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The Grimm Brothers: An Interpretation of Capitalistic Demands and Desires

Rebecca Cicalese

Introduction

Within the mystical world the Grimm Brothers created in their legendary fairy tales, components of Marxism, particularly the teachings of Karl Marx, exist and were purposefully written into the stories lines by the brothers to provide subversive criticism of the capitalistic society in Germany during the 1800s. Marx's principles of female commodification, worker exploitation and dehumanization, as well as worker rebellion to create a classless, or communist, society, within the context of Marxist literary criticism, will be highlighted in this paper to establish the correlation between Marx's teachings and the mindset of the Grimm Brothers when they created the fairy tales. There is an undeniable class distinction within the Grimm fairy tales, namely "The Maiden Without Hands," "The Juniper Tree," and "The Boy Who Went Forth to Learn Fear," and the brothers chose to write these particular stories in a light that exemplified the class struggle the Grimm family encountered, as well as other less fortunate families, within Germany during the early to mid 1800s. Through an analysis of these three stories, as well as the cultural, political, and social aspects of Germany at the time, this paper will provide evidence that suggests the Grimm Brothers had a particular agenda while altering German folklore and crafting their own stories.

These struggles German citizens faced, consisting of class discrimination and social limitation, stemmed from the distress and financial hardships that resulted from the early stages of the Industrial Era ("The Industrial Revolution and the Social Question"). As machinery and technological advances began to take the place of many individuals, unemployment rose, resulting in families being less able to survive financially, especially in rural areas. There were also troubles between workers and bosses due to the lack of workers' rights protection, which ultimately led to exploitation and more defined class structures ("The Industrial Revolution and

the Social Question”). The brothers were aware of these class structures and how citizen morale was being affected, and therefore felt compelled to write their tales in a way that captured their personal perspective about German society.

As seen through the eyes of both Wilhelm and Jacob Grimm, components of Marxism exist within society and are purposefully written into the stories to bring light to these issues. The societies existing within the fairy tales are commodity based; goods and services are involuntarily exchanged between the lower and higher socio-economic classes, and thus perpetuate the cycle of financial inequality and struggle. The “monsters” in the Grimm Brothers’ fairy tales are seen as the laborers who must comply with the higher socio-economic classes (e.g. the royals/rich within the society), and damsels function as objects that must be exchanged in order to keep society moving forward. The brothers symbolically represented the teachings of Marx in their fairy tales, even though Marx and Engels did not publish their ground breaking analysis of capitalistic societies until after some of the tales were published.

Although Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels published their doctrine, *The Communist Manifesto*, in 1848, and the Grimm Brothers published their fairy tales, which were roughly based on German folklore, between the years of 1812 and 1857, both pieces of literature focused on how class is structured, and how certain socio-economic positions can help or hinder the individual in attaining material wealth or a moral sense of right and wrong in a capitalistic society. By simply writing these stories, the brothers revealed their own personal demons, as well as the ones that plagued society during the 1800s. Through careful analysis, this project will support the claim that the Grimm Brothers purposefully included ideas surrounding class structure during the industrial revolution in Germany, and which Marx eventually gave name to

in 1848, into their stories as an attempt to gather the lower socio-economic classes and encourage these groups to rise from their oppressive counterparts.

German Society During the 1800s

During the time the Grimm Brothers imagined and published these fairy tales, which was between the years of 1812 and 1857, there were various political and social movements occurring throughout Germany that may have influenced the perspective and writing of Wilhelm and Jacob. One of those movements was the Unification and Freedom Movement, which sought to break down the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation because this structure still based its rules and laws on traditional authoritarian guidelines. The “new” German society, namely the Burschenschaft Fraternity, demanded the dismantling of unfair economic and working conditions, as well as forced oppression (Jachmann 2014). Another such movement was the Lassallism Movement, which was created by Ferdinand Lassalle and partly influenced by Otto von Bismarck, former Minister President of Prussia. Lassalle supported universal suffrage, and eventually created the *Allgemeiner Deutscher Arbeiterverein* (General German Workers’ Association), where his party worked to secure voting rights through a peaceful, democratic process (Dauve and Authier 1976). These movements strengthened the beliefs the Grimm Brothers possessed about class structure in Germany, and thus persuaded the brothers to become more politically aware.

Between the years of 1812 and 1857 – the years in which the brothers were actively publishing their fairy tales - both brothers tirelessly researched and became aware of the political and social upheaval of the lower socio-economic classes by scholars and political theorists, such as Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, among others (Zipes, “Who’s Afraid” 67). In 1848, the groundbreaking work of these men, *The Communist Manifesto*, became available to the public,

and there is no doubt that Wilhelm and Jacob, being young, educated men interested in the future of their society, were able to become accustomed to the ideas that were expressed. *The Communist Manifesto* explains the distinctions between each separate class, namely the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, which is exactly what occurs in the fairy tales I have chosen to analyze. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels may have been able to see the struggles between the socio-economic classes, just like the Grimm Brothers must have, so it seems justifiable to say that all those involved in the creation of both works of literature shared similar beliefs and political stances regarding the capitalistic nature of Germany during the 1800s.

According to biographical information, there are also personal motives behind the criticism of German society that is exemplified in the fairy tales. As young boys, Wilhelm and Jacob experienced a great loss that was felt not only emotionally for them and the rest of the family, but also financially. Philipp Wilhelm Grimm, the father and financial rock of the family, died when the brothers were only ten and eleven years old. Philipp was the primary breadwinner of the household, and through his death, the family lost financial and social stability (Zipes, *Breaking the Magic Spell* 206-207). Wilhelm and Jacob felt compelled to help their mother support nine children, including themselves, and therefore took it upon themselves to work while trying to attend school. Through this tragedy, the family lost their government sponsored home, which the family possessed due to their father's position as the town clerk of Hanau, Germany, and were forced to live in a shack that could barely fit all nine children (Peppard 3). Wilhelm and Jacob, however, knew their father would be disappointed if they did not help their mother provide and support their younger siblings, and so they set aside school for some time, in an effort to raise money for their family and eventual education (Peppard 9).

The Grimm Brothers knew the value of hard work and were therefore taken aback when they were denied entry into the University of Marburg for a whole year because of their new socio-economic class (Peppard 10). Wilhelm and Jacob were no longer considered “rich” in the eyes of society, and were therefore not allowed to continue their education. It took a letter from their mother, which begged the university to reconsider admission, for the boys to be admitted and allowed to continue their studies (Peppard 12). It can be assumed this letter had a profound impact on Wilhelm and Jacob because they watched one of the hardest working and strongest people they know beg like a child for their benefit (Peppard 12). This type of interaction was important for the Grimm family because it solidified their transition from a wealthy and highly respected family to a family that was treated differently because of their lower socio-economic status. Degradation of this kind was common between the higher social classes and the lower ones, who were trying to improve their social position through education, but were often faced with many obstacles, such as the one the Grimm Brothers faced (Zipes, *Breaking the Magic Spell* 206).

