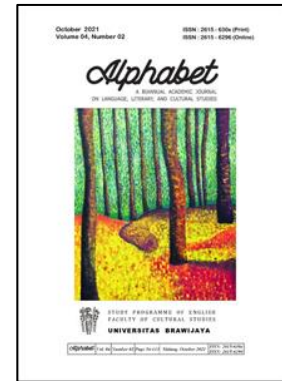# ALPHABET

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The Representation of Ideal Women in German Fairy Tales Written by The Brothers Grimm

Tira Murniati Yusuf [1]

Abstract

The patriarchal culture, which can be tracked down in most societies around the world, constructs the concept of ideal women. In this system, a woman is considered an ideal woman only if she represents particular traits. This study aimed to examine the representation of ideal women in the structure of selected German fairy tales by The Brothers Grimm. The method used in this study was descriptive qualitative. The five selected German fairy tales were *Cinderella, Snow White, The Six Swans, The Twelve Brothers,* and *The Three Little Men in the Woods.* To analyze those stories, the theory used in this study was Propp's framework in describing tales, particularly Narrative Structure and Dramatic Personae. The results revealed that the structure of Brother Grimm's fairy tales showed the traits of ideal women that are portrayed by the heroines of all the selected fairy tales as a consequence of the concept of ideal women constructed in the society. On the other side, the representation of non-ideal women is also demonstrated by the villains in the fairy tales.

Keywords:

ideal women, heroine, patriarchal culture, German fairy tales, The Brothers Grimm

In their history, fairy tales are rooted in folk tales that were passed down over the generations. To be specific, a fairy tale can be defined as a folk story with miraculous elements that is recorded in written form (Keightley, 1828; Zipes, 2014). What makes it different from folk tales is the authority of the works. While the individual author of folk tales cannot be identified, fairy tales are written by scholars, researchers, and folklore collectors who collected them. As a part of both literary and cultural enlightenment, the majority of the European nations thus archived oral fairy tales to written form at the beginning of the 18th century to track folk arts that were widely spread in the society at that time (Havirova, 2005).

Another feature that distinguishes fairy tales from folk tales is the appearance of wondrous creatures in most of the story. The events and setting narrated in folk tales are closely related to reality because the purpose of telling a folk tale is to teach a moral lesson with other members of a community (Aguirre, 2011). On the other hand, fairy tales present unreal, imaginative, and wondrous elements both in terms of the characters and settings. The seven dwarves in *Snow White and the Seven Dwarves,* the fairy godmother in *Cinderella,* and the beanstalk and the giant in *Jack and the Beanstalk* are several examples of these wondrous elements. Other illustrations of these elements include goblin, elves, fairy, and even mythological creatures.

As a product of society, fairy tales are greatly influenced by the culture where the story emerged. The concept of ideal women, for instance, is one of many cultural aspects

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that plays an important role in the development of these tales. Based on that background, this current study aimed to uncover the representation of ideal women in German fairy tales written by the Brothers Grimm. The Brothers Grimm are German academics Jacob Ludwig Carl Grimm and Wilhelm Carl Grimm who are well-known for their folklore collection and publication during the 19th century. There were five selected fairy tales involved as the research object, including *Cinderella, Snow White, The Six Swans, The Twelve Brothers,* and *The Three Little Men in the Woods.* Those titles were chosen among others since they have one thing in common: there is a wicked mother figure in each of the fairy tales.

To analyze the research object above, this study applied Propp's framework in describing tales, specifically Narrative Structure and Dramatic Personae. Basically, the most important thing to understand the overall meaning of literary works is by examining the

