GENDER STEREOTYPES IN *CINDERELLA* (ATU 510A) AND *THE PRINCESS ON THE GLASS MOUNTAIN* (ATU 530)

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ABSTRACT

One of the best-known role-based stereotypes in European fairy tales is that of an active male and a passive female. Awareness of such a stereotype is connected with the feminist approach that criticises the domination of the male point of view in fairy tales and the depiction of women from the position of men. The article focuses on analysing if and how the stereotype is realised in the context of two fairy tale types – *Cinderella* (ATU 510A) and *The Princess on the Glass Mountain* (ATU 530). According to Bengt Holbek, fairy tales as symbolic texts are closely connected to the real world as they refer to the latter through fantastic phenomena and events. Holbek is interested in the meaning of magical elements in the living tradition: according to him the world of fairy tales does not reflect the real world directly, but reveals the storytellers' and their audiences' ideas of what the latter should be like. What emerges as an important question is whose vision is transmitted by such fairy tale interpretations; whether researchers are able to interpret the meanings the tales might have had for the storytellers, or whether it is just the viewpoint of the researcher that is reflected.

KEYWORDS: fairy tale • interpretation • gender stereotypes • active male • passive female

INTRODUCTION

In order to observe gender-role-related stereotypes in fairy tales and discuss their manifestations in tales with male and female protagonists I wished to find tale types that would be representative of the masculine and the feminine tale types and at the same time would resemble each other to a degree.[1] When reading versions of *The Princess on the Glass Mountain* (ATU 530) I discovered approximately a dozen texts in which, similarly to the tale of *Cinderella* (ATU 510A), elder brothers throw peas into ashes and tell the youngest brother to pick these out and make a soup. Similarly to *Cinderella* a grey

old man arrives to help the hero in these versions. The tales start in the main character's home, there is a helper who assists the hero in carrying out a difficult task, and in the end the protagonist can be identified by a sign (a lost slipper, a ring broken in half). In both tales the main character initially has a socially low status (being poor, young) that will change after marrying a prince or a princess.

Proceeding from the interpretation theory offered by the Danish folklorist Bengt Holbek we can see that both types fit the framework of so-called symbolic fairy tales that are characterised by such features as a wedding or the reunion of a couple at the end of the story and marvellous plot elements in the events leading to this culmination. According to Holbek, a fairy tale as a symbolic text is closely connected with the real world. Symbolic fairy tales refer to the real world through fantastic phenomena, events and objects. Holbek is not concerned with discovering an original meaning, but is rather interested in the meaning of marvellous elements for those living within the tradition. Thus, the world depicted in fairy tales does not reflect the real world directly, but rather represents the storytellers' and their audiences' idea as to what the latter should be like. (Holbek 1987: 404–406)

> The symbolic elements of fairy tales convey emotional impressions of beings, phenomena and events in the real world, organized in the form of fictional narrative sequences which allow the narrator to speak of the problems, hopes and ideals of the community (ibid.: 435).

Becoming of age, looking for a partner and starting a family belong to the reality of the storytellers' and their audiences' lives. Thus, it can be supposed that both in the real world as well as in the world of fairy tales certain fixed ideas apply to men and women as regards the behaviour and attitudes deemed appropriate for them.

Such an approach is certainly simplified and I do not by any means think that the main aim in the storytellers' lives used to be finding the right partner and starting a family, yet the observed tale types allow of an analysis from this aspect. Thus we can presume that certain norms or expectations regarding the behaviour appropriate for men and women have been transferred from the real world of the storytellers into the world of fairy tales. According to the Finnish researcher Aili Nenola oral tradition reflects the views on gender roles of its time; therefore, it could be considered a part of a symbolic system based on the dominant gender roles and gender relations (Nenola 1990: 12). A gender stereotype suggests what a man or a woman should be like and this makes it possible to control the behaviour of the people close to one (Nenola 1986: 100–102).

One of the best-known role-based stereotype or clichés is that of an active male and a passive female (Moser-Rath 1987: 113). The hero is generally characterised by his activity, which is expressed in taking risks, being brave, fearless and adventurous. Being clever, witty, knowledgeable, cunning and skilful are also essential characteristics. Friendliness, helpfulness, fidelity, loyalty and honesty are valued independently of gender, as these features are considered to be common to all humanity. (Roth 1999: 147–149)

The heroine is usually pictured as more helpless, more passive and more tied to the family. The woman's morality is the central feature in fairy tales. By employing opposites (for example, daughter of the family versus stepdaughter), a picture is given of what is required from women in general, what kind of woman is good or bad, and

what kind of behaviour is appropriate for women. Obedience, humility, friendliness, helpfulness and, for practical reasons, the ability to manage with housework, are characteristics expected from a good woman. (Apo 1990: 24–27)