Witnessing their mother beg the Headmaster at Marburg for their acceptance reinforced the idea of how class structures formulate the world an individual lives in, as well as that particular individual’s possible chances for success. The brothers gradually became jaded towards society and felt compelled to at least make public certain observations they had about social structure and how that structure determined who possessed the power and who did not (Peppard 12). At university, the brothers became more politically aware of what was happening within their country and social class, and it was through this awakening that the Grimm Brothers determined they needed to express to the rest of the world the struggles of the lower classes

(proletariat) against the higher class (bourgeoisie). It is interesting how the Grimm Brothers express this message, though: through their collective love of literature, through fairy tales.

The Grimm Brothers chose to use fairy tales as their medium to inform the world of the injustices that exist between higher and lower socio-economic classes. At the University of Marburg, a law professor of theirs', namely Friedrich Carl von Savigny, inspired the brothers to explore German folklore. This professor encouraged the research by persuading the brothers into believing that the essence of law was understood by knowing ancient customs and language (Ben-Amos 117). By delving into German folklore, a curiosity and passion rose within the brothers to collect and alter such tales, which eventually resulted in the Grimm Brothers' own publication of fairy tales. The brothers wanted to learn more about the German legal and social systems while studying at Marburg, and through this exploration into the field of folklore, which contrasts legal studies in quite a logical way, the brothers were able to recognize the unspeakable injustices that exist within both systems (Ben-Amos 118). The Grimm Brothers understood the dangers associated with openly expressing controversial issues about German society, and therefore decided to communicate the differences between the socio-economic classes through fairy tales, as opposed to legal articles and criticisms (Zipes, "Who's Afraid" 69). By being critical of German society through literature that many believe was "fiction", the Grimm Brothers were able to safely convey their messages without fear of consequence. Numerous people read the Grimm Brothers' fairy tales as mere entertainment, but if one dares to read the tales politically, much more of Marx's philosophy and complexity can be seen.

Political Awareness in the Grimm Fairy Tales

When one thinks of fairy tales, one imagines child friendly stories of kings and queens living happily ever after in their castles, surrounded by beautiful landscape and adorning

servants. One does not imagine horrific violence in the tales being used to inform society about the evils of capitalism and commodity exchange, which is the tactic used by the Grimm Brothers. The fairy tales written by the Grimm Brothers were meant not for children, but for adults, in an effort to open their eyes to all that is happening within society (Bayer 2011). The Grimm Brothers were politically aware of what was happening during the time of their writing and were determined, alongside Marx and Engels, to see a society that criticized class distinctions and capitalism. The subversion of the fairy tales was intentional; the Grimm Brothers wanted to see an overhaul of society and instead of writing a manifesto like Marx and Engels, the Grimm Brothers chose to write fairy tales - a simple, childlike concept that stood and continues to stand for so much more. Sometimes, simple techniques are used to present complex concepts in order to clearly depict an intended message, and through analyzing the Grimm Fairy Tales, it can be assumed that this methodological approach can be applied.

Based on a political reading of the fairy tales, one may be able to assume that Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm drew upon their collective knowledge of German society at the time to inform the rest of the world of the class structure that existed, as well as the struggles that occurred alongside such a structure. By implementing criticisms of the capitalistic society, later known as Marxist criticism, the Grimm Brothers were able to express the degradation and suffering the lower socio-economic classes were forced to endure. The brothers also illuminated through their stories that those in power will continue to alienate and exploit lower social classes unless there is a collective movement to remove these individuals from power. There are traces of these efforts of resistance in the stories I have chosen to analyze within this paper, and it is important to remember that Wilhelm and Jacob were not the only ones at the time who believed society needed to change. By creating a world of violence and uneasiness, the Grimm Brothers were able

to expose realities of living within Germany during the 1800s, as well as how personal struggles become political and social burdens within the capitalistic society, without risking an immediate backlash from society or the German government.

Jack Zipes, retired professor of German at the University of Minnesota and passionate lecturer on the subject of fairy tales, explains in his anthology, *Breaking the Magic Spell: Radical Theories of Folk and Fairy Tales* that, “The genius fairy tale writer is a seer of the future,” (105). Zipes then goes on to say that, “...the alternative path [of] history could take if human beings actually took charge of their destiny,” (*Breaking the Magic Spell* 105). Through these two explanations of what fairy tales and fairy tale writers should include, it is possible to say that the Grimm Brothers possessed both of these aspects in their writings, as well as in their personal lives. Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm were able to see into the future and predict a world where class distinctions and economics were not the basis of interaction that took place, which is exactly what Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels were able to do. Even though Marx and Engels were not fairy tale writers, they were in essence able to create a fairy tale in their collaborative novels where everyone lived together, happily, in a communist society. This reality, the reality of a communist society, never successfully took form in German society, so it was therefore left upon the shoulders of the Grimm Brothers to inform those who were not interested in *The Communist Manifesto* about the dangers and injustices that were happening within society.

The following fairy tales: “The Maiden Without Hands”, “The Juniper Tree”, and “The Boy Who Went Forth to Learn Fear” are perfect examples of how the Grimm Brothers saw the society in which they lived. It cannot be forgotten that the Grimm Brothers closely identified themselves with the tales they wrote, and therefore felt compelled to shed light on a topic that was not discussed outside of the home (Zipes, *Breaking the Magic Spell* 206). In these fairy

tales, society is based on the exchange value of objects, such as women, for other material possessions, which indicates that in a capitalistic society, women are only valuable as long as they can offer men some sort of service. And this notion is accepted across all classes, not just those plagued by poverty and inequality. These fairy tales also speak of the hardships laborers must face as they are alienated from the rest of society and exploited by those who control all the wealth. So as a family that was once financially secure and then lost that security through tragedy, the Grimm Brothers were able to sympathize with those who had nothing. The brothers understood the struggle that came with being in a lower socio-economic class, and it was through their experiences that they felt compelled to publicly criticize the structure and dynamics that exist within a capitalistic society.

“The Maiden Without Hands”

Summary

In the fairy tale “The Maiden Without Hands,” the Grimm Brothers warn against the dangers of people blindly exchanging belongings for wealth, as well as the consequences that affect not only the individual person, but also the entire family. “The Maiden Without Hands” was written in 1812, and tells the story of a Miller, who is tricked by a strange wizard into sacrificing his daughter for financial security. This wizard, who has been interpreted by other scholars to represent the devil, manipulates the Miller by offering him wealth in exchange for whatever is behind his mill. Thinking only trees and land lay behind the mill, the Miller agrees to this proposition; however, he quickly learns that his daughter is the object of the wizard’s desire. Instead of objecting to the wizard’s desire to possess his daughter, the Miller agrees to forfeit his daughter for wealth. Since the daughter is so pious, however, the wizard cannot touch her; therefore, the Miller decides he will cut off his daughter’s hands in order to solidify the deal. As

the story progresses, the daughter leaves her father and eventually marries into wealth and power. While wandering through an apple tree garden, the daughter meets the King of another village, and the two fall passionately in love, despite the daughter's lack of hands. As time passes, the daughter becomes the Queen of the village and has a child. Learning of the daughter's marriage and the birth of her child, the wizard, who seeks revenge upon the daughter and her newfound happiness, conspires against the daughter and her new husband in an effort to remove her from her current position in society as a consequence of the previous interactions with the Miller. He disrupts letters that are sent back and forth between the King and Queen (daughter) while the King is away fighting in a war, changing the meaning and purpose of the letters, and eventually causing these two to drift apart.

