# SHADOWS IN THE LIGHT:

# REREADING THE CULTURAL DYNAMICS OF

# SELECTED FOLK AND FAIRY TALES

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# *REREADING THE CULTURAL DYNAMICS OF*

# *SELECTED FOLK AND FAIRY TALES*

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*Submitted*
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# CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the thesis entitled "SHADOWS IN THE LIGHT: REREADING THE CULTURAL DYNAMICS OF SELECTED FOLK AND FAIRY TALES" is the bonafide research conducted by Ms. Jamie Zodinsangi Hrahsel under my supervision. Ms. Jamie Zodinsangi Hrahsel worked methodically for her thesis being submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in English of Mizoram University.

This is to further certify that the research conducted by Ms. Jamie Zodinsangi Hrahsel has not been submitted in support of an application of this or any other University or an institute of learning.

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SUPERVISOR

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*August, 2016*

# *DECLARATION*

I, Jamie Zodinsangi Hrahsel, hereby declare that the subject matter of this thesis is the record of work done by me, that the contents of this thesis did not form basis of the award of any previous degree to me or to the best of my knowledge to anybody else, and that the thesis has not been submitted by me for any research degree in any other University or Institute.

This is being submitted to Mizoram University for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in English.

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# CHAPTER 1:

# INTRODUCTION: LOCATING FOLK

# AND FAIRY TALES IN LITERATURE

For many years, scholars have taken immense interest in folklore and its studies. The study of folklore dates back to the first quarter of the 19th century, but folklore had been collected long before that date. The organized study of folklore is an exploration of recent growth. The first Folklore Society was founded in London in 1878; similar bodies now exist in the United States, France, Italy, Switzerland and especially in Germany and Austria.(Encyclopedia Britannica)The elements of folklore are social products; they are created, retained and transmitted by the folk and as such folklore is the mirror of the people. Folklore can be divided into four areas of study: artifact (such as voodoo dolls), describable and transmissible entity (oral tradition), culture, and behavior (rituals). These areas do not stand alone, however, as often a particular item or element may fit into more than one of these areas. "Folktale" is the general term given for different varieties of traditional narrative. (Chisholm 191) The formation and transmission of traditional narratives from the perspective of time and space has constantly been a central subject within the science of folklore. Furthermore, folk narrative plays an essential part in social and cultural life. As such, an effort in the study of folklore is to uncover how traditional narration reflects and affects the spiritual life and conduct of human beings. In the same vein, this study shall attempt an analysis of folk and fairy tales and their implications in terms of contemporary discourses especially from the cultural parameters. Within this arena of culture, it shall examine the aspect of shadows in the form of violence and fear as inflicted and generated through upon various characters and incidents and the subsequent distortion of the self.

For the study, select tales of German fairy tales documented by the Grimm brothers as well as Mizo[1] tales have been chosen.

Traditional narratives or rather folktales, have acquired fresh and significant attention in the recent years. These narratives comprise of tales which may be rendered either in the oral or in the written form, handed down across multiple generations. The folktale makes its appearance in literature at a very early period-Egyptian tales have come down to us from the 28th century B.C; in Greece, the Homeric poems contain many folktale incidents; India has the *Jatakas* and *Panchatantra* and the Arabs boast of the great collection of the *Thousand and One Nights*.[2]

There is a continuing debate about the relationship between various forms of traditional literature and while some scholars accept that there are different forms of folktales, some others regard the forms as distinct but overlapping. In recent years, many critics have clubbed folktales and fairy tales together in their analysis. Jack Zipes uses the term "folk and fairy tales" as a single term that "encapsulates all folktales and fairy tales under one hood". (Zipes, *Breaking*, 14) Vladimir Propp and Stith Thompson have each contributed common methods for the structural analysis of both folk and fairy tales. Smith Thompsons's Aarne-Thompson system groups fairy and folk tales according to their overall plot. Common, identifying features are picked out to decide which tales are grouped together. Much therefore depends on what features are regarded as decisive. Tales like "Cinderella", for instance, in which a persecuted heroine,