Table 1. Propp's 31 Narratemes of the Fairy Tale

No.	Functions			Definition		Sphere
	Symbol	Name				
1.	α (alpha)	Initial situation	(0)	Some context is given for the story, with the hero and the family being introduced		1st Sphere (Introduction)
2.	β (beta)	Absentation	(1)	Someone goes missing		
3.	γ (gamma)	Interdiction	(2)	Hero is warned		
4.	δ (delta)	Violation of interdiction	(3)	Interdiction is violated		
5.	ε (epsilon)	Reconnaissance	(4)	Villain seeks something		
6.	ζ (zeta)	Delivery	(5)	The villain gains information		
7.	η (eta)	Trickery	(6)	The villain attempts to deceive the victim		
8.	ϑ (theta)	Complicity	(7)	Unwittingly helps the enemy		
9.	A	Villainy and lack	(8)	The need is identified		2nd Sphere (The Body of the Story)
10.	B	Mediation	(9)	Hero discovers the lack		
11.	C	Counteraction	(10)	Hero chooses positive action		
12.	↖	Departure	(11)	Hero leaves on a mission		
13.	D	Testing	(12)	Hero is challenged to prove the heroic quality		3rd Sphere (The Donor Sequence)
14.	E	Reaction	(13)	Hero responds to test		
15.	F	Acquisition	(14)	Hero gains magical item		
16.	G	Guidance	(15)	Hero reaches destination		
17.	H	Struggle	(16)	Hero and villain do battle		
18.	I	Branding	(17)	Hero is branded		
19.	J	Victory	(18)	Villain is defeated		
20.	K	Resolution	(19)	Initial misfortune or lack is resolved		
21.	↘	Return	(20)	Hero sets out for home		4th Sphere (The Hero's Returned)
22.	Pr	Pursuit	(21)	Hero is chased		
23.	Rs	Rescue	(22)	Pursuit ends		
24.	O	Arrival	(23)	Hero arrives unrecognized		
25.	L	Claim	(24)	False hero makes unfounded claims		
26.	M	Task	(25)	Difficult task proposed to the hero		
27.	N	Solution	(26)	Task is resolved		
28.	Q	Recognition	(27)	Hero is recognized		
29.	Ex	Exposure	(28)	False hero is exposed		
30.	T	Transfiguration	(29)	Hero is given a new appearance		
31.	U	Punishment	(30)	Villain is punished		
32.	W	Wedding	(31)	Hero marries and ascends the throne		

intrinsic elements of the work (Teew, 1988). These intrinsic elements are closely linked to the narrative structure. It appears that the structure of the general organization of a folklorist story is outlined along with the sequential order of the monotonic plot lines of elements. As a result, if a story is composed of elements A to Z, the story's structure can be defined in the same order. Therefore, fairy tales can be branched off into morphemes, in which 31 narrative units (narratemes) that build the story can be identified (Propp, 1928). Propp then used particular symbols to simplify the narratives; each is summarized in Table 1.

Propp not only discovered the 31 narratemes as illustrated above, but he also listed several key character groups that are found in most fairy tales. Characters function as consistent, steady elements in a story, regardless of how or by whom they are developed. In fairy tales, they are the basic elements of the story. These characters have their own functions and roles to construct the plot lines. Propp called this group of characters Dramatic Personae, as explained in the following Table 2 below.

Table 2. Propp's Dramatic Personae of the Fairy Tale

No.	Character	Definition
1.	The Hero	The main character in which the readers most associate the story with. The hero is the key person in a story.
2.	The Helper	The person who helps the hero in his or her quest. Usually takes the form of a wise person.
3.	The Villain	The opposite of the hero.
4.	The False Hero	A variant of villain who steals the hero's spotlight.
5.	The Donor	The one who gives the hero something special.
6.	The Dispatcher	The one who sends the hero on a quest.
7.	The Princess	The object that causes the quest or the reward given after the quest is finished.
8.	The Princess' Father	The person who holds the princess' fate.

In fairy narratives, the dramatic personae above are intrinsically associated with gender identity. While sex relates directly to human beings' biological construction as males and females, gender relates to human beings' cultural regulations as masculine and feminine (Goode, 1977). Whether we realize it or not, the issues on gender identity are still relevant in our present reality due to the unbalanced position between these two genders. In some ways, patriarchal society places men in a superior position to women. Men even dominate women in almost every sphere of life in a patriarchal environment. Women are supposed to obey men's orders while they make the decisions. Unconsciously, men are almost always the ones having authority so that the patriarchal society believes that women are better at managing household affairs than other matters.