In this fairy tale, the reader sees all components of Marx's teachings being exemplified: the greed and obsession with material wealth, the blatant disregard for those who are actually providing the labor (in this case, the wizard is seen as the laborer – his job is to trick and destroy the family), and the apparent rebellion of the laborers in an effort to bring down the establishment. All of these ideas are expressed in Marx's *The Communist Manifesto* and *The German Ideology*, as well as in the Grimm Fairy Tales. All of these men were thinking about the implications greed, capitalism, and commodification would have on society and what needed to be done in order to change the outlook of society in the future.

Analysis

The best way to observe and explain the teachings of Marx and Engels in "The Maiden Without Hands" is to systematically work through the fairy tale from beginning to end. The very first line in this fairy tale sets up the situation that occurred not only in this imagined world, but also in German society, as well, "A Miller, who had gradually become very poor, had nothing

left but his mill and a large apple tree behind it,” (Grimm & Grimm 205). This statement is indicative of the fact that as time went on in Germany, the wealth some people enjoyed began to diminish and they were left to pick up the pieces. However, this statement also indicates that there are those in society who were able to keep their wealth and eventually grow into some of the most prominent and powerful people in the country. One aspect of this statement that is of interest right away is that the Miller *gradually* becomes very poor, which is exactly what happened to the Grimm Brothers after their father passed away. The life experiences of the brothers, such as losing a parent who provides financial support for the family, as well as facing criticism and ridicule for a lowered socio-economic class, mirrors the experiences other people who live and struggle in society must endure. This first statement is also interesting in the fact that the story focuses on money right from the beginning; neither the Miller’s health nor his family is mentioned, simply the fact that he has no money. One can speculate based on Marx’s theory of worker exploitation that those who are in lower socio-economic classes are more easily tempted by material wealth when it is presented in front of them because only a few sentences later, the wizard appears with his proposition.

As the strange wizard appears from within the forest near the Miller’s house, he says to the Miller, “I will give you great riches if you will promise to let me have what stands behind your mill,” (Grimm & Grimm 205). Without hesitation, the Miller agrees to this deal because it is an opportunity to become very wealthy; however, the Miller does not realize that his daughter is also standing behind the mill. And even when the Miller’s wife informs him that he has agreed to give the wizard their one and only child, the Miller still does not beg the wizard to renounce the bargain. The Miller becomes obsessed with the idea of having money, especially after his wife explains, “All at once every drawer and chest has become full of gold,” (Grimm & Grimm

206). The Miller disregards the wizard's threat of taking his daughter for three years because he is preoccupied with guarding his money instead of his family. Once the wizard returns, the Miller is still not willing to sacrifice his financial security. The transformation has been completed by the time the wizard arrives to collect his end of the bargain; the Miller has become so accustomed to a lavish and carefree life, due to his excessive amounts of money, and therefore is willing to cut off his own daughter's hands in order to save his riches. The wizard does not actually want the Miller's daughter; rather, he wants to remove or destroy the machines that ensure profit for the Miller, which would be his daughter's hands. This drastic turn of events, just within the first few pages of this fairy tale, explains the Grimm Brothers, as well as Marx's and Engels', perspective of how consumed society becomes with money and how people are easily manipulated by those who are seen as a higher power. People are willing to sacrifice anything to ensure they are financially stable, and most of the time these sacrifices are not well thought out. This is an obvious criticism of how society is being conducted; people are putting material possessions ahead of what actually is important, such as family and education as explained by Marx, and it will be to the detriment of society as a whole.

As the story progresses, the daughter, whose hands have been amputated by her father as part of the deal with the wizard, no longer feels connected to her family because they have become obsessed with money, and thus becomes an alienated wanderer, a phenomenon that occurs to some workers who sacrifice for the apparent "greater good". As the father explains to his daughter that her sacrifice has helped her family, the daughter now feels as if she has been exploited for the benefit of others. By having her hands removed, the Miller's daughter has been rendered useless in terms of producing labor, which once was a major part of her life. Since the wizard, who represents the higher, conniving social class in society, forces the Miller, who

represents the lower social class who has been given an opportunity for financial gain, to cut off the daughter's hands, both men push the daughter lower socially because they have eliminated the tools that help create economic advancement for laborers: the hands. In a capitalistic society, an individual's hands represent freedom; by being able to work and use the hands to build products, the potential for socio-economic advancement exists, however small that chance may be in such a society (Marx & Engels 66). Since the daughter's hands are severed, her chance of freedom within the context of living with her family is eliminated, which is why she chooses to break free from her father, regardless of whether she loses the newfound wealth.

The daughter is not the one who possesses all the gold, that is her father, and she realizes at this moment that he will always value the wealth he has been given more than her. The father tries to convince his daughter to spend her life with him; however, the daughter no longer feels as if she can stay in a place that does not value her worth, “ ‘But I cannot stay here, father,’ she replied, ‘I am not safe; let me go away with people who will give me the sympathy I need so much,’” (Grimm & Grimm 207). This interaction between father and daughter is quite symbolic of the relationship between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. As the father is given the role of the bourgeoisie, or the members of society who controlled and had power over financial resources and proletariat freedom, he tried to keep his daughter with him in an effort to control her life and hinder any socio-economic advancement outside of her immediate family. The daughter, on the other hand, is given the role of the proletariat, who follows the wishes and demands of the higher classes (her father), hoping the outcome will one day be beneficial.

Knowing that she has been exploited and dehumanized by an entity who only sees her as a commodity and something that can be taken advantage of, the daughter rebels against her father and her social position in order to create a better life for herself. Instead of continuing to

work for her father and make sacrifices for him, such as giving up her hands, the daughter revolts against her father and his wealth induced ways by disapproving of the methods enacted to secure financial security. She abandons the wealth and the family, almost like a brave factory worker who quits his job, hoping to one day find not only economic advancement, but also effective worker/human rights. A major teaching of Marx is that in order to gain rights and a voice, the lower socio-economic classes must rise up and overthrow the established order, which is exactly what the daughter does in this tale (Wood 98). She leaves her controlling and manipulative father, who is now faced with the task of operating the mill without any assistance. The daughter was brave enough to question her position and worth in her father's business and personal life, which enabled her to find the answer that the only worth she possessed to him was one that could be measured economically. Many workers in Germany during the 1800s realized the same notion the daughter did in this fairy tale about worth and exploitation, and therefore urged others to revolt against the rich business owners and operators (Wood 100). These secret interactions and strategically planned revolutions eventually lead to improved working conditions and employee treatment, which parallels the experiences the daughter has once she is freed from the oppression of her father.