Feminist researchers connect the role model of a passive and helpless heroine to masculine views deriving from patriarchal social order (Apo 1986: 198–209; Horn 1990: 732–733). Gender studies emerged in the 1970s and soon reached the field of folkloristics. Donald Haase has written a survey article on the history of feminist treatments of fairy tales; according to him, gender-focused research does not only entail studying the contents of fairy tales, but also their canonisation and institutionalisation. The question of the domination of the male point of view in the genre of the fairy tale has given ground for alternative interpretations of fairy tales and helped to identify the female voice in fairy tales. (Haase 2004: 2)

Gender studies differentiates between the concepts of 'sex' and 'gender', with the former denoting biological and the latter the socially constructed characteristics (Rubin 1975: 165; Bottigheimer 2004: 38). Gender that is based on social relations is connected to a dichotomy and hierarchy in which the relations between the genders are organised proceeding from the aspect of power (Liljeström 2003: 114).

Feminist studies point out that women in fairy tales appear as overly passive, fairly helpless beings unable to control their own lives, while men are characterised as strong, active and dominant (Haase 2004; Farish Kuykendal, Sturm 2007: 39). For example, the passivity of the heroine comes across as extreme in the fairy tale *Sleeping Beauty* (ATU 410) in which the heroine falls into a lethargic sleep. This helplessness is magnified by loss of speech in the tale type *The Maiden Who Seeks her Brother* (ATU 451) or by the heroine having her hands cut off in the tale type *The Maiden without Hands* (ATU 706).

As a reason for the domination of the male point of view, the major role of men both in collecting as well as editing of fairy tales has been suggested, as this has had a considerable influence on the development and canonisation of the fairy tale as a genre.

Thus, for example, Ruth B. Bottigheimer has pointed out the role of men in the editing history of publications of fairy tales, which has influenced both the written tradition (how the tales have been told) as well as the repertoire (what the stories are about). She focuses on the principles of the Brothers Grimm in editing, which, besides the taste of the bourgeoisie of their time, represent the masculine viewpoint in the fairy tale genre (Bottigheimer 1993: 268).[2]

As regards Aarne-Thompson's tale type index, Torborg Lundell claims that the indexed tale types are dominated by stories with male heroes who play an active role, while women are usually represented as passive, even in cases in which they are protagonists (Lundell 1986: 162).[3]

Undoubtedly there are also fairy tales that set contrasting examples and in which the heroine plays an active part: for example, in tale type *The Shift of Sex* (ATU 514) a girl goes off to wander in the wide world. Still, it is remarkable that she does not do this as a woman, but engages in cross-dressing and takes on the role of a man. The realistic tale *The Forsaken Fiancée: Service as Menial* (ATU 884) has a similar plot. We can notice an attitude that tells us what kind of behaviour is considered to be appropriate for a man or a woman in a traditional society, and according to this a woman should not move alone outside the home. If she ventures out of women's ordinary sphere of activity, i.e. the domestic sphere, she has to take on a man's role for she would set herself in danger when appearing as a woman.

The *Rescue by the Sister* (ATU 311) and *Maiden-Killer (Bluebeard)* (ATU 312) tale types depict a heroine who can be considered active to a certain extent, but who is first and foremost clever. These are but a few examples of the heroine's active role as such in fairy tales to show that these still offer heterogeneous material that makes various interpretations possible.

CINDERELLA (ATU 510A) AND *THE PRINCESS ON THE GLASS MOUNTAIN* (ATU 530): CONTENT AND CONTEXT

Both *Cinderella* (ATU 510A) as well as *The Princess on the Glass Mountain* (ATU 530) are among the most popular fairy tales in Estonia: there are 112 versions of *Cinderella* and 165 versions of *The Glass Mountain* in the Estonian Folklore Archives.

The plot of the Estonian versions of *Cinderella* is the following:[4]

> On a Sunday, Cinderella's stepmother (or the devil) goes to church (or to a party) with her daughters and gives Cinderella the task of picking beans out from the ashes in order to make soup. Only after the job is done is she allowed to go to church. On subsequent occasions she has to pick peas, then lentils or groats from the ashes. The orphan weeps, and suddenly an old man appears who helps her to carry out the task. In addition to this, the old man gives her a wand that provides the orphan with magnificent clothes and a carriage to go to church (or the party) when she taps it against a stone. However, she has to leave before the others (or, in case of attending a party, before midnight or cock-crow). The king's son notices Cinderella, who flees from the church. On the third Sunday he smears tar on the church's doorstep, and Cinderella's slipper gets stuck as she hurries away. The prince starts to look for the owner of the slipper. The stepmother first offers him her own daughters; when the slipper does not fit them, she cuts off their toes or heels. Finally, the prince finds the right girl and marries her.