As society consistently construct distinguished portrayal and roles of men and women, it can be clearly seen that issues on gender identity still exist in everyday life. This problem of gender identity can then be narrowed down to the concept of ideal women. The concept is established mostly in patriarchal society since they see women in this circumstance with certain characteristics. According to Heilman & Eagly (2008), ideal women in patriarchal culture are illustrated by these personality traits: gentle, obedient, kind, religious, expressive in showing their feeling, and dependent for security.

Some fairy tale studies have been conducted by previous researchers that inspire the researcher to write this research. The first study was carried out by Ulandi (2014) who analyzed the meaning of giant character in *Jack the Giant Killer* in terms of semiotics. The second study was carried out by Sigiro (2015) that discussed the hidden agenda, more precisely, the adult one, in *The Two Sisters* fairy tale. In the third study, Havirova (2005) examined the fairy tale elements in two of the world's most popular fantasy stories, *The Lord of the Rings* and *Harry Potter*.

Despite the availability of a great number of studies in this domain, there are still gaps in the previous studies that require further research. Thus, the focus of this study is to learn more about how ideal women are depicted in five selected fairy tales consisted of *Cinderella, Snow White, The Six Swans, The Twelve Brothers,* and *The Three Little Men in the Woods.* There are a few factors of this study that set it apart from the previous studies: first, the research object of this study was German fairy tales, while the research object of the previous studies was English fairy tale; and second, the theory implemented in this study was Propp's Narrative Structure and Dramatic Personae, while the previous studies implemented theories of Nodelman's Children Literature and Pierce's Semiotics.

METHOD

This study used a qualitative method, a research method in which the data analysis is qualitative so that the research result is more concerned with meanings (Sugiyono, 2001). By referring to Propp's steps in examining fairy tales, there were mainly four steps taken in conducting this study: (1) Deciding the object, which was carried out by limiting the scope of the research object. In this first step, the researcher selected five German fairy tales collected and published by the Brothers Grimm. By determining the appearance of a figure of wicked mother in the story as the inclusion criteria, five fairy tales were selected, consisting of *Cinderella, Snow White, The Six Swans, The Twelve Brothers,* and *The Three Little Men in the Woods;* (2) Collecting the data, which was carried out in a sequential process, including reading the fairy tales, writing down the plot of the fairy tales, and identifying the characters; (3) Analyzing the Data, which was also carried out in a sequential order, including analyzing the plot of each fairy tale, comparing all of the plot of those fairy tales, analyzing the characters and the characterization in each fairy tale, comparing the result analysis of each fairy tale, the relation between them and the portrayal of ideal women in society, determining the relation between the plot and characterization and the representation of ideal women depicted in the fairy tales, and determining the scope and limitation by only analyzing the 31 narratemes of the fairy tales and the dramatic personae of the characters; and (4) Drawing the conclusion.

RESULTS

The following section explains the findings obtained after carrying out a thorough analysis of the collected data. By applying Propp's Narrative Structure and Dramatic Personae, the researcher identified the narratemes and dramatic personae in the selected fairy tales. Thus, the patterns of those five German fairy tales can be recognized.

Narratemes in Brothers Grimm's German Fairy Tales

Cinderella

The story begins with a description of a sweet and lovely girl called Cinderella and her family. In Propp's Initial Situation, the plot gives context to the story (α). The plot then shifted to the villain, Cinderella's stepmother and stepsisters, who were on a quest for wealth and fortune. This part corresponds to the Reconnaissance or the stage where the villain seeks something (ε). Cinderella continued to do Counteraction, a scheme in which the heroine intends to carry out good behaviors against the villain **(C)**. She obtained a nice gown and a stunning pair of slippers one day, which is referred to as Acquisition, or a stage in which the hero obtains a magical item that will assist them in accomplishing what they need **(F)**.

