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FAIRY-TALE ENCHANTMENTS

For Isabel Cardigos, an inspiring colleague and good friend

Abstract: More than two decades ago the folklorist Isabel Cardigos remarked that the hinge of fairy tales is the cyclical movement in and out of enchantment. I feel that this insight is important, and I propose to briefly explain my understanding of it. First, I mention the importance of using allomotifs to bring out the folk metaphors in fairy tales. Then, I discuss a basic symbolic pattern of enchantments at the core of fairy tales. Overall, I add to Vladimir Propp's statement that the most complete fairy tale is a heroic quest the proposition that the irreducible core of fairy tales hinges on feminine maturation. Along the way, I discuss some metaphors suggestive of the lunar template at the core of fairy tales.

Keywords: fairy tales, allomotifs, enchantment, folk metaphors

The realm of enchantment, the folklorist Isabel Cardigos once noted, is “the core of fairy tales.” Hence, she proposed, explaining “the movement of non-enchantment to enchantment and back to non-enchantment, as expressed in a wealth of different symbols,” should account for “the logical illogicality of fairytales” (Cardigos 1996: 14). In the following pages the author's understanding of Cardigos's insight is briefly explained, and how it squares with his own research. First, the importance of using allomotifs to bring out the folk metaphors in fairy tales is brought up. Then, a basic symbolic pattern of enchantments at the core of fairy tales is discussed. Overall, the proposition that the irreducible core of fairy tales hinges on feminine cycles is added to Vladimir Propp's statement that the most complete fairy tale is a hero quest. Finally, some recurrent fairy-tale metaphors (flower, snake, and mirror tropes) that convey the cyclic pattern of lunar lore (i.e., the “logical illogicality” of this genre) are elaborated.

ALLOMOTIF MATTERS

It used to be a tenet of folklore studies that at the root of a given tradition you can find an original text, which tale-tellers replicate by word of mouth as best they can. But, given the limitations of human memory, rote replication inevitably corrupts the original. As Kaarle Krohn put it, “in the manifold modifications of the original form of a tradition, we encounter first the influence of faulty memory” (1971: 64). In this view, oral tradition is a corrupting process. Which, alas, fails to account for the actual stability of folktales. Stith Thompson, who subscribed to the notion that forgetfulness “is perhaps the most frequent cause of modifications in stories,” nevertheless noted the “remarkable” stability of stories “in the midst of continually shifting details” (1977: 436–437). Similarly, Krohn acknowledged “the incredible stability of folk narrative” (1971: 122). The adjectives used are interesting. If one thinks of tradition as a succession of memory errors that cannot but corrupt Ur-texts, then the stability of folktales looks “incredible” indeed. And this question arises: how can ever-shifting oral traditions, driven by memory lapses, achieve a “remarkable” stability?

Walter Anderson ingeniously devised a “law of self-correction” to explain away this problem. He noted that tale-tellers in oral traditions usually listen to a story several times, which allows them to correct any “gaps” and “errors” that may arise from memory weaknesses. Moreover, they listen to various sources, which allows them to patch the “errors” and “variations” of each one. Last but not least, when a narrator tells a story with “deviations” on different occasions, the audience will recall how on a previous occasion the story was told “correctly” (Anderson 1923: 399–406). Notice that Anderson’s acknowledgment that tale-tellers draw on various sources to compose their tales entails admitting that tale transmission hinges on creative retelling, rather than on repeating a text by rote. Moreover, the idea of self-correction rests on the chimeric assumption that there are Ur-texts one can use as benchmarks for correctness. Overall, an explanation relying on how audiences manage to keep correcting the “gaps” and “errors,” so as to revert to the “correct” tale, is wrong because—quite simply—there are no benchmarks in oral traditions, no original texts, to revert to.