Towards the middle of the fairy tale, another act of rebellion by the proletariat is expressed in the fact that the wizard, who also feels alienated and exploited for his previous work with the Miller, is trying to cause the daughter (now seen as the Queen, for she married the King of the village) great pain and suffering. At this point in the fairy tale, the daughter is no longer seen as a laborer – she is seen as part of the higher socio-economic classes, higher now than even her father. And since the story follows the line of thought from Marx and Engels, the Grimm Brothers wrote the wizard as a character who will start a very small, selective revolution against

the bourgeoisie class, only to have the rebellion become rendered ineffective. In the story, the wizard interrupts messages sent to and from the King, who was fighting in a war far away, and the Queen, who had just given birth to their son, in an effort to tear the higher class apart from the inside out. The following quotations are the evidence of the wizard's behavior: "Then came to wizard, who was always trying to injure the good Queen, took away the letter from the sleeping messenger, and replaced it by another, in which it was stated that the little child was a changeling," "The wicked wizard again watched for the messenger, and while he slept exchanged the King's kind letter for another, in which was written to the King's mother an order to kill both the Queen and her child," and finally, "...the wicked wizard always interrupted the messengers, and sent false letters. The last was worse than all, for it stated that instead of killing the mother and her child, they were to cut out the tongue of the changeling and put out the mother's eyes," (Grimm & Grimm 208-209).

Even though the wizard, who was part of the labor and lower socio-economic class, wrote these letters, they are still indicative of perhaps what the bourgeoisie class would seemingly do with those they disapproved of in society. There is no doubt that these acts of resistance were to be seen as encouragement from the Grimm Brothers to the proletariat to rebel against a system that was designed to cheat and exploit them. In the Grimm Fairy Tales, as well as in *The Communist Manifesto*, violence was seen as the way of starting political and social movements that would help change the way the bourgeoisie and the proletariat interacted with one another. While violence may not always be the solution, throughout history we have seen that violence (more precisely varying degrees of violence) is needed to make any change. However through this violence, the proletariat are more likely to lose more than the bourgeoisie because they will not only lose their jobs, but also their whole way of life, especially if the revolution does not

prevail. Marx warned against failing rebellions, and the Grimm Brothers expressed clearly what would happen if rebellions did not incite change. The wizard's efforts to destroy the Queen (the Miller's daughter) and King's life through subtle rebellion is only partially successful; the Queen leaves her palace with her son after receiving the messages, but is eventually reunited with her husband years later. Ironically, the situation only ended badly for the wizard because he fell harder and lost more financially than the King and Queen in the long run when the rebellion proved unsuccessful.

In "The Maiden Without Hands," the higher socio-economic classes were still able to maintain their wealth and power, despite the opposition that came from the lower socio-economic classes. This particular fairy tale expresses Jacob and Wilhelm's desire for change to occur between the social classes; however, it also explains their diminishing hope that anything will ever ease tensions between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. Wilhelm and Jacob believed, as did Karl Marx, that the lower classes are oppressed and exploited by the higher classes; however, it is evident through their fairy tales, namely "The Maiden Without Hands", that some times the oppressed cannot overpower the oppressors.

"The Juniper Tree"

Summary

Another fairy tale that the Grimm Brothers wrote that indirectly reveals the tumultuous nature of the German society at the time was "The Juniper Tree". This fairy tale was also written in 1812, and tells the story of a young boy, who was secretly murdered by his stepmother because of greed and jealousy. This young boy is the son of a wealthy man who has become widowed and unfortunately remarries a vindictive and invidious wife. The new wife wants to inherit the man's entire wealth for herself and her daughter; however, the man's son is likely to

gain his riches once the man passes away. The stepmother cannot stand the thought of losing her share of the man's wealth when he dies, so she creates a plan to eliminate the son so the money will become hers entirely: the stepmother kills and decapitates the young boy, and subsequently blames her daughter for the incident once she witnesses the boy's carelessly reattached head fall off. In an effort to seemingly protect her daughter, the stepmother cuts the boy up into small pieces and horridly adds his remains to the stew the family will enjoy for dinner. Once the father returns home from a trip, he asks for his son, but the stepmother claims the boy went to his uncle's house, while the reluctant daughter must not say a word.

As the family begins to eat their dinner, the father comments on the exquisite taste of the stew, which causes the daughter to feel immense regret about what occurred, and therefore tenderly buries the boy's remaining bones beneath the juniper tree. As the story progresses, the boy returns as a dove and travels around his village telling the tale of how his stepmother murdered him and asking for various gifts. Poor village members almost involuntarily give these gifts to the boy, despite these individuals' lack of financial security. Once the boy returns to his father's home in the form of the dove, his beautiful singing draws the family out of the house, where the father and daughter receive beautiful gifts and the stepmother is violently killed. In the end, the boy returns in his human form and the family lives on without the jealous stepmother.

Analysis

The following section of this analysis will focus on how Wilhelm and Jacob Grimm incorporated their political and social understanding of how class structures containing exploitation, manipulation, and blatant disregard for human life is evident in "The Juniper Tree". The element of feeling entitlement to certain aspects of life, particularly another individual's wealth and material possessions also plays a vital role in this fairy tale. The characters in this

fairy tale play various parts that correlate with Marx's teachings, and that is why it is important to unpack each character and each scene to explain in detail how the Grimm Brothers are portraying their own society.

The very first line of this fairy tale points to a German society where women are seen as the subordinate members of society, who cannot make decisions for themselves, regardless of whether those decisions affect the women's body and/or marital rights. The Grimm Brothers open their tale with an introduction to material wealth and women's subdued cooperation, "Long ago, at least two thousand years ago, there was a rich man who had a beautiful and pious wife..." (Grimm & Grimm 268). Although the tale goes on to explain that this rich man loved his first wife dearly, there is still a societal structure of dominance that is represented. The fact that the man is written first, and is thought to be the one who possesses all the money, there is a clear indication of the position women held in this society, as well as the one the Grimm Brothers lived (Dalton 1968). Women were seen as less important than men, and although this particular man does not desire to trade his wife for some other material possession, those individuals do indeed exist, as seen from the analysis of the previous fairy tale, "The Maiden Without Hands".

Further into the fairy tale, the audience learns of the greed and jealousy that boils within the stepmother, and this is the point where it becomes evident that she desires to be in a higher social class than she was in the past. However, instead of working laborious hours and being exploited and manipulated by the man who controls the wealth (the father), the stepmother turns into the individual who dehumanizes and hurts the son, essentially reversing traditional socio-economic positions. The boy, who can be seen as a member of the higher, bourgeois class is now treated horribly by the stepmother, who can be read as coming from a lower socio-economic class. This role expresses how the desires of capitalistic nations, as well as the desires and

demands of greedy, money-driven people can sometimes cloud judgment and occasionally cause unpredictable behavior. In this passage of the fairy tale, the stepmother first begins her exploitation and dehumanization of the boy in order to seize his inheritance:

When the woman looked at her daughter, she loved her very much, but then she looked at the little boy, and it pierced her heart, for she thought he would always stand in her way, and she was always thinking how she could get the entire inheritance for her daughter. And the Evil One filled her mind with this until she grew very angry with the little boy, and she pushed him from one corner to the other and slapped him here and cuffed him there, until the poor child was always afraid... (Grimm & Grimm 269).

From this interaction between the boy and his stepmother, one sees evidence of classic socio-economic class struggles. In this particular instance, the stepmother feels entitled to the boy's inheritance, and therefore, will damage and hurt the boy in any way necessary to ensure her ultimate goal: obtaining all the wealth from her rich husband. This type of loveless marriage can be intertwined and seen alongside the Grimm Brothers' view of capitalistic Germany, as well as the view Marx and Engels wrote about and explain in their manifesto. The workers in the capitalistic society were forced into a seemingly "loveless marriage" with the owners and managers of factories and other industries out of necessity, because if these individuals did not, their families would ultimately starve or be forced into even lower socio-economic standards with even less opportunity for improvement (Marx & Engels 70). The only objective of these men was to obtain money from the individuals who possessed it all, which can be seen as an analogous situation for the stepmother. The workers will do whatever is necessary to secure or at least maintain the life they have now, which is exactly what the stepmother is trying to accomplish.