The Guidance stage begins when Cinderella arrived at the King's palace, the stage when the hero arrives at their destination **(G)**. She danced and enjoyed the ball with a Prince. The first misfortune is resolved during this stage **(K)**. Cinderella's return from the ball is depicted as the Return of the hero $(\searrow)$. This event is followed by the Claim **(L),** which is the stage when Cinderella's stepsisters pretended to be the maiden the Prince was looking for. Eventually, the Prince found that Cinderella was the one he was looking for. This is the Recognition **(Q)** event, in which the true hero is finally

revealed. The Punishment **(U)**, as the final narrateme, is portrayed when the pigeons pecked the stepmother and stepsisters' eyes, rendering them blind. In short, the narratemes of *Cinderella* are **α ; ε ; C ; F ; G ; K ; ↘ ; L ; Q ; U**.

Snow White

The story begins with Propp's Initial Situation **(α)**, an introduction of the hero and her family. Initially, Snow White's mother, the Queen, desired to have a beautiful baby as white as snow. This shows the Absentation **(β)**, the absence of something in her life. After the death of her mother, Snow White's stepmother was jealous of the young lady's beauty so that she wanted to kill her. This desire is included as Villainy and Lack **(A)** event, which can be described as the desire to harm the hero. Snow White ran into the forest to save her life which, in Propp's narrateme, it belongs to Departure **(↖)**. The Guidance **(G)**, where the hero reaches the destination, was when she found a little house of seven dwarves.

The Struggle **(H)** where the hero and the villain have a battle is illustrated when Snow White's stepmother made attempts to defeat the girl through trickery and witchcraft. Fortunately, because the piece of the poisonous apple was no longer inside her body, Snow White awoke from her deep sleep and was able to achieve Victory **(J)**. The next plot in *Snow White* is the Punishment **(U)**, in which the stepmother was forced to wear hot slippers as a way to punish her. In short, the narratemes of *Snow White* are **α ; β ; A ; ↖ ; G ; H ; J ; U**.

The Six Swans

The Six Swans also begins with an Initial Situation **(α)** where the background of the story introduced a King who was lost in a wood. An old witch promised to help him out of the woods if he married her daughter. By deceiving the King, this old witch hoped to gain something, in which her act falls under the category of Trickery **(η)** where the villain

attempts to manipulate someone for a purpose. The King, who had been married once, finally married the witch's daughter. The King's act belongs to Complicity **(ϑ)**, a narrateme that symbolizes the part where the hero or the hero's family unintentionally help the enemy. The King, who had six sons and a daughter from his first marriage, hid his children in a secret castle because he was afraid his new wife would harm them. In Propp's narrateme, this situation belongs to Departure **(↖)**. The Struggle **(H)** begins when the stepmother found the six sons and cursed them into swans. When the youngest daughter finally reunited with the six brothers—the swans—again, the event reached a Resolution **(K)**.

The youngest daughter had to complete a series of Tasks **(M)** to transform her brothers back into humans, one of which was to refrain from speaking or laughing for six years. She married a King during this hard time. Even though she did not say a single word, the King insisted on crowning her the Queen. The King's mother, on the other hand, distrusted her and blamed her for many horrible actions. However, the King could not keep defending the Queen so that she was brought to the stake. Fortunately, her execution day was also the last day of the six-year period. This Solution **(N)** stage, when the hero's difficult task is finally completed, made the six swans back into humans and thus allowed the Queen to speak again. As she told the King the truth, the King's mother was sentenced to a Punishment **(U)**. In short, the narratemes of *The Six Swans* are **α ; η ; ϑ ; ↖ ; H ; K ; M ; N ; U**.

The Twelve Brothers

The Twelve Brothers begins with an Initial Situation **(α)** introducing twelve sons of a King. The King was so desperate for a daughter that he swore to kill all of his twelve sons if his thirteenth child was a girl. The Queen forewarned her sons about this. The Queen's action is the Interdiction **(γ)**, in which the hero is told in advance of

approaching bad fortune. It turned out that the Queen gave birth to a baby girl so that the twelve sons hid in the forest and could not go back to the castle. For years, the youngest daughter was completely unaware of her brothers' existence. Until one day, the girl discovered the story about her brothers. This belongs to Mediation **(B)**, which represents the event in which the hero realizes a villainous act. The girl then set out for a Departure **(↖)** to find her brothers. After a long search, the girl finally reached a Guidance **(G)** stage when she found the place where her brothers were living. This is followed by their reunion, a Resolution **(K)** in which the first misfortune was resolved.