A better model of tradition was proposed by Roman Jakobson and Petr Bogatyrev in *Folklore as a Specific Form of Creativity* (1929). Jakobson and Bogatyrev argued that because in oral settings stories and motifs will die out if they are not retold over and over, the creations of individual tale-tellers will endure only insofar as they are accepted and retold—insofar as they survive

the “preventive censorship of the community,” which tends to prune away anything not in line with the community-shared values and norms (1982: 38).¹ By dint of this cumulative mechanism of selective appropriations, materials in the traditional chain will comply with the norms and values in a community. This model explains, as the so-called law of self-correction does not, why oral tales are stable despite their superficial variability. It is not that variants mysteriously revert to an original text; rather, traditional themes persist insofar as they express the background values of tale-telling communities.²

This being said, it is clear that a tale can only come in many variants, and yet remain stable, on condition that the variants somehow comprise equivalent motifs. Which amounts to saying that the background values of tale-telling communities are expressed in a host of equivalent motifs. Alan Dundes famously proposed the term “allomotifs” to designate the equivalent motifs in variants of a tale. Shrewdly, he pointed out that if a number of motifs can fill the same slot in a tale—if the story works with any of them—then a comparison of the available allomotifs should clarify why those motifs are permutable. As Dundes put it, by examining allomotifs “we may gain access to implicit native formulations of symbolic equivalences” (1987: 168). His basic idea is: if A and B both fulfill the same narrative slot, then we can assume tale-tellers are equating A and B. Using this method, Dundes proposes, one could “unlock the secrets of symbolism in folklore” (2007: 319). Unfortunately, Dundes introduced a Freudian bias in his method for finding symbolism. He specified: “We can tell that A and B are functional or symbolic equivalents, but not necessarily that A is a symbol of B or that B is a symbol of A.” For example, if you find tale variants equating a phallus and a nose, “it is just as likely that a phallus is a symbolic nose as it is that a nose is a symbolic phallus.” His proposed solution is: if we find evidence “that either A or B is a tabooed subject, then we might well expect that the non-tabooed subject might be substituted for the tabooed subject rather than vice-versa,” that is, the nose would symbolize the phallus, rather than vice-versa (1987: 170). This reasoning uses Freud’s (1989: 185) idea that symbols often screen something repressed—the “‘genuine’ thing behind” them, as Freud put it. For Dundes, the allomotif that conveys the genuine thing is typically to be found in Freud’s standard list of symbols.

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¹ This model is applied in light of contemporary scholarship in Vaz da Silva 2012.

² The notion that oral traditions derive from original literary texts recently enjoyed a revival, which the author discusses in Vaz da Silva 2010. And the idea that traditional tales express the values of tale-telling communities is illustrated with a specific case study in Vaz da Silva 2016a.

But, of course, not all symbols are reducible to Freud's standard list. It is best to consider allomotifs as expressions of underlying ideas yet to be discovered and to face symbolic variability without the crutch of any predefined exegetic keys. Basically, it will be argued that allomotifs express folk metaphors steeped in the worldview of tale-telling communities. However, before focusing on any particular metaphor, the point will be made that fairy tales as a genre, *as a narrative form*, are inherently metaphorical.

FAIRY TALE AS METAPHOR

This point is taken from the author's understanding of some interesting results of Vladimir Propp's work on the morphology of the fairy tale. On the one hand, Propp pointed out that the "structure of the tale demands that the hero leave home at any cost," hence the narrative develops along the "route of the hero" (1996: 37, 39). On the other, he remarked that the themes of initiation into puberty and of journeys to the realm of death account for nearly all the contents of fairy tales. This makes sense, he notes, because initiatory processes are usually conceptualized "as abiding in the realm of death" (1983: 470).

If Propp's remarks are brought together, two quite important points emerge. First, the morphology of fairy tales amounts to the structure of rites of passage—separation from a given status, then into a liminal status tantamount to temporary death, and finally incorporation into a new status amounting to a rebirth.³ Second, there is a correlation between Propp's points that fairy tales describe spatial journeys on the one hand, and that they address coming-of-age processes on the other. The point here is that fairy tales use spatial journeys *in order to* talk about coming-of-age processes. In other words, fairy tales use the concreteness of spatial journeys to reason about maturation processes. This is a basic metaphorical process.