By removing obstacles – for workers in capitalistic society, it may be securing rights or even rebelling against the bourgeoisie class and for the stepmother, it is killing the son – these individuals try to become profitable from their hard work. While the stepmother, as stated before, reverses the traditional role and becomes a manipulative bourgeoisie member of society, she still had similar thoughts and motivations to those of the proletariat working class before she decided to murder the boy. Both entered into this forced engagement, where dependence rested solely on the individuals who were higher socio-economically. When an individual does not have something they desire, there is an inherent nature to take it from those who have it, either through extreme violence or theft, which is what the stepmother is doing in this situation (Greenberg 48-50).

Later in the fairy tale, we see the stepmother murder the boy and blame the daughter for the crime. But it is what happens after the boy is killed, eaten, and his bones buried that has the most significant effect on the stepmother and her desire to become wealthy. After the daughter buries the boy's remains under the juniper tree, he reincarnates as a dove and begins flying around his village in search of items to bring back to his family. In this situation, the boy returns to his bourgeoisie position in society and almost demands material goods from these members of society in exchange for hearing his beautiful voice. These individuals exchange items they worked tirelessly for, while the boy only has to exchange a moment of singing with his naturally beautiful voice. Again, the lower socio-economic classes have to sacrifice more, while the higher classes do not; the higher classes request gifts without any regard of how such a sacrifice will affect the individuals giving, which was a common occurrence between the bourgeoisie and proletariat.

German sociologist and political economist, Max Weber, further explains and complicates this relationship between these two radically different socio-economic classes by comparing the proletariat class to Prometheus, the Greek mythological being that gave fire to mankind, but was then forced to suffer for all eternity. As previously stated, Marx and Engels, as well as the Grimm Brothers, believe that the lower class (proletariat) should collaborate and strategically revolt against those who possess a majority of the power in society (bourgeoisie). Weber, on the other hand, indicates that while the proletariat class should rise up and “liberate humanity from its self-imposed immaturity,” this class ultimately cannot achieve that goal because “it is chained to the rock of its torments,” just like Prometheus (Weber 264). This inherent linkage between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat classes in this fairy tale speaks to Weber’s point of desperate revolt, but ultimate indoctrination of the lower socio-economic class. It can be suggested that the village members who give the young boy lavish gifts truly want to rebel against the higher socio-economic class, which oppresses and manipulates them into sacrificing their goods; however, these individuals are innately “chained” to their tormenters through years of fear of punishment and eventual social acceptance. The bourgeoisie class (the boy) expects these gifts without any signs of protest or tension from the poor villagers; he expects the cycle of abuse and degradation to continue because there has been minimal backlash to this obsolete way of life. And while these villagers may be strong willed and have the desire to free themselves and be the heroes of their own stories like Prometheus tried, these individuals in the fairy tale were not able to prevent the inevitable because they are forever linked to a system that punishes the poor and rewards the rich.

In this fairy tale, there are three instances where the boy refuses to sing again until he receives a present from his subordinates. The first instance is when the boy comes upon a

goldsmith creating a golden chain in a dilapidated home: “ ‘Bird,’ he said, ‘how beautifully you can sing. Sing that piece for me again.’ ‘No,’ said the bird, ‘I do not sing twice for nothing. Give me the golden chain, and then I will sing it again for you. The goldsmith said, ‘Here is the golden chain for you. Now sing that song for me,’” (Grimm & Grimm 272). The second instance is when the bird visits a shoemaker and his wife, who give the boy a pair of newly crafted shoes: “ ‘Bird,’ said the shoemaker, ‘now sing that song again for me,’ ‘No,’ said the bird, ‘I do not sing twice for nothing. You must give me something.’ ‘Wife,’ said the man, ‘go into the shop. There is a pair of red shoes on the top shelf. Bring them down.’ ... ‘There, bird,’ said the man, ‘now sing that piece again for me,’” (Grimm & Grimm 272-273). The final instance where the young boy asserts his power and authority over the rest of the members of this village is when he flies over to the mill and begins entertaining the workers: “ ‘Bird,’ said he [the fifth worker], ‘how beautiful you sing. Let me hear that too. Sing it once more for me.’ ‘No,’ said the bird, ‘I do not sing twice for nothing. Give me a millstone, and then I will sing again,’” (Grimm & Grimm 274).

These particular incidents where the boy is able to manipulate the common residents of this village into giving him two lavish presents and one millstone expresses how higher socio-economic individuals expect more from the lower classes, regardless of these individuals’ ability to afford it. These lower class individuals’ desire to hear the bird sing enslaves them; their own desires and needs become “alien” to them because they forget the importance of the finished good they have produced and thus give it to an individual who could survive without such a possession (Marx & Engels 53). The gold chain and the red shoes symbolize the superfluous nature behind individuals who are higher socio-economically in a capitalistic society, whereas the millstone represents a device in which the boy will gain revenge. The gold chain for the

father and the red shoes for the sister can be interpreted as representing conspicuous wealth: as members of the higher socio-economic class, the father and the sister want the rest of society to know they possess money, and by wearing items that explicitly speak to their wealth, those individuals play into that stereotype. The millstone, on the other hand, can be seen as representing the transferring of a burden from the son to the stepmother. The stepmother must now carry the oppressive weight she cast upon the son when she killed him, which ultimately ends up crushing her. Once the boy returns to his father's home, he switches back into a lower social position, but he is prepared to rebel against the stepmother in a way that Marx proposed lower socio-economic individuals should in society.

Marx claims that in order to remove the inherent class structure in society, the lower socio-economic classes must rise up against the bourgeoisie and start a revolution, which would ultimately result in a communist society (Marx & Engels 66). When the boy returns to his family, Jacob and Wilhelm purposefully write that the boy kills his stepmother as a way of representing his rebellion and removal of classes within his family. The boy decides classes should be eradicated, as do the Grimm Brothers, since each individual has seen the rise and fall wealth can provide to human existence: the boy when his stepmother murders him for mere material wealth, and the brothers when their family loses nearly everything after the untimely death of their father. Embodying the proletariat, the socio-economic roles are abruptly reversed for this young boy, as he is once again thrust into to a life of servitude and sacrifice for those who are higher above him socially (his stepmother). Since the stepmother represented the bourgeoisie society in the relationship, the boy knew the only way to secure freedoms and rights for himself would be to destroy the system that kept him from achieving such goals. Therefore, the boy killing his stepmother at the end of the story could be read as the Grimm Brother's vision

of a world in which the oppressed have the courage to publicly denounce, rebel, and ultimately defeat those who torment these individuals' lives. The final few lines of the fairy tale explain this very situation of a murder that ultimately sets other people free as well as himself, "And as she [the stepmother] went out the door, crash! The bird threw the millstone on her head, and it crushed her to death," (Grimm & Grimm 274). This young boy committed this final act of revenge and he was able to return to his human self and continue living with his father and sister.