When the girl picked twelve white flowers from a delightful garden, however, she accidentally turned her brothers into ravens. She was given a Task **(M)** that restrained her from speaking and forced her to be deaf for seven years to transform her brothers back into human figures. She married a King while completing this task. The King's mother, on the other side, hated her and intended to defame her. The Girl, now The Queen, was sentenced to death as a result of the accusation of the King's mother. Luckily, her execution date coincided with the end of the seven-year period. This is the Solution **(N)** stage where the proposed task is completed. Once the truth was revealed, the King's mother was sentenced to a Punishment **(U)** by being left into a barrel of boiling oil with deadly snakes. In short, the narratemes of *The Twelve Brother* are **α ; γ ; B ; ↖ ; G ; K ; M ; N ; U**.

The Three Little Men in the Woods

This story begins with an Initial Situation **(α)** introducing a widower and a widow whom each had a daughter with opposite personality and appearance. When they married, the widow broke her promise to treat her stepdaughter well. Her evil treatment towards the girl was Trickery **(η)**. Despite being treated unfairly, she continued to do good. In the wintertime, her stepmother asked her to collect strawberries in the woods. The girl did not doubt to make her Departure **(↖)**. At this moment, she came across three little men who lived in a hut deep within the woods. Because of her kindness in helping them, she received an Acquisition **(F)** in the form of rewards. Besides, she also reached the Guidance **(G)** stage by completing her duty to collect strawberries. Then, she went back home **(↘)**.

The evil stepmother and stepsister were envious when they realized what had happened to the lovely girl. The unattractive girl decided to do the same, but she ended up with something awful. When the beautiful girl married the King, the stepmother and stepsister became even more envious. The stepsister and her mother continued their attempt to Claim **(L)** the Queen's position by throwing the beautiful woman into the river and pretending as the Queen. The trickery was revealed with the help of a kitchen boy who knew what had happened, which refers as Exposure **(Ex)** in Propp's narrateme. When the King learned the truth, he placed the stepmother and stepsister in a barrel full of nails and rolled it downhill into the water to punish them **(U)**. In short, the narratemes of *The Three Little Men in the Woods* are **α ; η ; ↖ ; F ; G ; ↘ ; L ; Ex ; U**.

Table 3. The Comparison of the Narratemes of Brothers Grimm's German Fairy Tales

No.	Title	Narratemes
1.	*Cinderella*	α ε C F G K ↘ L Q U
2	*Snow White*	α B A ↖ G H J U
3.	*The Six Swans*	α η ϑ ↖ H K M N U
4.	*The Twelve Brothers*	α γ B ↖ G K M N U
5.	*The Three Little Men in the Woods*	α η ↖ F G ↘ L Ex U

Based on an analysis of the plots of each fairy tale, it obtained several similarities between the narratemes (see Table 3). It can be seen that the Initial Situation **(α)** mostly introduces obedient characters and it is set in a palace or a house of the rich. In Guidance

(G), the setting of time when almost all the heroes, in this case, the heroines, of the fairy tales reach their destination is always in the evening or at night. Of the five fairy tales, four of them also have the Departure **(↖)** stage where the heroines of the stories must risk going out of the house and into the wild world. The last similarity is that all those fairy tales, in their ending, always have physical Punishment **(U)** for the antagonists.

Dramatic Personae in Brothers Grimm's German Fairy Tales

Cinderella

In *Cinderella,* the Hero is definitely Cinderella as she is the main character with whom the reader is most familiar. The Villain consists of more than one person, including the stepmother and the stepsisters who are depicted as the opposite of Cinderella. The pigeons that always sit on a branch of the tree above the grave of Cinderella's mother are the Helpers that assist Cinderella every time she needs help. The pigeons are also the Donor in this story because they give Cinderella magical items in the form of a beautiful gown and a pair of golden slippers. The stepsisters are the False Hero in Cinderella because they keep claiming to be the beautiful maiden that the Prince is looking for. The Princess or the reward for the Hero at the end of the story is The Prince. The last dramatic personae found in Cinderella is the Princess' Father, or in this case, the Prince's Father, who is the one deciding the Prince's fate. He is the one who decides that the Prince should choose a bride so that he finally meets Cinderella.