The versions of the Estonian *Cinderella* mainly follow the international plot, while to some extent distinctive, probably more archaic versions come from Setumaa (an Orthodox region in south-eastern Estonia): in these stories the devil turns Cinderella's mother into a sheep who will be slaughtered and eaten afterwards. Cinderella buries her mother's bones and later on will visit the grave to look for help. The Setu versions also contain the motif of the devil telling the girls to compete to find who is the fastest at washing and drying her hair before the party. In order to get her daughters ready before the orphan, the devil cuts off their heads, dries them in the stove and then sticks them back on with cow dung.

The plot of the Estonian versions of *The Princess on the Glass Mountain* is as follows:

> On his deathbed, a father asks his sons that each keep watch on his grave for a night after his death. The two elder brothers send the youngest (i.e. most foolish) one to keep watch in their place. The father gives his youngest boy three horses coloured copper, silver and gold, as well as matching clothes. The king of the country promises his daughter to the man who is able to ride to the top of a glass mountain. The two elder brothers ride away to try the task, leaving the youngest behind. The youngest brother attempts to ride the three horses he has received to the mountain

top. On his third try he succeeds in doing this on the golden horse and receives a ring (or an apple, a golden egg or a mark on his forehead) from the king's daughter. The hero hides the princess's ring from the others. The king keeps looking for the suitor who managed to complete the task, finds the youngest brother thanks to the ring and the brother marries the king's daughter.

Both tale types involve pejorative nicknames that hint at the protagonist's low status. Similarly to the name Aschenputtel, familiar from the German tradition, the heroine's name in Estonian tales is derived from ashes (Tuhkatriinu). The male hero's name Turak-Tuhkapusja is also associated with ashes.[5]

The literary background of *Cinderella* has to a degree influenced the Estonian archival versions. In these, reflections from translations of fairy tales by Charles Perrault and the Brothers Grimm can be detected, while the version of *Cinderella* by the Estonian author Friedrich Reinhold Kreutzwald ("Tuhka-Triinu", first published in 1866) that was also created drawing on German and French models has had the greatest influence. At the same time it does not become quite clear on the basis of archival texts if *Cinderella* reached Estonia only via literature or whether there was a merging of the literary and oral traditions. The existing versions show the existence of a strong tradition that is partly influenced by the literary versions.

Only a few versions of *The Princess on the Glass Mountain* have appeared in print. Despite the earliest printed version having appeared as early as 1876 (Sohberg 1876), the influence of this, as well as other editions, on the oral tradition has not been significant.

The earliest recording of *Cinderella* dates from around the beginning of the 19th century. The Baltic German pastor Arnold Friedrich Johann Knüpffer transcribed it from the notes of pastor Christian Jacob Glanström. The exact date of the transcription is not known, but as Glanström died in 1825, the tale must have been recorded earlier.

The earliest version of *The Princess on the Glass Mountain* was also recorded relatively early, around the 1830s. Active collecting of folklore in Estonia started at the end of the 1880s, before which texts of folkloric content were collected only sporadically. The texts known from the early 19th century were generally recorded by Baltic German intellectuals whose aim was to acquire additional and illustrative material to study Estonian and to develop the grammar of the language; thus, the folklore texts recorded at the time were originally language samples. (Toomeos-Orglaan 2005: 152–153)

Most versions of *Cinderella* and *The Princess on the Glass Mountain* were recorded in the years 1888–1899 and 1924–1939. It is in these years that major folklore collecting campaigns took place.

As collecting folklore first and foremost focused on rural regions, archival texts represent the lore known in villages. Those collecting were usually educated people – schoolmasters, students – but also pupils and other activists inspired by the work of collecting; there were also professional folklorists among the later (i.e. 20th century) collectors. As regards the storytellers, usually there is no information given about their background; only on some few occasions is the occupation of the storyteller (mistress of a farm, gardener, artisan, cowherd, etc.) given. Nevertheless, the place data usually allow us to presume that the storytellers belong to a village community.

Several scholars have studied whether the gender of the main character was of decisive significance in the selection of the tales. Different researchers have reached fairly

similar conclusions: men prefer to tell (as well as to collect and to publish) tales with male heroes, while female storytellers have no fixed preferences and stories with both heroes and heroines are represented in their repertoires (Holbek 1987: 168; Järv 2001: 37–39; Ragan 2009: 234–237).

The same tendency becomes apparent in the given tale types (see Table 1). The tale of *Cinderella* was mainly told by female storytellers (69), while the proportion of men was relatively low (13). In case of *The Princess on the Glass Mountain* we also have predominantly female storytellers (60), but there are considerably more male storytellers (43) in comparison with *Cinderella*. Thus, it might be claimed that in the case of these tale types men preferred tales with male heroes, while the repertoire of woman storytellers has been less influenced by the main character's gender.

Table 1. Gender division of storytellers and folk tale collectors.