The fact that the rest of the family did not weep for the stepmother is indicated in the final line of the fairy tale and expresses that there are those in the German society who would not be opposed to supporting a revolution against the bourgeoisie class, "The father and Marlene [the daughter] heard it [the crash] and went out. Smoke, flames, and fires were raising from the place, and when it was over, the little brother was standing there, and he took his father and Marlene by the hand, and all three were very happy, and they went into the house, sat down at the table, and ate," (Grimm & Grimm 275-276). The fires that are referenced at the end of this fairy tale could be interpreted as the fires of revolution that the Grimm Brothers, as well as Marx and Engels believe need to happen in order to create a society based on fairness and equality, instead of harsh capitalism and exploitation. Despite the fact that with every revolution comes death and periods of uncertainty and chaos, there is the possibility of new hope and welcomed change that Marx speaks of in his teachings (Wood 134).

This possibility of a better and more sympathetic society is echoed in the Grimm Brothers' fairy tale "The Juniper Tree;" the brothers allow the family to reconnect and live together without internal competition, jealousy, and judgment, which colors the social and political movements happening within Germany during the early portion of the 1800s in an optimistic glow. Through this political interpretation of "The Juniper Tree," it can be assumed

that the Grimm Brothers understand that in order to create fairness and eventual peace within the class structures in German society, something drastic must be done and one possible course of action is proletariat revolution.

“The Boy Who Went Forth to Learn Fear”

Summary

The final fairy tale from the Grimm Brothers this paper will analyze is “The Boy Who Went Forth to Learn Fear.” This fairy tale was originally written in 1812 by the Grimm Brothers, and depicts the life of a teenage boy, who is struggling to learn and understand the causes and ultimate consequences of fear. Once this boy explains to his father that instead of learning a trade in order to make a living he wants to learn how to “shudder,” the father requests help from a sexton, who believes he will be able to teach the child fear. That night, the boy visits the sexton’s church; the sexton disguises himself as a ghost, but instead of being afraid, the boy becomes annoyed because the entity will not identify itself. Consequently, the boy pushes the sexton down the tower stairs, and the sexton sustains a broken leg. Learning this information, the father disowns his son and forces him out into society, alone, in order to learn how to “shudder” and support himself. As the boy wanders through the community, he comes upon several mysterious individuals who claim to be able to teach him how to feel fear.

During these interactions, it can be interpreted that the boy feels superior to several of these “workers”, and thus does not believe that he needs to show them any respect or humanity. The first interaction involves seven corpses and a howling wind that is supposed to frighten the boy. He is not afraid of these beings and instead becomes quite angry with them because they are not able to perform their designated task of scaring him, thereby failing at their job. These horribly disfigured men, hanging from gallows, are supposed to haunt this boy, but they are not

able to, and are therefore treated poorly by the boy. The next supposedly fear inducing interaction this boy encounters is three nights in a haunted castle, which possesses monsters, ghosts, and other creatures hoping to frighten this boy. The boy is told from the beginning that if he survives the three nights, not only will he receive all the riches in the castle, but he will also be given the King's daughter. On the first night, the boy encounters two large, black cats determined to play within the shadows of the room. During the second night, skeleton men, who are meant to frighten the boy, appear from within the room's chimney and consequently deviate from the original plan by playing games, such as billiards, with him throughout the night. On the third and final night, the boy confronts several men carrying the projection of his dead cousin's coffin, as well as an old man trying to trick the boy to follow him throughout the castle into more dangerous areas, but all fail to make him "shudder". Not only does the boy last the three nights, mostly through dehumanizing, scolding, and tricking the various creatures that visit him each of the nights, (which will be discussed in further detail in the following paragraphs), but he also receives the riches and a wife, further confirming his superior position in society among the various other socio-economic classes.

Through these interactions, it can be interpreted that this boy exhibited some classic behaviors and perspectives of the bourgeoisie class in Germany during the 1800s. He craves not only a sense of fear, but also a preservation of previous wealth he lost from his father, and therefore cunningly deceives the laborers he comes upon throughout the story in an effort to obtain property and wealth from the King. This boy felt superior to those he believed were below him socio-economically, which fueled him into his dehumanizing, exploitative, and condescending behavior.

Analysis

In this fairy tale, particularly after the boy is banished from his father's home, there are instances where the superior mindset of higher social classes clashes with those of the lower social classes. In this fairy tale, the supernatural beings that are supposed to frighten the boy are seen as the laborers, and in a traditional Marx reading, these individuals are treated with less respect and dignity than others who are higher socio-economically because authoritative and capitalistic society and traditions have allowed such behavior (Wood 9). Essentially, the boy is a member of the bourgeoisie class, while the corpses, creatures, and monsters are members of the larger proletariat class. These individuals must endure the ridicule from the boy who accuses these individuals of poor job performance and openly humiliates them, which was common between the bourgeoisie and proletariat classes in society during the 1800s (Korten 142).

The first instance where the boy exemplifies traditional petit bourgeoisie practices is when he comes upon the seven hanging corpses in the gallows. The goal for this night is to spend the evening with the men who have been hanged and their very presence should be enough to frighten the boy. However, the boy does not become frightened, instead he builds a fire and invites the men to join him. Since the men do not oblige the boy and thus remain silent and still, hanging from each individual's respective rope, the boy quickly becomes enraged and annoyed with them because they do not immediately do as they are told. The boy's annoyance can be sensed throughout this situation because not only does he scold the men for being "stupid" and "careless" for staying away from the fire during the cold night, but he also criticizes the men's work the next morning to the man who first introduced him to the gallows. Once the man returns to the spot where the boy had been staying that night, he realizes that the boy has not been frightened and does not value the effort these men put into their performance the previous night:

The next morning the man came to him and wanted to have fifty talers [for securing his frightening experience]. He said, ‘Well, do you know how to shudder?’ ‘No,’ he [the boy] answered. ‘Where would I have learned it? Those fellows up there did not open their mouths. They were so stupid that they let the few old rags which they had on their bodies catch fire. ... He [the man] went away saying, ‘Never before have I met such a fellow,’” (Grimm & Grimm 2).

This interaction between the man and the boy, as well as between the boy and the seven dead men, expresses the disregard and contempt the boy has for those who are lower socially than him. Not only does the boy verbally abuse the corpses (actual dead bodies) by calling them names, but he also publicly criticizes their work, potentially influencing others to not “hire” them in the future. The boy also refuses to pay the man for the men’s work throughout the evening, which can be read as a bourgeoisie business owner refusing to pay his employees because he does not approve of their performance.

During the time Wilhelm and Jacob Grimm crafted this fairy tale, the labor and social division in Germany was expanding rapidly; in Germany, industrial labor work was not regulated and workers had very few, if any, rights (Jachmann 2014). Using a political and capitalistic understanding of this first interaction between the higher social class and lower class in this community, it can be interpreted that the boy identified himself in a higher class and therefore did not feel obligated to pay the workers for their efforts. Since these men were mere laborers and had no real power, they could not fight back and demand payment or even recognition. These men were essentially working for free and exploited for their efforts, which happened on many occasions to workers in factories in Germany during the 1800s (Dauve & Authier 1976).