Snow White

The Hero in *Snow White* is Snow White herself because the story revolves around her life's journey. Meanwhile, the Villain is Snow White's stepmother, the wicked Queen, who is cruel, heartless, and skilled in doing evil deeds. Despite the presence of the Villain, Snow White has seven dwarves who serve as the Helper. Besides, there is also another good character who is the hunter, the Dispatcher, who sets Snow White free into the forest with the mission of rescuing herself from the Queen. The Princess is the story's final dramatic personae. The same as in *Cinderella,* Propp's Princess in *Snow White* is the Prince who is the reward given to the heroine.

The Six Swans

There are several dramatic personae found in *The Six Swans.* First, the Hero is the daughter who undergoes trouble before achieving her goal. Second, there are several villains that cause the Hero to be sorrowful, including her stepmother and her mother-in-law. When her stepmother turns her six brothers into swans, it makes her miserable because she is separated from her six swan-brothers. Meanwhile, the daughter's mother-in-law makes her even miserable with her constant slandering, which eventually leads to the daughter being punished by her own husband, the King. These actions done by the stepmother and mother-in-law indicate that they are the Villain of the story. The last dramatic personae is The Princess. In the story, the daughter finally lives happily ever after with the King as a reward for her years of struggle.

The Twelve Brothers

In some points, the dramatic personae found in *The Twelve Brothers* are similar to those in *The Six Swans.* Firstly, the Hero is the daughter who makes her attempts to rescue her twelve raven-brothers. The Villains in this story are the daughter's father, the King, who tries to kill the daughter's brothers; and the daughter's mother-in-law who always accuses her of unjustified horrific acts so that she is sentenced to death. The daughter is helped by her mother in her efforts to save her six brothers. In this case, the daughter's mother is the Dispatcher who tells the truth about the twelve brothers. The Princess dramatic personae in this fairy tale, like in *The Six Swans,* is the King who married the heroine so that they live together ever after.

The Three Little Men in the Woods

Six dramatic personae are found in *The Three Little Men in the Woods*. First, the Hero is a beautiful maiden who is beset by misfortune. Second, the story features two antagonists: the maiden's stepmother and stepsister. They take on the role of Villain because they are the complete opposite of the Hero. While the maiden is obedient and kind, the two are cruel and unkind. Third, the three little men in the woods who assist the maiden with her needs are the Helpers in this story. Fourth, the False Hero is the maiden's stepsister, who pretends to be the beautiful maiden and attempts to deceive the King by acting as his wife. Fifth, when the three little men in the woods give the Hero magical items that can support her in her journey, they act as The Donor. Sixth, the kitchen boy who revealed the tracery in the story can be considered as the Dispatcher. The last, the King in this fairy tale fulfills the role of The Princess in Propp's narrateme. He is given to the Hero as a reward for defeating the Villain.

Based on a comparative analysis of the dramatic personae in the research object, it can be seen that there are several similar characters with the same role in the five fairy tales above (see Table 4). The Hero in all the tales is a female, who is certainly a heroine with a particular mission. On the opposite side, the Villain in the five tales is a figure of a mother (whether a stepmother or mother-in-law), also with a particular mission. The last, Propp's Princess in these stories is manifested as a Prince or a King who married the main female character.

DISCUSSION

By examining the structure of the five selected fairy tales, it can be seen that the authors placed women in a prominent position. They featured women in the positions of both hero and villain. Brothers Grimm demonstrated the complexity of women in German culture by placing them in these two positions. For hundreds of years, a woman's role in German has been categorized into 3 "Ks": *Kinder* (children), *Kirche* (church), and *Küche* (kitchen). Sometimes, the fourth "K" is also mentioned: *Kleider* (clothes). Women's roles are restricted to only these four domains, all of which are very domestic or traditional. These are the roles that are considered to be closely related to the concept of ideal women.