with the help of the fairy godmother or similar magical helper, attends an event(or three) in which she wins the love of a prince and is identified as his true bride are classified as type 510, the persecuted heroine. Vladimir Propps' *Morphology of the Folktale* is a study of Russian folktales but his analysis has been found useful for folk and fairy tales from other countries. Propp criticized Aarne-Thompson type analysis for ignoring what motifs did in stories, and because the motifs used were not clearly distinct, he analyzed the tales for the function each character and action fulfilled and concluded that a tale was composed of thirty-one elements and eight character types. While the elements were not all required for all tales, when they appeared they did so in an invariant order - except that each individual element might be negated twice, so that it would appear three times, as when, in the tale, "Brother and Sister", the brother resists drinking from enchanted streams twice, so that it is the third that enchants him. One such element is the donor who gives the hero magical assistance, often after testing him.

Stith Thompson has organized folk and fairy tales under the broad German team "marchen" or "wonder tale" which he defines as:

> A tale of some length involving a succession of motifs or episodes. It moves in an unreal world without definite locality or definite creatures and is filled with the marvelous. In this never-never land, humble heroes kill adversaries, succeed to kingdoms and marry princesses. (Thompson, 8)

Therefore folktales are about the adventures of people in the land of fairies as much as of those in the concrete world. Critics of folk tales such as Marina Warner, Bruno Bettelheim, and Jack Zipes agree that the exact origins of folk tales remain cloudy and uncertain because no one can pinpoint exactly how a tale began and where it originated. Over time, folk tales have been created geographically and it has thus, moved haphazardly across borders, societies, and generations. Zipes opines:

> In fact, the literary tale has evolved from the stories of oral tradition, piece in a process of incremental adaptation, generation by generation in the different cultures of the people who cross-fertilized the oral tales and disseminated them. (Zipes, *Breaking* 6)

R. M. Dawkins has simply described folktale as "a story handed down by oral tradition from mouth to ear among people generally in fact illiterate, though not necessarily so." (Dawkins 417) While some exist as fairy tales, others may sometimes merge with other narratives such as legends, myths and fables which are often believed to be actual events in history. D. L. Ashliman asserts that fairy tales cannot be treated as a distinct genre from folktales and that they simply "form a subcategory of folktales, not a separate genre." (Ashliman 34). Fairy tales encompass fantastic beings in a realm of magic and fantasy. Ashliman further denotes that fairy tale is

> A normal term in English for *magic tale* or *wonder tale*, designated even stories that do not feature fairies per se. Fairy tales, whether told orally or composed on paper, are characterized by fantasy and magic. ( Ashliman 187)

Legends, which is a part of folktale, on the other hand, is a narrative of human actions that are perceived both by teller and listeners to take place within human history and may include miracles that are perceived as actually having happened, within the specific tradition of indoctrination where the legend arises, and within which it may be transformed over time, in order to keep it fresh and vital, and realistic. Myth is a traditional or legendary story, usually concerning some being or hero or event, with or without a determinable basis of fact or natural explanation, especially one that is concerned with deities or demigods and one that explains some practice, rite, or phenomenon of nature. Similarly, a fable is a succinct fictional story, in prose or verse, that features animals, mythical creatures, plants, inanimate objects, or forces of nature which are given human qualities and that illustrates a moral lesson. Folk tale, therefore, consists of stories, both real and fantastic, that come from the oral tradition. These tales often depict everyday life and frequently feature wily peasants getting the better of their superiors. In many cases, the characters may also be animals with human characteristics. In their original versions, most folktales are not considered appropriate for children because they are sometimes coarse and often violent. Fairy tale, as such, is a sub-genre of the wider realm of folktale and unlike folktale, its setting may be limited only to fictionalized world. Further, oral folktales are

aged tales whose origins are unknown while fairy tale is a term newly coined when re-rendering of oral folktales into written form was undertaken. The fluidity of folktales by nature has rendered its definition and categorization complicated. After the pioneering work of Stith Thompson and Antii Aarne[3] in the early 20th century, folktales are now arranged in international catalogues according to the motifs or themes in them, by numbers, titles and summaries of the content. Despite many criticisms, this A-T numbers, as they call them, have proved to be practical tools in the study of folktales. But even this multivolume listing designed to help folklorists also illustrates the lack of precision in the term "folktale". The Aarne-Thompson tale type index organizes folktales into broad categories like Animal Tales, Fairy Tales, Religious Tales, Novellas or romantic tales, Tales of the stupid ogre, jokes and anecdotes, formula tales and unclassified tales. (Thompson, 13) Fairy tales, thus, come as subcategory of folktales and not as a separate genre.