	ATU 510A (112 versions)	ATU 530 (165 versions)
Male storytellers	13	43
Female storytellers	69	60
Male collectors	75	97
Female collectors	24	35
Anonymous storytellers	25	40
Anonymous collectors	7	11

The data concern the storytellers and collectors whose gender is known; in quite a few versions data about the storyteller are missing or insufficient (in addition to the surname only the initial of the first name is known).

The proportion of anonymous storytellers is higher among the material recorded in the 19th century. Recording the data about storytellers started only after Jakob Hurt, the initiator of the collecting campaign, made a request regarding this in his reports; before that, the person of the storyteller had not been considered important (Viidalepp 1959: 276; Järv 2001: 32). According to Risto Järv, the gender division of the tellers of fairy tales shows that in the 19th century male storytellers were predominant, whereas in the 20th century female storytellers were more numerous. At the same time Järv draws attention to the number of anonymous storytellers during the early period of collecting and makes the tentative suggestion that it might include female storytellers whose data may have been left unrecorded because of the low social status of women. (Ibid.: 35) What is considerably more likely, however, is that in the 19th century the recorder was also the storyteller, sending in the lore that he or she knew.

In case of both tale types the collectors were predominantly male, there were considerably fewer female collectors. The greater proportion of men as collectors apparently derives from their social position because in the 19th century men played a more active role in social life, while women were occupied with domestic housekeeping. The number of female collectors increases only in the 20th century, when the social position of women changes and they get the opportunity to study at university (collectors often were people of education).

In order to see if and how gender-role-related stereotypes are realised in the tale types studied, I have divided the plots into three putative situations: (1) a starting situation in which the domestic circumstances of the main characters and their relations with their families becomes clear; (2) a meeting with the helper in the course of which the main character obtains marvellous objects that help him complete a future task successfully; (3) completing the task and meeting the future spouse, culminating with their wedding.

The Main Character's Domestic Circumstances and Relations with His/Her Family

As is common in fairy tales, the hero's home and family are described in the starting situations of both tale types. It is here that the protagonist's social status is revealed (whether it is that of king's son or daughter, son of a poor man, or that of orphan, etc.). In these two tale types the protagonist usually has a low status. The heroine in *Cinderella* is an orphan or the stepdaughter of a widow. She can also be a maid at a landlady's, a witch's, or the devil's house. The malicious stepmother speaks to the orphan as if she was a servant and treats her and her own children with a glaring difference. The heroine is humiliated in every way. She is obliged to do the dirtiest and hardest domestic chores from morning to night; she is given poor food, her clothes are torn and tattered and her freedom to move around is limited (for example, she is not even allowed to go to church). The reason why the stepmother hates her and deprives her of motherly love could be the fact that Cinderella approaches the ideal and matches the prototype of a good woman, as it were – she is hard-working, helpful and friendly.

An example from the Estonian Folklore Archives:

> She [Cinderella] had to wear rags that had been darned together, patch on patch. Be it Sundays or week-day, she was always wearing the same clothes for she had no better. However, the kind creator had made her wonderfully clever, beautiful and quick. Although her face was sad and pale because of the worry and wear of her labour, the girl was even prettier and lovelier than otherwise. Her stepsister would put on fine clothes and try to make herself outwardly attractive. On the inside, however, she was robust and rude, her face was not as pretty either as that of Cinderella, and no one really loved her, except those who were like her.[6]

The internal values of the heroine ensure her success in the future, and the orphan certainly has better marriage prospects in comparison with her lazy and inept stepsister.

In *Cinderella*, the opposition of the heroine and her stepsisters is not stressed as vividly as in some other tale types, for example, *The Black and the White Bride* (ATU 403, former AT 403B) or *The Kind and the Unkind Girls* (ATU 480). The contrasting behaviour of the heroine and the stepsister in similar situations is pointed out by the tales' repetitive structure – the heroine is always helpful and kind to everyone she meets on her way; the stepsister is always rude and reckless.

The antithesis of Cinderella is, however, her stepmother. Although the stepsister is paired up with the stepmother, she usually remains in the latter's shadow. From the

point of view of the story, the stepsister's role remains secondary, one might even say that she is an invisible character.

While the family of the heroine in *Cinderella* consists of strangers (a stepmother; the orphan as a servant to the devil), the hero in *The Princess on the Glass Mountain* lives at home among his closest relatives. The social position of the family is not specified directly, but we can assume that we are dealing with a lower status family. The story-tellers do not always point out whether the events take place in a poor or a rich man's house, but in all versions without exception an opposition between brothers takes place. The two elder brothers are called wise and the youngest one foolish. Foolishness (ignorance) in fairy tales is not necessarily negative, it is rather immaturity that serves as the starting point for the younger brother's development (maturation) into a hero (Roth 1999: 149). In the context of this particular tale type this would mean that the two elder brothers are already adults, while the youngest is still immature. Stupidity (or foolishness) has also been associated with the hero's tactics – being regarded as inferior, the hero is secure from the rivalry of his brothers who might kill him fearing the competition (Horn 1993a: 807).