In the 20th century, however, the role of women began to shift in several directions as

Table 4. The Comparison of the Dramatic Personae of Brothers Grimm's German Fairy Tales

No.	Character	Title				
		Cinderella	*Snow White*	*The Six Swans*	*The Twelve Brothers*	*The Three Little Men in the Woods*
1.	The Hero	Cinderella	Snow White	Daughter	Daughter	Beautiful Maiden
2.	The Helper	Pigeons	Dwarves	-	Old Woman	Three Little Men
3.	The Villain	Stepmother Stepsisters	Stepmother	Stepmother Mother in-Law	King Mother in-Law	Stepmother Stepsister
4.	The False Hero	Stepsisters	-	-	-	Stepsister
5.	The Donor	Pigeons	-	-	-	Three Little Men
6.	The Dispatcher	-	Hunter	-	Queen	The kitchen boy
7.	The Princess	The Prince	The Prince	The King	The Prince	The King
8.	The Princess' Father	The King	-	-	-	-

they fight for equality. Following the end of World War II, women were also involved in the reconstruction of Germany, which had been damaged by the war. As a result of this situation, independent groups of women emerged. At that time, women were started to participate in many domains of life.

The same as what happened in the reality, the complexity in the role of women is also portrayed in the five selected fairy tales in this study. By drawing a red line from the narrative structure to the dramatic personae of the stories, the representation of ideal women in the selected fairy tales can be identified. The characteristics depicted by all the heroines are analyzed by referring to particular traits of ideal women proposed by Heilman & Eagly (2008).

The first trait of an ideal woman is gentleness. This is a trait that is often correlated with women because it demonstrates tenderness in the manner of doing things. Gentleness can be seen in the way the woman speaks or acts. To be considered an ideal woman, one must always be gentle, regardless of the situation. Even when one is under extreme stress or critical situation, one must remain gentle.

Cinderella's gentleness is expressed through her words. Even when she is mistreated, she never yells at her evil stepmother and stepsisters. When she talks to the pigeons, she also demonstrates her gentleness. The following are the sentences she uttered to communicate with the pigeons:

> "You tame pigeons,
> You turtledoves,
> And all you birds under heaven,
> Come and help me to pick
> The good on the pot
> The bad in the crop" (Grimm & Grimm, 2012)

Based on the quotation above, it is evident that she refers to ordinary birds as "tame pigeons" and "birds under heaven." It indicates that she maintains her gentleness even when she is not speaking to another human being. This gentleness in the way the

character is speaking is also demonstrated by other heroines, such as Snow White and the youngest daughter in *The Twelve Brothers.* Besides, the girls in *The Six Swans* and *The Twelve Brothers* demonstrate their kindness through their actions. The heroine in *The Three Little Men in the Woods* also treats the little men that she met in the woods with equal gentleness as if she is treating other human beings.

In contrast to the gentleness showed by the heroines of each tale, all the villains exhibit no such gentleness. They are all used to yell and treat everything with carelessness. Cinderella's stepmother, even towards her own children, does not prove any gentleness. To obtain what she wants, she fiercely cuts her own children's toes.

The second trait of an ideal woman is obedience. Women are expected to be obedient in society, especially to their parents or husbands (Wojtczak, 2009). When they question it, it sometimes even be seen as an act of rebellion. In a patriarchal society, men are the ones who have authority. Thus, women are indirectly forced to follow the decision and orders made by men. While a group of women sees this trait as an act of subordination, the others in the opposite group see this trait as a good opportunity to improve their life.

From the beginning of the story, Cinderella is introduced as a girl who always obeys her parents, just as her late mother asked her to. More precisely, she even obeys her stepmother and stepsisters who treat her unfairly. Similarly, the heroine in *The Three Little Men in the Woods* also keeps obeying her stepmother and stepsisters in return for their rude behavior to her. In the rest selected fairy tales analyzed, the heroines also comply with the command, direction, and request of others which clearly shown their obedience.