As part of folktale, animal tales feature animals with "didactic function" and "brevity" as its attributes. (Ashliman, 35) These tales sometimes feature plants and animals as stand-ins for human and may function as allegory. Religious tales consist of supernatural elements taking centre stage. Supernatural intervention is common and comes from a relatively well-defined deity rather than from an amorphous magical universe. The themes include faith, miracles, repentence, conversion, forgiveness and redemption. Novellas or romantic tales reflect a series of unexpected romantic events leading to an almost miraculous conclusion, all achieved without

recourse to magic. As is evident from the title, tales of the "stupid ogre" feature dim-witted ogres who can be easily defeated by humans. Trolls, boggarts, hobgoblins, giants, monsters, satyrs and devils all take their turns being humiliated by their human adversaries in these tales. Jokes and anecdotes conclude with a punch line and include tales of fools and tricksters. Formula tales are chain tales, often describing long and involved sequences but with only the sparsest of plots. They may also be nonsense tales that consist of nothing but self-contradictory sentences and a number of mock stories-tales that at the beginning appear to be traditional stories but that end abruptly and without a resolution.

Thought the other tale types under folktales as categorized by Aarne and Thompson have plants and animal protagonists, they are still very much a part of this world. Fairy tales, on the other hand, take place in a world of fantasy. As Ashliman asserts:

> This is a world of fantasy, an enchanted world where wishing still does some good: a fairy-tale world. (Ashliman 38)

The term fairy tale, now used as a generic label for magical stories for children comes from the translation of Madame D'Aulnoy's *conte de fées,* first used in her collection in 1697 (Windling 1). Folk tales have been part of the storytelling tradition since the dawn of time including stories of fairies, sorcerers, witches, and human folk under enchantment. The designated term "fairy tale" itself only came about in the 17th century when a revival of documenting oral folktales surged. Prior to the 17th century, folktales were considered the vulgar province of the peasantry,

although members of the upper-classes often knew such tales through nurses and servants. In the mid-17th century, a vogue for magical tales emerged among the intellectuals known as *précieuses* who frequented the salons of Paris.[4] Some of the most gifted women writers of the period came out of these early salons (such as Madeleine de Scudéry and Madame de Lafayette), which encouraged women's independence and pushed against the gender barriers that circumscribed their lives. Critiques of court life (and even of the king) were embedded in flowery utopian tales and in dark, sharply dystopian ones. Not surprisingly, the tales of women often featured young (but clever) aristocratic girls whose lives were controlled by the arbitrary whims of fathers, kings, and elderly wicked fairies as well as tales in which groups of wise fairies (i.e., intelligent, independent women) stepped in and put all to rights. D' Aulnoy, as her contemporaries note, was a major force behind the fairy tale vogue and the first to publish her salon tales, but she was soon followed by a number of other writers like Mme. De Murat, Mlle. L'H'éritier, Mlle. Bernard, Madame Beaumont and Mlle de la Force. (Windling, 1) Subsequently, the fairy tale rage soared across Europe and in time, every household across the globe retold the fairy tales shared in the *salonniére* or adopted their own versions thus, making the tales richer.

The characters and motifs of folk and fairy tales are uncomplicated and archetypal: princesses and goose-girls; young and gallant princes; ogres, giants, dragons, and trolls; wicked stepmothers and false heroes; fairy godmothers and other magical beings, often talking horses, or foxes, or birds; magic mountains; and prohibitions and breaking of prohibitions.(Encyclopedia