An interesting observation is made by Carolyn G. Heilbrun who says that the third brother's empathy, kindness and helpfulness can be interpreted as traces of feminine values, whereas the two older brothers carry masculine ones (Heilbrun 1979: 147).

The Finnish researcher Satu Apo notes that the family relations of the heroes get much less attention than those of the heroines. If a man can sometimes be pictured as estranged from his family (being a soldier or a beggar), the heroine is always defined by family relations. (Apo 1986: 201) In this case, the protagonists of both tale types are connected with their families. However, the relations of the heroine with those surrounding her are much more critical compared with the relations between the brothers. One of the main enemies of a woman in fairy tales is another envious woman (Apo 1986: 203; Horn 1993a: 804), which is especially apparent in the fairy tale *The Snow White* (ATU 709) in which the stepmother attempts to kill the heroine, for the latter is more beautiful than herself.

In case of *Cinderella* the conflict about a potential partner is already present at the beginning of the story; in the other, masculine tale type the enmity arises only when the competition for a partner becomes actual. At the beginning, when the hero is still immature, there is no competition between the brothers, for the youngest one is not taken seriously.

The main opposition that is manifested in the situation is the conflict between a youngster and an adult, which Holbek calls the generational split (Holbek 1987: 435). Irrespective of their gender, both protagonists are passive in the starting situation. The heroine takes orders and the hero lazes idly on top of the stove. Passivity can be interpreted here as being young and tied to one's family – in the parental home the hero or heroine tends to be subjugated, has no right to make decisions and is dependent upon the parents.

The second situation I am observing more closely is connected with the appearance of the helper and obtaining of marvellous objects.

In *Cinderella* the stepmother goes to church or to a party given by the king's son with her daughter(s), while Cinderella is left behind. She is given a rather peculiar task – to pick out the beans (peas, lentils, groats) from the ashes and prepare soup – which is obviously impossible. However, a grey old man appears to the weeping heroine and helps her complete the task; in addition to this, he gives the girl the most wonderful clothes. In some versions help arrives when the orphan visits her mother's grave. Here we can draw a parallel, or at least find a similarity, with *The Princess on the Glass Mountain* in which the hero's dead father helps his son. The way of receiving help in which the protagonist weeps at home or prays at her mother's grave has been called spontaneous (Apo 1986: 199).

The helper gives the orphan beautiful clothes so that she can go to church or to the party. Several fairytale researchers have expressed the opinion that on the one hand the marvellous gift reflects the heroine's internal values – she is helpful, friendly, docile, hard-working – and pretty clothes are a reward for her so-called correct behaviour. On the other hand, however, beautiful clothes are the means by which the heroine is turned into an attractive and desirable partner. (Apo 1986: 112; Moser-Rath 1987: 111; Horn 1993a: 804) Clothes have also been interpreted as a symbol showing that the protagonist's ugly and torn clothes had signified her immaturity (Horn 1993b: 1436–1437).

In this case, the fine clothes given to the orphan can be seen as a sign of her approaching maturity. Holbek suggests that the marvellous gifts received from the helper symbolise the protagonist's hidden internal values, calling the expression of internal characteristics through such attributes externalisation (Holbek 1987: 442).

In *The Princess on the Glass Mountain* the father gives his sons a task – usually it involves keeping watch on his grave. Only the youngest brother of the three is willing or able to fulfil the father's wish. The opportunity to become the owner of marvellous attributes is given to all three sons, but only the youngest one, who is considered to be foolish, seizes the opportunity. Katalin Horn supposes that the hero behaves instinctively when fulfilling his father's wish, yet the behaviour turns out to be prudent considering the forthcoming challenge – conquering the glass mountain (Horn 1993a: 807).

The marvellous attributes (i.e. horses) are generally given by the father. In those versions in which the motif of keeping watch on the father's grave is absent, the giver turns out to be a grey old man, as is also the case in *Cinderella*. However, here the episode of giving gifts takes place in the home and not outside it. The elder brothers leave in order to carry out the task given by the king (riding up the glass mountain). They leave the youngest brother at home to make soup, and for this purpose throw beans, peas or lentils into the ashes. A grey old man appears to help the hero – he gives him horses and fine clothes. Similarly to the heroine in the tale of *Cinderella* the hero gets the attributes while remaining passive.

In principle there are two ways to receive an attribute: by completing a certain task, or else spontaneously, which may sometimes be accompanied by a peculiar domestic chore. How justified is differentiating between peculiar domestic chores and a particular task in analysing the plot events? On both occasions the protagonists' hidden val-

ues become apparent, but in case of a particular task they manage to complete it on their own and this, indeed, is the precondition for receiving help. Peculiar domestic chores, however, require that the protagonist receive help. Here too it is the internal values of the protagonist that are the precondition for receiving help, although they are not directly put in active practice in completing the task. The existence of the values becomes apparent from the fact of the forthcoming help.