Recall George Lakoff and Mark Johnson's research on conceptual metaphor. These authors emphasize that "[m]ost of our understanding of time is a metaphorical version of our understanding of motion in space." For instance, the so-called time-orientation metaphor "has an observer at the present who is facing toward the future, with the past behind the observer" (linguistic expressions of this metaphorical mapping include "that's all *behind* us now," and "we're looking *ahead* to the future"). Moreover, in the so-called time's landscape metaphor "each location in the observer's path is a time,"

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³ This point was made long ago by Mircea Eliade (1998). It is developed in Vaz da Silva 2018.

so that “time is a path on the ground the observer moves over” (linguistic expressions of this mapping include “there’s going to be trouble *down the road*,” and “we’re *getting close* to Christmas”) (1999: 139, 140, 146). Fairy tales, this paper suggests, map space to time as they depict characters leaving home to walk (or fly, or be carried over in) the journey of their own maturation. In other words: fairy tales, taken as a narrative form, are inherently metaphorical in that they use spatial journeys as images for coming-of-age processes.

THE FULL FAIRY TALE AND ITS CORE

There is more to be said on Propp’s morphological model. Let us recall some basics. First, it suggests that all fairy tales develop along a single narrative axis encompassing thirty-one functions. This axis spans a development proceeding from a lack (or a villainy), through intermediary functions, “to Marriage ... or to other functions” involving a reward, a gain, or “in general the liquidation of misfortune” (Propp 1996: 92).

Within this framework, Propp set apart two sorts of heroes—the seeker, whom he mostly thinks about as a male, and the “victim hero,” whom he mostly identifies as a girl:

If a young girl is abducted and a seeker goes in pursuit of her, then two characters have left home. But the route followed by the story and on which the action is developed is actually the route of the seeker. If, for example, a girl is driven out and there is no seeker, then the narrative is developed along the route of the victim hero. (Propp 1996: 39)

Regarding the path of heroes, Propp noted that after leaving home, “the hero (both the seeker hero and the victim hero)” obtains a magical agent from a donor, by means of a test or a contest, “which permits the eventual liquidation of misfortune” (ibid.: 39). If the donor’s reward provides whatever was lacking, the tale ends. Propp notes that this is usually the case with “tales of stepmothers and stepdaughters” and “tales of the Amor/Cupid and Psyche types,” that is, with feminine tales (2012: 172, 189). However, in the case of male heroes, the donor’s reward usually allows him to travel to a distant realm and either fight an opponent or solve a difficult task in order to obtain his prize. Therefore, the full fairy tale is typically a male quest. In Propp’s words, the “most complete and perfect form of the tale”—the dragon-slayer plot—is the “archetype of the fairy tale,” the “one tale with respect to which all fairy tales will appear as variants” (1996: 89, 95).

In short: Propp's ideal 31-function model befits a hero quest, the dragon-slaying scheme (Bremond and Verrier 1982: 76–77).

Yet, as Marie-Louise Tenèze (1970: 22) astutely noticed, Propp never asked what the “irreducible core” of the fairy tale might be.⁴ Propp did note that the tales of the persecuted stepdaughter “have neither battle with an opponent nor difficult tasks linked with courtship and marriage.” The basic element of these tales, he proposes, is the test. “We could say that these tales go no further than the test, reward, and return,” he notes (2012: 209–210). In Propp's androcentric perspective, feminine tales are but incipient plots. The fairy-tale archetype is about male quests: “... a dragon kidnaps a princess, ... Iván meets a witch, obtains a steed, flies away, vanquishes the dragons with the help of the steed, returns, is subjected to pursuit by she-dragons, meets his brothers, etc.” (Propp 1996: 89).

But take away the androcentric gaze and a different picture emerges. Notice that, *because* a dragon kidnapped the princess, the seeker departs to save her. The feminine abduction pre-exists the hero's quest and gives it a purpose—it is the prime mover of the plot. Now compare the twin propositions that (i) most feminine tales do not go beyond the donor's test, and (ii) even the most complete male tale hinges on feminine enchantments. One inescapable implication is that a feminine enchantment—or a girl passing the donor's test, or something equivalent—is the irreducible core of the fairy tale.