Mythica)Fairy tale characters accept magic as a natural and expected part of their everyday world. Vladimir Propp has suggested that folk and fairy tales are marked by a fairly consistent structure- separation, initiation and return. (Propp, 69) The characters' separation from familiar surroundings can be either voluntary or forced. Grimm's "Hansel and Gretel" (Grimm 15)[5] depicts two children who are taken into the woods and abandoned by their parents. In "The Maiden without Hands" (Grimm 31), a girl walks away from her father's house on her own accord and into the woods. In "The Brave Little Tailor" (Grimm 20), a tailor, finding his work too restraining, abandons his trade and sets forth to seek a better life. With few exceptions, the leading characters must find their new way by themselves, independent of traditional social structures. The female heroines are typically faced with daunting domestic takes: to spin straw into gold as in "Rumpelstiltskin" (Grimm 55), to separate peas and lentils from ashes as in "Cinderella" (Grimm 21) or they may spend their time of initiation passively isolated: locked in a tower as seen in "Rapunzel" (Grimm 12) and comatose in a glass tomb such as "Snow White" (Grimm 53). For males, the initiation usually requires strength, valor, and fortitude. Familiar challenges include spending three nights in a haunted castle as depicted in "The Story of a Boy Who Went Forth to Learn Fear" (Grimm 4) or killing a dragon as denoted in "The Two Brothers" (Grimm 60). The end of the tales usually denotes the return of the hero or heroines to society. They either return to their original home or integrate into a new community and nearly always in a much more powerful and prestigious role. Heroines may move from kitchen to

castle. Servants and shepherds may also be promoted as kings. Heroes and heroines, thus, typically have the least favored position in the beginning. Ashliman opines.

> By casting the heroes and heroines as ordinary, even disadvantaged folks, the storytellers make it easier for their listeners to identify with them and to vicariously share in their trials and ultimate victories. (Ashliman 41)

Extremely common are marriage arrangements between a princess or a prince or even a supernatural being a seemingly undesireable partner. These tales reflect a marriageable woman's anxieties about a process that gives her but little control. Fears concerning fertility are also common as is the tale of stolen infants. Sibling rivalry and parent-child conflict are also scattered across the tales. Perhaps the greatest overall theme treated in folk and fairy tales is the restoration of justice. Folk and fairy tales evolved in cultures where injustice, by modern standards, prevailed the most. Kings, patriarchs and priests enjoyed indisputable authority within their respective realms. The tales expose and correct individual cases of the misuse of power, however, the institutions such as monarchy, patriarchy and class structure are never faulted.

Folk and fairy tales are timeless, both in their enduring appeal and in their depiction of days and years. For instance, Han-My-Hedgehog (Grimm 108) leaves home at the age of eight, herds animals in the woods for an unspecified time, then marries and assumes the support of his now aged father. Folk and fairy tales often function as cautionary tales and offer story tellers and their audiences a socially acceptable platform for the expression of otherwise unspeakable fears

and taboos. One can find a story of incest in “All Kinds of Fur” (Grimm 65) when a king makes advances towards his very own daughter. Thus, anyone who has faced this threat (or even anyone who has perceived such a threat) would relate and find relief in the story. Ultimately, however, despite their many functions, entertainment is still perhaps the most important function of folk and fairy tales because if a story does not please its listeners, it will die. The fact that these tales have resonated over centuries proves that these tales truly entertain and remain enduring.

Folk and fairy tales not only connects people to their past, it is also a central part of life in the present, and is at the heart of all cultures throughout the world. The broad term “folklore,”[6] under which comes “folktale,” itself was coined in 1846 by W. J. Thomas as a designation for the traditional learning of the uncultured classes of civilized nations. The word has been adopted in this sense into many foreign languages.(Chisholm 211) The telling of stories appears to be culturally universal, common to basic and complex societies alike. Jan Brunvand opines.

> Folklore comprises the unrecorded traditions of a people; it includes both the form and content of these traditions and their style or technique of communication from person to person. Folklore is the traditional, unofficial, non-institutional part of culture. It encompasses all knowledge, understandings, values, attitudes, assumptions, feelings, and beliefs transmitted in traditional forms by word of mouth or by customary examples. (Brunvand 78)

Even the forms in which folktales are narrated are similar from culture to culture, and comparative studies of themes and narrative ways have been successful in denoting these relationships. Also it is considered to be an oral tale to be told for everybody. They provide a mechanism for fantasy wish fulfillment. Folktales and fairy tales, as parts of folklore, are embodied in the form of aesthetic expression and their creator or creators are part of the society that exists today, existed in the past and will continue to exist in the future. Hallowell had remarked:

