the Forest' and Marie Catherine d'Aulnoy's 'Princess Rosette.' All of the tales feature a virtuous, beautiful (usually pale) young female protagonist who is married to a king, but her ugly, dark-skinned, stupid, or cruel (sometimes all of the above) step-sister (or a stranger) takes her place in the marriage bed. The true bride is either transformed into a duck or thrown into the sea until the situation can be righted.

As a starting observation, my data on these versions of 'The Black and the White Bride' indicates that descriptions of women's bodies are much more important than those of men's bodies; there are 66 references to men's bodies and 166 references to women's bodies. In one sense, it is unsurprising that tales about women feature many more references to their bodies than to men's bodies, but it is important to emphasize that mine is the first empirical study to demonstrate that this is the case, rather than going on intuition or anecdotal observation. Nearly three-quarters of the bodies described in these four tales belong to women – and these bodies tend to skew between the very beautiful and the very ugly, with adjectives like 'beautiful,' 'old,' 'ugly,' 'black,' 'homely,' 'white,' and 'pretty' ranking highly in use. In fact, 'beautiful' is the only adjective that appears in all four tales. It is also intriguing to note that the tale emphasizes adjectival body descriptions over nouns, with 138 adjectives appearing over the four tales (102 with female bodies, 36 with male bodies), and only 94 nouns (64 with female bodies, 30 with male bodies). Adjectives in fairy tales tend to describe appearances but also moral states, and it is significant that in ATU 403, adjectives are used far more frequently with women than with men. The very title of the tale highlights the dualistic opposition of the kind, beautiful (light-skinned) protagonist and the ugly (dark-skinned) antagonist who displaces her temporarily. As discussed above, race dualisms emerge quite strongly in skin descriptions and the values attached to them. This tale does, however, feature the transformation of a woman into different bodily states, which is interesting given that I have found that transformations tend to be associated with men more than with women in fairy tales.

Many of the themes of dualism discussed earlier – alienation from and fear of the body; association of women with the body – emerge in ATU 403. In three of the versions in my dataset, 'Oraggio and Bianchinetta,' 'Princess Rosette,' and 'The White Bride and the Black Bride,' the

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heroine's brother(s) must act as the intermediary between her and her intended husband (a king or prince). When the ugly bride is substituted for the true bride, the brother is condemned to death or suffering for misleading the king who thought he was getting a beautiful bride. The heroine's body is thus a source of danger to her male kin, as well as to herself. In Crane's version, 'Oraggio and Bianchinetta,' the heroine Bianchinetta is being transported by ship to meet her husband-to-be, the prince, who wishes to marry her because of a portrait that her brother, Oraggio, carries with him. Yet 'on the ship where Bianchinetta was, was also another young girl with her mother, both very homely. When they were near the harbor, the daughter gave Bianchinetta a blow, and pushed her into the see. When they landed, Oraggio could not recognize his sister; and that homely girl presented herself, saying the sun had made her so dark that she could no longer be recognized.'[219] Doomed to be the captive of a sea monster, Bianchinetta is in peril; failing to deliver the promised beautiful bride, Oraggio is sentenced to herd geese. When all is made right in the end, the ugly girl is 'burned in the public square, with the accustomed pitch-shirt.'[220] Intriguingly, this tale, unlike the other three versions in my dataset, offers not a single description of the male body. Men are alternately disgraced or must wait longer than anticipated for a bride; women are thrown in the sea and burned at the stake. Women's appearances are commented on, while men's are absent. While this version's title highlights the brother-sister relationship, others (and the title of the tale type) emphasize the dichotomy between the true bride and the false bride, one beautiful and the other ugly, one pale and the other dark, one fated to live despite threats to her personhood and the other destined to die.