The feminine tale-type is exclusively related to the situation of gaining the helping attribute spontaneously. In case of the masculine tale-type, there is usually a concrete task involved, yet spontaneous obtaining of an attribute can occur as well. Thus, certain gender role stereotypes may become apparent in the situation of giving gifts: the hero's internal values are usually revealed through active engagement, while the heroine's values tend to appear as her nature (being good, kind and helpful).

The Hero's/Heroine's Meeting with the Future Partner

Cinderella attends church (goes to a party) three Sundays running. A king's son (rich suitor) notices the girl in fine clothes and decides to marry her. The heroine has a passive role in arousing his interest: she is simply on display. If we are to proceed from the dictum that the woman's sphere of activity is contained in the formula *Kinder, Kirche, Küche*, we can say that Cinderella need not even exit her usual domestic circuit, as her trajectory of movement is contained in the axis between the kitchen and church. The only risk she runs is being recognised by her stepmother.[7]

In comparison with the heroine, the hero acts much more actively after having obtained the marvellous attribute. He rides up the glass mountain and thus carries out the task given by the king. In *Cinderella* it is the king's son who selects his spouse; the orphan catches her eye because of her beauty. To proceed from Holbek's theory, her looks (fine clothes) are markers of her real nature and values and the king's son selects her by (subconsciously) understanding these signs.

The heroine's beauty is one of the main means of arousing the interest in a potential partner. For the hero, it is the completion of the task that comes first, his fine looks remain secondary (Moser-Rath 1987: 111). A fine outfit is not enough to symbolise the hero's superiority in comparison with other suitors. For this purpose, he has to complete an assignment that seems virtually impossible and in which he is the only one to succeed, and this only due to his marvellous horses. In addition, here the properties of the attribute can be interpreted as a reflection of the hero's nature – not everyone can be the owner of such horses, he must be stronger, braver, and more skilful than the others.

As a sign of conquering the glass mountain and completing the task, the king's daughter gives the hero a ring.[8] The story of Cinderella also contains the motif of a token – the heroine will be later identified by the slipper she has lost.[9]

In both fairy tale types the protagonists prefer to remain anonymous. Often the hero wears a bandage around his head or finger in order to hide the sign used as evidence. It is possible that the hero is hiding himself because if his meeting with the potential partner and the successful completion of the tasks were to become known, his relatives might kill him. As long as his participation in fulfilling the task is not known, he is protected from the wrath of his relatives/competitors.

Yet why should a hero who has already proved his superiority both as regards his skills and values, still be afraid of the opponents' aggression? At this point, Satu Apo's explanation can be recalled, according to which it is the case of a longer process during which an adolescent hero makes a transition to the world of adults, or an initiation period. When the hero has reached the age of marrying, he has to leave the home and prove that he is able to manage in the grown-up world, i.e. that he can acquire a spouse, take care of the family and manage any problems that need solving. (Apo 1986: 184–186) As this is still the case of the hero's transition to the grown-up world – he has not been fully accepted as yet – he is vulnerable during the process and more easily harmed.

According to Holbek, the hero here is a poor adult who has reverted to the status of an adolescent and is not accepted on the level of wealth (oppositions of adult–adolescent and poor–rich).

Linda Dégh points to a dual identity that appears both in the case of Cinderella as well as the youngest brother: on the one hand, they are low-status people "covered in ashes", on the other hand, one is a beauty clothed in finery, and the other the brave conqueror of the glass mountain. Dégh considers such hiding and transformation of the looks a part of the learning process. Changing the attire to attend church or conquer the glass mountain allows an opportunity to become stronger, cleverer and more beautiful, and serves as a sign of the protagonists' maturation. (Dégh 1994: 94)

If we try to observe the situations proceeding from gender role stereotypes, it seems that there are certain correspondences with the behaviour patterns considered typical of men and women. The hero engages in active behaviour, he completes a task, while the heroine just happens to be on display. We might certainly ask how active the hero is if he just lets himself be carried by a horse, and how passive the heroine is as she goes somewhere and puts herself in a risky situation (there is the possibility of being recognised) – a change in the situation also accompanies the heroine's behaviour. The concepts of activity and passivity can certainly be interpreted in several ways; they do not present a rigid, unchanging value or property. This is best manifested in case of the male character who is passive in the situation at the tale's beginning, but becomes active after acquiring the marvellous attributes and solves a difficult task successfully. It is through his activeness that the hero proves his worth. The change is less marked in the heroine: in principle, going to church might be interpreted as activeness, but she is still acting only in the sphere that is considered suitable for women (home and church) and does not undertake anything except being on display and looking beautiful. It is this passivity characteristic of descriptions of women in fairy tales that has been criticised in feminist discussions.