> I cannot help believing that much valuable material that would deepen our understanding of culture lies awaiting those who will systematically study oral narratives in relation to all aspects of society. What people choose to talk about is always important for our understanding of them, and the narratives they choose to transmit from generation to generation and to listen to over and over again and can hardly be considered unimportant in a fully rounded study of their culture. When, in addition, we discover that all their narratives, or certain classes of them, may be viewed as true stories, their significance for actual behavior becomes apparent. For people act on the basis of what they believe to be true, not on what they think is mere fiction. (Hallowell 482-488)

The interest of the story in folk and fairy tales is, thus, vastly enhanced and given its proper character by the manner in which it is told.

Due to certain sanitization and censorship, folk and fairy tales have often been associated with unrealistic, inhuman flawlessness and situations in which everything, however improbable, goes right in a condition which can only be attained completely through magic, as reality is somewhat less obliging. That quality of perfection, however, is not representative of the fairy tale genre as a whole, for these tales possess examples of behavior, which, when read literally, are realistic portrayal of cultural elements. Themes of redemption, love, familial ties, honesty, heroism as well as negative features such as abandonment, fear, incest and abuse become significant in folk and fairy tales. They are disguised by a thin veneer of metaphor and magic which removes them from the immediate world, making them universal in tone, as applicable today as it was when the phrase "fairy tale" was first used as *Conte de Fées* by Madame D'Aulnoy in her fairy tale collection, in 1697.(Campa, 45) The term "folk and fairy tale" itself has, in recent times, become a euphemism for a certain frame of reality, which, while it may not necessarily contain all those factors, certainly does contain at least some element of magic. As Maria Tatar opines:

> Fairy tales are still arguably the most powerfully formative tales of childhood and permeate mass media for children and adults. ... The staying power of these stories, their widespread and enduring popularity, suggests that they must be addressing issues that have a significant social function–whether critical, conservative, compensatory, or therapeutic.. ... Fairy tales register an effort on the

> part of both women and men to develop maps for coping with personal anxieties, family conflicts, social fictions, and the myriad frustrations of everyday life.(Tatar,*The Annotated* 45)

Thus, the problems of fairy tale heroes and heroines are real: poverty, sibling rivalry, unjust persecution, finding an appropriate mate, and many more.

Closely related to wish fulfillment is folk and fairy tale's ability to provide an acceptable outlet for the expression of fears and taboos often veiled by the shade of believed purity. The themes of shadow and evil have permeated almost all of folk and fairy tales since antiquity. The term "shadow" in folk and fairy tales connotes negative elements which can be detected both in the actions and the personality of the characters of the tales. Thisshadow in the tales is an area where direct light from a light source cannot reach due to obstruction. The obstruction here is the seemingly innocent feature that lay readers often perceive with first-hand reading of the tales. The shadows beneath contain all sorts of brutalities, violence, abuses and fear. According to Marie Louise Von Franz, an eminent critic of folk and fairy tales, the shadow in the tales is "brutal emotion" and claims that "after a time people (in the tales) discover these negative qualities in themselves and succeed not only in seeing but in expressing them, which means giving up certain ideals and standards."(Franz, 6) Those who give up the ideals and standards of life eventually turn evil and become the instigators of the numerous wicked deeds in the

tales.These traces of violence are found especially in the early recordings of folk and fairy tales. While modern writers and collectors of the tales choose to sanitize the tales thinking they are excessively brutal for children, the earliest collectors of the tales documented many of the violent features which are now excluded. This study shall situate these dark themes into the light and shall illustrate the various nuances of cultural iniquity which can be exposed through the tales. Folk and fairy tales, therefore, persist as significant mirrors of cultures and one only has to scratch the layers of the supposed purity in order to find a darkness encompassing all inherent human violence. D.L. Ashliman claims:

> Sexism, racism, anti-Semitism, persecution of people deemed to be witches, and an almost pathological drive toward retribution are among the ideals unapologetically advanced by traditional tales that modern readers find offensive. ( Ashliman, 4)

The term “violence” itself immediately denotes viciousness. Rene Girard has defined “violence” as:

> The process when two or more partners try to prevent one another from appropriating the object they all desire through physical or other means. (Girard,9).