Which brings to mind Roger Sale's proposition, uttered from an unrelated perspective, that the gamut of fairy-tale transformations might unfold from a simple nucleus—a girl enters the woods:

A girl is in a wood. Give her a brother and one has *Hansel and Gretel*, give her many brothers and sisters and one has *Hop o' my Thumb*, send the girl to dwarves and one has *Snow White*, to bears and one has *Goldilocks*, to grandmother and one has *Little Red Riding Hood*. Make the girl a boy and one might have Jack, either the one who climbs beanstalks or the one who kills giants; make her a man and one has *The Wonderful Musician*; give her three drops of blood and a servant and one has *The Goose Girl*. (Sale 1979: 29)

At first sight, Sale's generative girl-focused model and Propp's archetypal hero-focused model cannot both be right. Yet, each of these approaches is illuminating in its own way. Notice that Cardigos's question—

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⁴ Max Lüthi (1982: 132) made a similar point.

can we explain the movement of non-enchantment to enchantment and back to non-enchantment?—is actually about the core of fairy tales, which eluded Propp’s attention. That is the next point of interest.

CRONES, DONORS, AND ENCHANTMENT

The foregoing discussion suggests that a girl passing the donor’s test amounts to her undergoing enchantment. Propp, on a different tack, insisted on the triviality of feminine tests. He felt that there is not much really to say about feminine tales—the story simply “ends with a reward. The stepdaughter returns home,” he says. The test itself concerns “housekeeping abilities”—and the gifts received are trivial, “do not bear a magical character but represent material wealth” (2012: 158, 161). Bengt Holbek, who followed Propp’s emphasis on the male quest pattern, clarifies his predecessor’s line of thought: the gifts granted to girls are but “pretty clothes, good looks, spinning and weaving implements and the like,” whereas the gifts granted to boys “serve to enhance the protagonist’s powers” and include ontological “properties (ability to change shape, great strength).” In short, the gifts granted to girls are trivia rather than (as in masculine tales) ontological properties (1998: 420; 1989: 50).

Arguably, this is the wrong conclusion. Fairy-tale girls do receive “properties”—in fact, enhanced feminine powers—that magically transform them. Such properties are encoded in a symbolic pattern that is remarkably stable, for it is actually the code of enchantment in fairy tales.

Let us take a look at some allomotifs that are typical of the donor’s test. We start with the clear-cut case of *The Kind and the Unkind Girls* (ATU 480). Perrault’s famous variant of this tale, *The Fairies*, features a mistreated stepdaughter and her wicked half sister. The two girls sequentially go fetch water at a spring. The stepdaughter is kind toward a fairy she meets there. As a reward, she is fated to exhale roses, pearls, and diamonds when she speaks. In contrast, the other girl is cursed to expel snakes and toads. In Grimms’ *Frau Holle* (KHM 24) the diligent girl walks from the donor’s test covered with gold, and her counterpart goes home covered with pitch. In another variant quoted by the Grimms, one girl is rewarded with golden flax to spin whilst the other is led across a gate of pitch into a realm of snakes and toads. The Brothers Grimm also paraphrase a French variant by Madame de Villeneuve that depicts one girl fated to produce bright flowers whenever she combs her hair, whilst the other girl is cursed to endure stinking weeds and rushes growing out of her head (Grimm J. and W. 1884/1: 104–107, 370–372). According to a Portuguese variant, three fairies fate one girl to be beautiful,

to expel gold from her mouth, and to enjoy a long happy marriage whereas the other girl is cursed to have a misshapen face, to defecate through her mouth when speaking, and to a short horrid lifespan (Oliveira 1905/2: 65–66). In the same vein, Basile's *The Three Fairies* establishes that the good girl acquires a magnificent gown embroidered with gold and a golden star on her forehead, and is fated to find herself "well married." Her counterpart gets "a donkey's testicle ... onto her forehead "and dies scalded, shedding her skin like a serpent leaving its slough" (Basile 2007: 283–284; 287).