The second interaction this boy has with lower socio-economic citizens is when he spends the first night in the haunted castle. During his first night at the castle, the boy is visited first by two large, black cats. When these creatures appear from within the shadows of the rooms, they do not immediately frighten the boy, so once again, he believes the laborers have failed to perform their jobs properly. Instead of initially informing these creatures that their skills were lacking adequate precision, the boy decides to trick the cats into playing a game of cards, which costs them dearly. The boy asks to see the cats' claws, which is when he decides to discipline them in a way that could be read as analogous to how the bourgeoisie class disciplines the proletariat: "With that he seized them by their necks, put them on to the woodcarver's bench, and tightened them into the vice by their feet. 'I have been looking at your fingers,' he [the boy] said, 'and my desire to play cards has disappeared,' and he struck them dead and threw them into the water," (Grimm & Grimm 5). The boy shows no regard for the life of these creatures and does not care if he hurts not only them, but also their families financially. He expects a job to be completed accurately and since it is not, the problem (the inefficient and undependable workers) needs to be eliminated. In factories during the 1800s, worker related "injuries" were common, and it has been suggested that these injuries were actually assaults committed by the higher social class (the owners and managers) on lower classes (Jachmann 2014). This same type of behavior is committed by the boy on the cats, and thus can be interpreted as the boy expressing his power over those he deems to be under him economically. Another aspect of this interaction that should be interpreted is the attention the boy put on the creatures' fingers. David Greenberg, author of *Crime and Capitalism*, suggests that individuals who are lower socio-economically and are struggling to survive will systematically attack a member of high society who seems vulnerable and ultimately rob him of any money he may possess at the time (49). Greenberg also

goes on to suggest Marx and Engels predicted this increase in crime rates between the opposing classes (677). Using this information to analyze why the boy focused on the creatures' fingers, it can be assumed that the boy believes he would have been robbed by these "lower beings" if he did not interrupt the situation in the way that he did. The boy was dissatisfied with the situation and once again took control of what was happening because he was traditionally given the power in society.

The third instance where the boy asserts his power and authority over others is the third and final night he spends in the castle. On this evening, the boy encounters an old man, who took the guise of a monster. Frustrated with the fact that no one has been able to frighten this boy, this monster explains that the boy is about to die in hopes that this exclamation will be enough to make him "shudder". This act does not frighten the boy, however, so the monster decides to test the boy and if the boy wins, he will let him go without harm. Knowing that he cannot beat this gigantic monster in an anvil splitting contest, the boy tricks the monster and exploits his flaws in order to secure freedom for himself. The boy asks the monster to stand closer to him and this is when the boy is able to put the axe through the monster's beard, trapping him: " 'Now I have you,' said the boy. 'Now it is your time to die.' Then he seizes an iron bar and beats the old man until he moaned and begged him to stop, promising that he would give him the riches. The boy pulled out the ax and released him. The old man led him back into the castle, and then showed him three chests full of gold in the cellar," (Grimm & Grimm 7).

This interaction between the boy and the monster/old man exemplifies the boy's final act of dominance and intimidation over those who are below him socially. He believes he can treat others in any manner he wishes because he has more money than these other individuals, which is exactly what he did to this monster. He beat and manipulated this monster in order to secure

his freedom, but more importantly, the boy behaved this way because he wanted to secure the money he was promised in the beginning of his visit. Individuals who are used to a certain life monetarily do not react kindly when they no longer have the money they once possessed (Marx & Engels 85). This boy was accustomed to living off of his father's wealth and once the boy was disowned, he knew he had to secure some sort of financial future for himself, which is why he took advantage and assaulted the monster. The bourgeoisie class in Germany during the 1800s did everything in their power to manipulate, exploit, and cheat the proletariat class in order to secure their own financial welfare, regardless of what happened to the laborers and their families (Jachmann 2014). In response to such exploitation, Marx and Engels recommended revolt; however, this fairy tale did not end with any labor rebellions. Instead, the rich boy only becomes richer, while the monsters and other various supernatural creatures of the night are degraded, dehumanized, and exploited.

Another aspect of this fairy tale that should be analyzed is the fact that the King's daughter was a mere commodity in the exchange between the boy and the King. There was no discussion between the King and his daughter as to whether she wanted to marry this boy; instead, it was assumed by the King and society at the time that since this wealthy boy was able to survive three nights in the haunted castle, he must be a decent and respectable boy, who would take care of the King's daughter. This exchange of women without the particular woman's consent was a traditional part of Germany and other countries that believed in prearranged marriages (Wood 225). As long as both families receive financial gains for the exchange, the process was considered ethical and a beautiful tradition. In this fairy tale, the King promises the boy riches and a wife if he survives three nights and he does; therefore, he is entitled to his commission. Once the King informs the boy of this fact, he responds in a way that expresses

disinterest in the girl, “ ‘That is all very well,’ said the boy, ‘but I still do not know how to shudder,’” (Grimm & Grimm 8). The boy does not see beyond the idea that the daughter is more than a commodity he acquired while trying to learn fear. This interaction is expressive of how Marx and Engels saw women being treated in the 1800s. Women were seen as objects men can trade and sell, instead of love and respect. Even though the daughter in this fairy tale is a member of the bourgeoisie class, just like the boy, she nonetheless possesses no power because she is a woman in a man’s world. Women were valued on their exchange worth, not on how devoted they could be to their husband (Marx & Engels 66). The idea of power and who controls society in these fairy tales is telling of a time in Germany when only those who were higher socio-economically were able to live without fear of starvation and fear of being exploited by others. The bourgeoisie class ruled society during this time, while the proletariat class worked endlessly to still be dehumanized and exploited.

Conclusion

In writing these fairy tales, particularly “The Maiden Without Hands,” “The Juniper Tree,” and “The Boy Who Went Forth to Learn Fear,” the Grimm Brothers were aware of the struggles that were occurring within Germany during the 1800s among the different socio-economic classes. The brothers were politically and socially aware of how the industrialization of Germany was creating various class structures among citizens that were promoting and encouraging traditional class struggles of higher versus lower socio-economic positions. Understanding that the proletariat class was struggling against a capitalistic system that was designed to keep these individuals from advancing or improving living conditions, the Grimm Brothers felt compelled to fight against these struggles in more of a metaphorical way. Alongside other critics of a capitalistic society, such as Marx and Engels, the brothers purposefully wrote

their fairy tales in a way that not only criticized members of the condescending bourgeoisie class, but also called for reform and change in the future. Although Wilhelm and Jacob did not openly support proletariat revolution as Marx and Engels did in their writings, the brothers knew society needed to be reformed in a way that respected the rights of lower socio-economic citizens and allowed opportunity for improvement and advancement with hard work and dedication.