The obedience demonstrated by the heroines is in direct opposition to the act done by the villains in each fairy tale. These villains mostly refuse to follow others' commands or requests. They even disobey the men who

have power in their circumstances. Even though Cinderella's stepmother is married to Cinderella's father, she does not strictly obey him. In the same way, the wicked mother-in-law in *The Six Swans* and *The Twelve Brothers* clearly opposed the King's intention to marry the female main characters. In a patriarchal society, this action can be considered an act of resistance done by the subordinate group over those who have authority.

The third trait of an ideal woman is kindness, which is probably showed by all heroines in the selected fairy tales. The kindness of all the heroines of those stories is portrayed through their actions, both towards other people as well as animals and nature. Not only to the stepmothers and stepsisters as previously explained, but their kindness is also illustrated by the heroines in the other selected fairy tales in this study. They have the quality of being generous and considerate to their family, such as to the brothers in *The Twelve Brothers,* or even to a strange old woman in *Snow White.*

In contrast to the heroines, the villains in those fairy tales do not highlight any kindness to anyone. They treat their stepdaughters violently and without regard for their stepdaughters' feelings. They also curse, abuse, and murder innocent people. The stepmothers in *The Six Swans* and *The Twelve Brothers,* for example, curse their stepsons to become swans and ravens. Snow White's stepmother, too, has no compassion for her daughter, as she attempts to murder her a few times.

The fourth trait of an ideal woman is easily expressing feelings. Women, according to common belief, are more emotional than men, or at least more emotionally expressive (Kring & Gordon, 1998). A number of academic studies have supported this traditional view, indicating that women are mostly the more emotionally expressive of the genders (Ashmore & del Boca, 1979; Brody & Hall, 2000). In the selected tales, this trait is also demonstrated by all heroines, in which they

show their emotions when they are sad, happy, or distressful.

Though in an opposite manner, the villains in the selected tales also express their emotions immediately when something happens to them. In *Snow White,* every time the Queen knows that Snow White is still alive, she is always mad. The Queen shivers and shakes with rage when she hears the glass speaks because it means her attempt to kill Snow White has failed. In *The Twelve Brothers,* the villainous mother-in-law is illustrated as a woman who always resents her daughter-in-law. She always feels aggrieved to anything done by the King's wife.

The last trait of an ideal woman is the need for security. The depiction of all heroines in the research object can be considered quite complicated. This is because they are depicted as both the hero and the "damsel in distress" at the same time. While a hero is typically someone who saves the world with their courage and strength, the damsel in distress is commonly fragile, caring, and dependent on others. The heroines in these tales, however, are both hero and damsel in distress. Despite their noble qualities, they are still attributed to the social stereotype that they need security because they are all women. This need for security, according to (Ashmore & del Boca, 1979), can only be met by men, primarily through marriage. When a woman marries a man with a high social class and a guaranteed income, she feels secure and protected. Thus, based on the narrateme of those tales, it is stated that the heroines live happily ever after with the Prince or the King.

The villains, on the other side, are nothing like the heroines. While the heroines in those tales find happiness after marrying honorable men, the villains demonstrate that they do not need to marry a man to be happy. In *Snow White,* the wicked Queen is pictured as a powerful woman because she is the leader of a kingdom. Despite her ugly personality, readers cannot ignore that she is an independent woman. What makes her truly content is knowing that there are no other

women who can surpass her beauty. Her desire becomes her life's prime purpose. She tries her hardest to accomplish it without her husband's help.

CONCLUSION

A fairy tale is used by society to teach moral values by showing how people should and should not behave. From a fairy tale, the readers can learn that every member of society has a different role, with a woman's role being the ones who maintain virtue and goodness in the domestic realm. According to society, the ideal woman must be gentle, obedient, kind, religious, expressive in showing her feeling, and dependent on men for security. However, there are still many who have none of these characteristics and refuse to accept the ideal woman stereotype constructed by society. Further research is suggested to use a psychoanalysis approach to learn more about the psychological conditions of the characters of the fairy tales. The second option is to apply feminism theory to compare the representation of ideal women in fairy tales to the modern representation of women.

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