In these examples, the recurrent references to marriage leave no doubt as to what this test is about. The end results suggest that newly-acquired puberty comprises two opposite aspects. One girl becomes radiant and beautiful, expels flowers, and proceeds to marriage; the other becomes dark and ugly, is associated with snakes and toads, and lapses into abjection. The symbolic code is quite stable: radiance and flowers are on the side of beauty and marriage; darkness, snakes, and toads are on the side of ugliness and abjection.

The theme of *The Kind and the Unkind Girls*, being very simple in its binary outcome, is often used by narrators to glorify "good" girls and stigmatize "bad" girls. But there is more to be said about this symbolic pattern. Cardigos points out that sometimes the golden "girl and the snake actually merge into one, whose nature changes in the course of time" (1996: 128). Cardigos's point is that the golden and the dark traits are the inherent aspects of each menarcheal girl. Otherwise put, feminine maturation includes a dark spell associated with snakes as well as a bright phase associated with courtship—the two phases represent the complementary aspects of the feminine fertile cycle.

Take *Burdilluni*, a Sicilian story. The parents of a four-year-old girl ask four fairies to fate their daughter. The spells by three fairies go according to plan: "Whenever you comb your hair, pearls and precious stones will fall from it. ... [Y]ou will become the most beautiful girl there ever was. ... [W]hen you see fruit out of season and desire it, the fruit will immediately be there for you." But the fourth fairy, having found herself momentarily blinded by cinders, curses the girl: "Whenever you see the sun, you'll turn into a black snake."⁵ In the same vein, a story from Tuscany, *The Serpent Girl*, recounts how a girl finds toads underground that fate her to become the loveliest girl in the world and to shine like the sun; but then, one toad curses her to turn

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⁵ *Burdilluni* is tale no. 77 in Giuseppe Pitre's *Fiabe novelle e racconti popolari siciliani* (1875). This is quoted from Zipes and Russo (eds.) 2009: 281–282. (Bizarrely, this translation names the Sicilian tale after the Italian name form *Baldellone*.)

into a serpent the minute she sees the sun. In both stories the girl is on her way to marriage when she turns into a snake, and she must resume her shining persona before the marriage can be celebrated (Nerucci 1880: 275).⁶ Another Italian story, *The Three Sisters*, conveys the dark phase as a time of blindness. A snake bestows upon the youngest sister the gift of shedding tears of silver and pearls, and of producing golden flowers when laughing. When the girl is about to get married, the elder sisters gouge out her eyes and cut off her hands. After pitiful trials and tribulations, the girl recovers her eyesight and hands, and—shining like the sun—she reveals herself to the prince. Marriage ensues (Comparetti 1875: 103–106; Calvino 1982: 37–40 conflated this text with a Tuscan variant to produce his own variant, *The Snake*).

Considering the three Italian stories together makes it clear that the girl's lapse into blindness is tantamount to her transformation into a snake. Also note that a *blinded* fairy curses the girl to be a *black* snake. And, conversely, regaining the eyesight amounts to shedding the dark snake's skin. Whatever the motifs may be, one constant idea is that girls must lapse into darkness before they become brilliant brides and marriage can ensue.

Again, this constant symbolic pattern grants perspective on Holbek's statement that the donor sequence "is absent in many feminine tales where heroines assume the adult role without any initiation." Holbek adds, "If they are at all subjected to a test, it is ... often service with a witch. The gift is related to their sexual role in most cases" (1998: 420). This remark goes to the heart of the matter. Even when girls do not face a qualifying test, they tend to get magical powers from older women—witches, fairies, grannies, stepmothers, etc. So, it is not the case that girls can do "without any initiation"; rather, their interactions with older women are all about initiation.