The Grimm Brothers were also able to implement subversive techniques in writing their fairy tales in order to convey the messages they felt the society needed to become aware of and understand. Coming from a family that struggled financially after the death of their father, the Grimm Brothers became painfully mindful of how society privileged those who possessed wealth. However during those times, it was dangerous to openly criticize a population and a society that treated its lower citizens so poorly. There were no human rights' movements, and worker's rights movements were still very young, so the support needed to openly condemn the bourgeoisie class was lacking. Therefore, the Grimm Brothers decided to disapprove of these individuals through their fairy tales. By disguising serious political and social issues as mere fairy tales, the brothers were able to display their personal opinions about society in a way that was less controversial and less dangerous (Zipes, "Who's Afraid" 72). By pretending the stories were conventional fairy tales, instead of complex and opinionated objections to capitalistic demands and desires, the Grimm Brothers were given the freedom to convey a serious message without the risk of immediate persecution for disagreeing with members of society who possessed a vast majority of the power and control.

The Grimm Fairy Tales have an enduring power that capture the imagination of those who venture to read them for mere pleasure, as well as for those who dare to read them politically and interpret the stories as representing more than just individuals interacting in a

world that does not exist. These fairy tales are a convention of the time in which the Grimm Brothers were living; they spoke to the turmoil and tension that existed within Germany at the time, as well as how people were being treated on an individual basis in the capitalistic society. The Grimm Brothers left behind a history of what German society was like during the 1800s and exemplified how the personal blends with the political for writers who witness and live through such times of oppression. Throughout the early 1800s, the Grimm Brothers, as well as both Marx and Engel, shared similar beliefs about the downfall of humanity at the time, and called upon their respected disciplines to write criticisms and teachings that were different, yet similar in one overarching respect: the traditional class structures of Germany must be broken in order to create better living and working conditions for every citizen.

Notes

1. Through the literary criticism lens of Marxism, these theorists (Marxist theorists) focus on class differences, namely economical differences, as well as the implications that exist as a result of the capitalistic system. Marxist theorists are interested in answering various questions, such as: who has the power? who does the labor benefit? and how are the working/lower classes oppressed by higher ones? Marxist theorists are also interested in more personal questions, such as the socio-economic positions of authors when a piece of literature is composed, as well as the projected class structure of characters and societies within a story that are based on the author's personal life and experiences (Abrams 147-153).
2. There are several different types of Marxism that can be identified. While this project focuses on Classical Marxism, which explores Karl Marx and Friedrich Engel's initial theory of class structure as it relates to female commodification, worker exploitation and dehumanization, as well as worker rebellion to create a classless, or communist, society, other types of Marxism exist. Marxism-Leninism is loosely based off of Marxist theory, and surfaced during the post-Lenin era of Joseph Stalin. Western Marxism describes Marxist theory that arrived in Western and Central Europe, and interprets Marx as a philosopher, instead of a revolutionary. Libertarian Marxism focuses on the working classes' ability to create its own destiny without a revolution or state aid/mediation. Neo-Marxism returns to the early teachings of Marx and Engels, but also incorporates elements of psychological and sociological revolution of the lower class (Wood 226). Cultural Marxism analyzes the role of the media, art, film, and other cultural institutions within society, and how these institutions influence class structure. Analytical Marxism claims to provide "clear and rigorous thinking about questions that are usually blanketed by ideological fog," (Morrison 29). Post-Marxism has built upon Classical Marxism to some extent, but has also altered its understanding of the theory to put it outside of Marxism. Marxist Humanism focuses on Marx's earlier writings, namely his work "Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts" of 1844, where he developed his theory of alienation. Marxist Feminism is a branch of Feminist theory that focuses on dismantling the capitalistic system that oppresses women; these theorists assert that private property,

which gives rise to economic inequality, is the key to the oppression of women in society (Morrison 31).

3. For more information about Marxism, as well as the differences between Marxism in literary criticism and other disciplines, please visit some of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels' contributions to the literary and political criticism of capitalism: *The Communist Manifesto* (1848) and *The German Ideology*. Both works have been discussed within this project. Other works by Marx that may be of interest are as follows: *Wage-Labor and Capital* (1849), which further discusses Marx's ideas on the "alienated laborer", *Capital, Volume I* (1867), which delves into the root evils of capitalism, such as devastating class struggles, in relation to social means of production, and *Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Germany* (1896), which discusses the German unification process among Prussia, Austria, and other German states during 1848, and how this unification impacted each social class.
4. In relation to comment made about petit bourgeoisie during the analysis of "The Boy Who Went Forth to Learn Fear": the petit bourgeoisie are distinct from the proletariat and the haute bourgeoisie (high bourgeoisie), in that these individuals can buy the labor of others, unlike the proletariat, but usually work alongside their employees, unlike the haute bourgeoisie (Marx & Engels 5-23). Therefore, the petit bourgeoisie have some economic and social power within society, but are still forced to adhere to some social rules the proletariat must. In relation to the fairy tale, the young boy exercises some power over the individuals he encounters during his journey, but he is not as powerful as the King of the village where he lives.
5. The story of Prometheus comes from Greek mythology. In this myth, Prometheus creates fire for mankind, which he subsequently stole from Mount Olympus. In the story, there were two brothers, Prometheus, which means Forethought, and Epimetheus, which means Afterthought. Prometheus constantly thought about the future, and how his actions could impact others, while Epimetheus constantly fixated on the past. Prometheus did not want to live on Mount Olympus; therefore, he decided to live among the common man and perform laborious acts in order to survive. Knowing that fire could help mankind, Prometheus asked Zeus to give fire to man; however, Zeus refused to help the common man; he believed that if man had fire, man would become too smart and powerful and

eventually force the Gods out of their kingdom. Defiantly, Prometheus created fire by stealing a spark from Zeus' lightning bolt and then shared it with all of mankind.

Knowing that Prometheus disobeyed him, Zeus ordered Prometheus to be chained to Mount Olympus for all eternity, where he stayed until Hercules eventually saved him from his torments (Raggio 44-62).

The fairy tales discussed in this project could be read as Prometheus representing the proletariat, in that these individuals were always thinking of how they could improve the future, and Epimetheus representing the bourgeoisie because these individuals were always trying to find a way to keep their wealth, and therefore implementing ideologies from the past to keep lower socio-economic classes oppressed. Prometheus asked Zeus to give the individuals who essentially “work” for him something that would greatly improve their lives, but Zeus refused because he was apprehensive of a commoner “revolt”. In these fairy tales, it can be read that the proletariat were forced to work for the bourgeoisie without any help or assistance beyond the bare minimum because the bourgeoisie were nervous that any small sense of power could result in an uncontrollable revolution. Zeus chained Prometheus to Mount Olympus in an effort to stop his advances and to also remind him of his social place within the kingdom: he had no real power and would be punished if he was disobedient. The same sort of relationship can be read to exist within these fairy tales. The bourgeoisie essentially “chained” the proletariat to the socio-economic class these individuals existed within through extortion, manipulation, and social/personal degradation. It was near impossible to possess a voice or any rights in Germany without the fear of repercussions before the workers' rights movement occurred; therefore, these individuals had no power to free themselves without outside influence and assistance. This obstacle existed for Prometheus, as well. He was a prisoner to those individuals who had more power than himself (more powerful Gods) until an outside influence, namely Hercules in this myth, came to rescue him and commenced the tides of change within society.

6. For more stories from the Grimm Brothers that highlight the teachings of Marx and Engels and the inequalities of capitalism, specifically how the brothers perceive class struggles within Germany, see “Cinderella” (1812), “Hansel and Gretel” (1812), or “Iron Heinrich” (1812 – first edition, 1857 – final edition).

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