Conclusion: Fairy tales, Dualism and Their Relation to Social Realities

The way that the black/white dualism corresponds to the bad/good dualism in this tale, and fairy tales in general, is disturbing from a social perspective – and, I would therefore argue, a social perspective is necessary in this analysis. Dorothy Hurley analyzes whiteness in Disney fairy tale films and their folkloric antecedents, and concludes that whiteness (as in white skin) is often 'used to symbolize beauty and goodness.'[221] By presenting her analysis of fairy tale color symbolism alongside classroom ethnographic studies of the self-esteem of children of color, and their reactions to fairy tales, Hurley makes the case that 'The problem of pervasive, internalized privileging of Whiteness has been intensified by the Disney representation of fairy tale princesses which consistently reinforces an ideology of White supremacy.'[222] This position argues, in contrast to Lüthi's observations about colorlessness in fairy tales, that the fairy tale's attraction to certain forms of beauty does carry social meaning. Lori Baker-Sperry and Liz Grauerholz concur from a feminist perspective, stating, 'beauty is often associated with being white, economically privileged, and virtuous.'[223] Because of these culturally pervasive ideological associations, I do not believe it is possible in fairy-tale interpretation to rely solely on the types of symbolic color associations that Vaz

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[219] T. Crane, *Italian Popular Tales*, ed. and with an introduction by Jack Zipes (Santa Barbara, Denver, and Oxford: ABC-CLIO, Inc. 2001), p. 48.

[220] Ibid., p. 49.

[221] D. Hurley, 'Seeing White: Children of Color and the Disney Fairy Tale Princess.' *The Journal of Negro Education* 74.3 (2005): pp. 221-32. p. 224.

[222] Ibid., 223.

[223] Baker-Sperry, L. and L. Grauerholz, 'The Pervasiveness and Persistence of the Feminine Beauty Ideal in Children's Fairy Tales.' *Gender and Society* 17.5 (2003): pp. 711-726.

da Silva focuses upon in his work, nor the psychological interpretations of fairy tales that view light and darkness as mere states of mind.[224]

Apart from the obviously racist implications of the tale's bodily descriptions and the titles of some versions, it is curious that this tale has not been adapted in many modern retellings. Perhaps there is too much sadistic glee at killing the false bride in the end, when modern audiences (primarily composed of children and their parents[225]) would prefer to see antagonists rehabilitated? Or perhaps the tale too obviously puts the fate of women's bodies into the hands of men, as it is the faithful brother who rescues his sister and restores her bodily autonomy (significantly, conveying her to the marriage bed) in so many versions.

Additionally, the dualism expressed in the tale many be too artless for modern audiences, though dualism has left an intellectual legacy that continues to impact fairly modern behaviors and expressive forms. As Susan Bordo notes, 'Disdain for the body, the conception of it as an alien force and impediment to the soul, is very old in our Greco-Christian traditions.'[226] Bordo then goes on to examine how precisely this same rhetoric appears in the testimonies of young female anorexics: the feelings of alienation from the body, the various techniques to exert control over the body, fantasies of disembodied omnipotence, and so on. That the mind/body split is so striking in contemporary pathological behavior – a pathology that exposes the tensions at the heart of normal identity construction, as Bordo argues – seems to me a strong argument for the prevalence of dualism in various cultural arenas.

Examining multiple versions of a tale, as well as the cultural context in which tales are told, are central tenets of the study of folklore. With its focus on expressive culture of both the past and present, the discipline of folkloristics has much to contribute to a discussion of identities and power relations within history and culture. Though fairy tales are often associated with children's culture and thus relegated to the margins, their political messages have not disappeared or gone unnoticed. In light of how pervasive fairy tales are as intertexts in Western storytelling modes from film to children's toys, feminist fiction to video games, we cannot afford to overlook their troubling relationship to dualism and gender roles. Tales like 'The Black and the White Bride,' with their foregrounding of women's appearances and their dualistic approach to class, ethnicity, and value, serve as a reminder that even the most fantastic of tales can still reflect cultural paradigms and reinforce normative social messages.

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[224] However, there is certainly a compelling case to be made that from a depth psychology perspective, darkness and light can refer to psychological aspects of human development (for instance, in the work of Jungian fairy-tale scholars like Marie-Louise Von Franz.). While my focus here is on social realities rather than psychological approaches to the tales, in another article I suggest that scholars should avoid the danger of dichotomizing psychological and social approaches to fairy tales. See J. Jorgensen, 'Sorting Out Donkeyskin (ATU510B): Toward an Integrative Literal-Symbolic Analysis of Fairy Tales.' *Cultural Analysis* 11 (2012), pp. 91-120.

[225] As many folklorists and fairy-tale scholars have noted, folktales and fairy tales were not originally intended solely for children. Children were among their audiences, but it was not until the popularization of the Grimms' tales for the children's literature market that fairy tales became so thoroughly associated with children's culture.

[226] Bordo, *Unbearable Weight,* p. 149.

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