According to Linda Dégh, it is the necessity of stabilising one's position in the parental home or of reaching a higher position in a new home, i.e. acquiring the role of a wife and a mother, that makes the heroine act and leave the home (Dégh 1994: 93). Feminist criticism sees this as a limitation of the career of a woman that can be realised only by being a good wife and mother; the basis for such criticism is the change in women's social status during the 20th century, which no longer corresponds to the values depicted in stories recorded in the 19th century.

When interpreting the marvellous features of fairy tales it is important to ask whose point of view is represented by such an interpretation.

Holbek distinguishes between eight different groups who participate in creating, spreading and interpreting fairy tales: 1) creators of the tales or primary storytellers; 2) further tellers; 3) storytellers whose tales have been recorded and archived; 4) audiences; 5) collectors; 6) editors; 7) readers or "secondary audiences"; 8) interpreters (Holbek 1987: 191).

Undoubtedly it is not possible to ascertain the interpretations of all participants (for example, primary storyteller, intermediate tellers, audiences). Archived texts make it possible to see how a tale has been interpreted by a particular teller and the recorder. Holbek believes that his source (the Danish collector of fairy tales Evald Tang Kristensen) recorded the tales as closely to the original as possible and that the collector's participation in the recordings was minimal (Holbek 1987: 193).

However, it seems to me that the contributions of the storyteller and the collector need not be clearly distinguishable, and that in giving the storyteller 'a voice' one should certainly consider the recorder. Sound recordings certainly make it possible to observe the storyteller's phrasing more closely, yet the collector still has a decisive influence on what is being said and which material is archived.[10]

In order to get a full picture it makes sense to discuss the aspects that are connected with the tale's textual history and pay attention to how, for whom and with what purpose one or other tale has been published and by which lexical means the publisher has influenced the depiction of the characters (Haase 2004: 13).

Holbek singles out as receivers the audiences participating in a traditional storytelling situation, as well as readers of the tale's written versions. As regards interpretation, he considers the audience and their reception to be more important than that of the reader. In a traditional storytelling situation both the storyteller and the audience/receiver belong to the same community and thus the audience is very likely to interpret the tale similarly to the storyteller. The written version need no longer be a pure performance, as it were, but may be influenced by the publisher's aims and promote their interpretations. Thus, in Holbek's opinion readers play no important role in interpreting fairy tales (Holbek 1987: 192–193). At this point, my opinion differs from his, for if we proceed from reception theory both the performer as well as any receiver have an equally significant role in interpretation.

Interpreters include not only the storytellers and their audiences/readers, but also the researchers who attempt to understand the world or the community in which the tales have been recorded with the help of the tales.

In Holbek's estimation the researcher should strive for an interpretation that ought to be as objective as possible, yet at the same time he concedes that this is a most difficult task (Holbek 1987: 193). Or rather, it is downright impossible. Even if we are familiar with the socio-cultural background against which the tales have been collected and recorded, we still cannot enter the storyteller's skin, as it were, and thus we should certainly be aware of the fact that in giving meanings to fairy tale elements and motifs it is first and foremost the researcher's voice that becomes audible. Irrespective of the

aims the researchers set themselves, they are necessarily influenced by various ideologies that dominate the studying of culture at the moment, and the same can be claimed about feminist treatments of fairy tales.

The setting up of problems that criticise the domination of the male point of view and leave woman in the male shadow could occur only after the emergence of feminist approaches and trends in research. Such an approach is very clearly representative of the researcher's position; the evaluation is given from the researcher's socio-cultural standpoint. However, we cannot really claim that women would feel themselves to be oppressed in the 19th century when the collecting of folk tales was launched.

Isabel Cardigos has asked in connection with the masculine and feminine voices in fairy tales: "Do they express the same or different worldviews? If the worldview is the same, whose voice is dominant? […] Does the female narrator express a female worldview?" (Cardigos 1996: 46) In the case of the given material it is possible to look for differences that occur in the choice of the storytellers' and collectors' repertoire, proceeding from their gender. As was seen above, male storytellers prefer to tell the tale of the glass mountain, which has a male protagonist, while no preferences related to the protagonist's gender emerge in case of female storytellers. Thus we may suppose that the values important for male storytellers are first and foremost manifested in the tale of *The Princess on the Glass Mountain* with its male protagonist. Here, the man is depicted as an active agent, as the woman remains a prize who is left in the background in the tale and does not interfere with the plot in any way. At the same time, concentrating of the activity of the male character and leaving the woman in the shadow need not mean that the story as a whole would show the general attitude towards the social positions of men and women. Obviously, the aim of the tale is not to denigrate women, but rather to present an adventure-laden plot; in addition, a tale with a male protagonist allows the male storyteller to identify with the hero.