The point is that all fairy-tale maidens eventually come to a crisis and they acquire the cyclic gift of fertility. Lapsing into darkness and emerging back into light is one simple code for that crisis, which amounts to a symbolic death and rebirth. There are, of course, myriad ways of expressing that enchantment condition. An enchanted maiden might be buried deep in a well, in a cave, or in the crystal mountain. Or she might fall into catatonic slumber. She may as well become blind, mute, unable to laugh, or forgetful, which is yet another mode of suspended life. Or else, the enchanted character may appear inside a tower, a well, or a tree—all equivalent modes of being hidden, buried, confined. She might also appear as a serpent or a bird, or dressed in

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⁶ See a translated adaptation in Calvino 1982: 227–228.

a pelt, which amounts to taking an animal shape. The point is: coming of age requires the dual movement into a death-like liminal state—enchantment—and back into a (new) social status.

METAPHORS: FLOWERS AND SNAKES

In order to grasp what is at stake in this dual movement, focus on the link between menarcheal girls, flowers, and snakes. The sheer frequency of flowers in coming-of-age scenes is staggering. And, given the widespread assumption that menarcheal girls are in bloom, it is not surprising. This metaphorical notion can be found in one French expression for menarcheal girls, *jeunes filles en fleurs*, as well as in Shakespeare's description of a virgin as "a fresh uncropped flower" (*All's Well That Ends Well* 5.3.319). The same metaphor tacitly underlies the ongoing habit of calling the first sexual experience a "defloration." A 16th-century French medical doctor, Laurent Joubert, helpfully explains that the "menstrual purgations of women are commonly called 'flowers' because they ordinarily precede and prepare for the fruit, which is the child" (1989: 99). The point is that this metaphor draws on the visible causal connection between the flower and the fruit to conceptualize the link between menarcheal blood and motherhood. Assiduously, fairy tales cultivate the flower metaphor regarding girls who receive the wonder of fertility, plus the oomph of Eros, as they come of age.

As for snakes, these reptiles are often associated with the underground and with watery settings. Also, because they slough their old skin and seem to become rejuvenated, snakes share with the moon the reputation of being able to cyclically rejuvenate.⁷ Lunar cycles have the same duration as women's cycles, and reputedly influence them. The net result is that, as the comparatist Robert Briffault put it, snakes play worldwide "the same part in regard to the functions of women as the moon" (1977: 312–315). It is the case that fairy-tale dragons, a glorified form of snakes, typically abduct girls who have come under the sway of moon cycles. Overall, the snake connection suggests that the supernatural endowments granted to fairy-tale girls are lunar powers.

In short, the flower metaphor uses the causal link between the flower and the fruit to conceptualize the link between menarcheal blood and

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⁷ For a short listing of the traits of snakes in folklore, see Vaz da Silva 2016b; for a much longer and fascinating account, see Hazel 2019.

children. Moreover, the snake image uses the empirical notion that in snake sloughing (and in moon cycles) the old form is discarded so that a new form emerges in order to explain why women cyclically shed blood before pregnancy occurs. While the thrust of each metaphor is different, they are complementary. Together, they convey the notion that women become fertile as they start cycling along with the moon, and each monthly period renovates their fertility. In fairy tales, girls acquire flowers and meet the dragon/snake as they enter the lunar sphere of influence.

MIRROR SPLITS

Eleazar Meletinsky and his collaborators have pointed out that in fairy tales “[a]lmost every personage can perform temporarily some opposite functions. To consider such cases as mechanically superimposed is incorrect. ... [F]unctional fields are continuous, and ... they form a cyclical structure” (1974: 117). This insight applies to the split of fairy-tale girls between a dark/enchanted and a golden/bridal aspect. The general point of this paper has been that opposite rivals, such as the ones that can be found in ATU 480, are the split aspects of a cyclical girl. Presently, let us take this point one step further. As the tales in which the black character acts as a bridal usurper are considered, the dark usurper will be seen to actually represent the bride’s lapse into dark enchantment. The point, again, is that the two rival girls are one.