In the case of female storytellers we may ask why women do not prefer tales with female protagonists, but rather tell both types of tales relatively equally. Scholars studying folk tales have explained this as men telling tales mostly outside the home and to male audiences, while women tell stories at home where audiences included both men and women (Holbek 1987: 405–406). Archival material has not been recorded in traditional storytelling situations; nevertheless, a similar tendency can be noticed here.

Proceeding from the premise that the collected material has been recorded in patriarchal village communities, one could ask if the tale types only reflect the male point of view or whether they also reflect the values of the female storytellers. To repeat Isabel Cardigos's question: are the worldviews that are represented in the tales different or similar?

On the basis of the archive material it can be said that no significant differences can be detected between the worldviews of male and female storytellers. Irrespective of the gender of the storyteller, Cinderella is still a poor orphan who is suffering from persecution by her stepmother and gets beautiful clothes she can wear to church thanks to the grey old man; the male hero still proves his value by keeping watch on his father's grave and rides a fine horse up the glass mountain. If there are differences, these rather arise from the individual styles of the narrators: male characters do not make male heroes finer, braver or more active than female narrators, and, vice versa, women do not underscore Cinderella's hard-working attitude and kindness more than male narrators,

nor do they express their critical attitude towards the lower position of women. These emphases emerge in scholars' treatments but not in archival material itself.

When observing role stereotypes in these tale types more closely I reached the conclusion that the interpretations I have offered (while relying on various authorities) are first and foremost connected to the values of the culture and society in which I live. Thus I find it necessary to emphasise that in the present analysis it is primarily my own voice as a researcher that is heard, and not the voices of storytellers or collectors of long ago.

From our contemporary viewpoint passivity is considered a negative quality: being active means progress, evolution, modernisation, flexibility, etc., while passivity has connotations of stagnation, conservatism, rigidity, inability to change, etc. Yet is it necessary to make such re-evaluations? Society has changed since the 19th century, and the ideals and reality of modern fairytale audiences, including researchers, are likely to differ from those of the storytellers; however, we do not know how exactly. Actually, it cannot be claimed with absolute certainty that the gender stereotypes manifested in fairy tales represent the reality of everyday life or just the values and ideals of the storytelling community, or else the values and ideas of someone else: either the collectors, the publishers or the researchers.

NOTES

1 The tale type is defined as masculine or feminine on the basis of the protagonist's gender, see Holbek 1987: 161.

2 To counterbalance male-centred study of fairy tale publications, Shawn Jarvis has been studying works by female collectors and editors published at the same time as those by the Brothers Grimm or other male editors, yet which still remain outside the reception of canonised editions of fairy tales; see Jarvis 1993: 102–126.

3 In case of the tale type catalogue it is important to bear in mind the story of its genesis and the sources used by Antti Aarne in compiling the catalogue.

4 The short descriptions are based on the summaries of the tale types included in Järv et al., forthcoming.

5 The hero's name in this tale type often consists of two parts. The first part, *turak*, is a Russian loan (< *дурак*) and means 'stupid', 'foolish'; the second part, *tuhkapusja,* means sitting in the hearth and farting, and meaning also 'lazy', 'stupid' by association.

6 H I 1, 279/84 (4) < Ambla parish, Põriki commune, Apliku farm – Joosep Freimann (1889). Still, comparative descriptions that contain evaluations of the characters' natures can be met but rarely in archival texts. Juxtaposing the orphan and the stepmother's own daughter can be seen in the tale type *The Substituted Bride* (ATU 403C) in which the stepmother dresses her own daughter in clean clothes and fine jewellery for the suitor's visit, while the orphan gets ugly clothes (and later the other way round), but the suitor nevertheless chooses the right girl.

7 The main character also remains in the domestic circle in the fairy tale *One-Eye, Two-Eyes, Three-Eyes* (ATU 511). At the same time, there are numerous fairy tales in which the heroine is still forced to leave the homestead – enter the forest (for example, *The Black and the White Bride* (earlier AT 403B), *The Maiden Who Seeks Her Brothers* (ATU 451)) or the other world (*The Kind and the Unkind Girls* (ATU 480), *Our Lady's Child* (ATU 710)). In these, the heroine is considerably more active than in *Cinderella*.

8 Identifying the real hero with the help of the ring can also be met in other tale types, for example, *The Dragon Slayer* (ATU 300) and *The Man Who Flew like a Bird and Swam like a Fish* (ATU 665).

9 The slipper has also been seen as a symbol of female sexuality, see Cardigos 1999: 219–228.

10 Publishers make up another of these influences, see, for example, Marzolph 2008: 75 and Uther 2008: 129–147.

S O U R C E S

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    H – Folklore collection of Jakob Hurt (1860–1906).

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