Let us start with the Grimm Brothers’ *The Three Little Men in the Woods* (KHM 13). After a beautiful young queen bears a son, the wicked stepmother and her ugly daughter throw her into a stream. The ugly stepsister replaces the queen in the nuptial bed, but whereas pieces of gold used to drop from the queen’s mouth, toads leap out of the usurper’s mouth when she speaks. Similarly, in *Little Brother and Little Sister* (KHM 11), after the queen bears a son the stepmother and her ugly daughter put her into a fiendishly hot bath where she suffocates. The stepsister, who is ugly as night and has only one eye, gets into the queen’s bed. She takes on the shape and the look of the queen, but she cannot disguise her blind eye. Another German variant has a young woman, after being turned into a duck, say she lies “in the lowest depths, the earth is the bed I sleep on, the water ... is my coverlid” (Grimm J. and W. 1884/1: 352). And in *The White Bride and the Black Bride* (KHM 135), the stepdaughter is forced to dress a grey gown and gets thrown into deep water. As she sinks, a snow-white duck arises out of the “mirror-smooth water” (Grimm J. and W. 1884/2: 191). Although

the usurper wears the queen's golden dress, she cannot disguise the fact that she is black. On the third night, the king beheads the duck and thus disenchantments the true bride.

Notice that in KHM 13, after the young queen cast in the water turns into a duck, the usurper produces toads in the nuptial bed, as if she represented the queen's enchantment in the netherworld. The usurper is associated with blackness and blindness, the typical traits of enchantment spells, which suggests she embodies the background predicament of the queen under the limelight.

Also notice that in KHM 135, the image of mirror-smooth water represents the boundary between opposite worlds, which suggests that mirroring is a fit metaphor for the correlated aspects of girls. Consider in this connection Basile's *Pentamerone* tale 5.9, *The Three Citrons*. After a prince let some blood fall on ricotta cheese while beholding crows, he wished to find a woman as white and red as that ricotta stained with blood. After he finds her, the prince leaves the young woman on a tree by a fountain. A black slave who comes to the source sees the maiden's face mirrored in the water, which she deems her own face. The slave attacks the young woman, who turns into a white dove, and takes her position. In order to understand this scene, consider that the black woman's name is Lucia, which means "light." Her mistress had pointedly warned her not to indulge in gazing at Lucia in the water. Regardless, the slave does look in the mirroring surface and there beholds "Lucia" in the guise of a white face. As the black slave sees Lucia in the mirror, it is the white maiden she sees.

Not only does the white maiden appear as the white reflection of the black woman; the black slave represents the white maiden's dark condition. Consider this: although the setting of the prince's original infatuation for an ideal woman involves three colors—red, white, and black—the prince then searches for a red-and-white woman. Has the black dimension vanished, then? Not quite, for—as the prince's father points out—his son set out "in search of a white dove only to bring home a black crow." Here the black crow and the white dove signify the polar dimensions of the bride otherwise associated with mesmerizing redness. And Lucia looks like lucidity incarnated as she maintains to the prince that she is the bewitched black aspect of the white bride—allegedly, the slave is "enchanted, one year white face, one year black ass" (Basile 2007: 439). There is structural truth to this deception in that Basile puts the dark-Lucia character in charge of expressing the alternating dark and luminous phases of fairy-tale enchantments.

CONCLUSION

The foregoing discussion suggests that the “movement of non-enchantment to enchantment and back to non-enchantment, as expressed in a wealth of different symbols,” indeed explains the “logical illogicality” of fairy tales (Cardigos 1996: 14). That logical illogicality, in short, expresses the warp of cyclic time. It is the cyclic logic “of ‘ordeals,’ ‘deaths’ and ‘resurrections’” that, as Eliade (1998: 202) pointed out, fairy tales share with initiation rites. Fairy tales, like coming-of-age ceremonies, hinge on cyclic processes in which dissolution portends renewal. The lunar template of enchantment explains why it involves darkness, shapeshifting, and bloodshed. The clockwork of fairy tales relies on metaphor, abides by cyclic time, and befits feminine processes.

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