Such models propose that “many of our problems are the direct result of concentration of wealth and power” as well as “exploitation and colonialism” (Farley, 17-18). These tales reveal that the conflict between individual needs and societal mores is the source of mankind's propensity for dissatisfaction, aggression, hostility and ultimately, violence. Thus harmony and inner peace can only be attained by the characters in the tales when they have learned to control their aggressive impulses by resolving this incongruity. However, as destructive forces are present in all individuals, and because man is by nature, an essentially anti-social and anti-cultural being, it is difficult for many people to accept his premises and often, end up being the evil characters in the tales.

As networks across the globe are accelerated at a faster pace, cultural juxtaposing, meeting and mixing are also increased to a higher level. This, in turn, enables a broader analysis and comprehension of narratives across different literatures of the world. In terms of folk and fairy tales, an examination of the conditions of history that shape the tales and the similarities and differences across cultures and also the interrelationships or similar traits between characters in various tales across cultures and times is essential

The Mizo community, for instance, has a rich culture with abundant tales which, with the new prospects, invite closer scrutiny in parallel with the European tales. Alan Dundes comments:

> All pre-literary and literary works form a cohesive and systemic whole in relation to which the individual tale must be studied precisely because of what it shares with other tales. There are certain recurrent narrative patterns which both pre-literary and literary forms share. The narrative and imagery patterns detectable in this way in folk narratives can be traced to those human rituals, in the form of harvest songs, sacrifices and folk customs, etc., handed down from time immemorial. (Dundes 38)

With the growth of knowledge regarding European folk-custom and belief on the one hand, and of rites and religions of people in the lower stages of culture on the other hand, it has become abundantly clear that there is no line of demarcation between the two. Each throws light upon the other, and the superstitions of Europe are the lineal descendants of savage creeds which have their parallels all over the world in the culture of primitive peoples. Similarly, the tales from different regions reveal the fact that the things that one values most highly, fears most deeply, and hopes for most ardently are valued, feared and hoped for by all people. Still, while the same yearnings are expressed, each culture has a unique response that is made richer by details from its society and the local ecology.

Analysis of folk and fairy tales have shown that they reflect the cultural aspects of the period in which they were written in. Stereotypical roles such as the wicked stepmother, abused

children and heroic princes were actual entities who were found in history. Along with these roles, cultural practices such as hunting, cultivation, royal system, war and adverse events such as murder, famine and diseases which are found in the history of every culture are reflected in certain folk and fairy tales. As Stith Thompson opines:

> Even more tangible evidence of the ubiquity and antiquity of the folktale is the great similarity in the content of stories of the most varied people . The same tale types and narrative motifs are found scattered over the world in most puzzling fashion.(Thompson 9)

As such, comparative readings of numerous tales from different regions becomes necessary in order to understand different cultures and individuals. If removed from their immediate surroundings, these tales are virtually incomprehensible and to recover their meaning, the situation in which they were produced has to be reexamined. Therefore, it can be surmised that literature can be a reference to understanding culture. Stephen Greenblatt writes:

> Literary texts are not merely cultural by virtue of reference to the world beyond themselves; they are cultural by virtue of social values and contexts that they have themselves successfully absorbed.(Greenblatt, 229)

Historical and sociological theorists perceive of folk and fairy tales as reflecting social and historical conditions. Any approach which attempts to extrapolate social conditions and values

from literary texts runs the risk of assuming a one to one relationship between literature and reality. However, contemporary historicist and sociological theorists typically avoid such conceptual problems through an eclectic, but highly theorized, combination of a range of methodologies.There are two main historical approaches to the fairy tale. The first which is associated with Nitschke, Kahlo, and Scherf, stresses the social and cultural purposes such narratives served within the particular communities from which they emerged. Nitschke and Kahlo trace many folktale motifs back to rituals, habits, customs, and laws of pre capitalist societies and thus see the folktales as reflecting the social order of a given historical epoch. The assumption that individual tales developed at specific moments and passed unchanged through subsequent eras implicitly denies the historicity of the genre. Zipes, however, adapts Nitschke's method for defining the socio historical context of folk tales to the study of the literary fairy tale, arguing that fairy tales "preserve traces of vanished forms of social life even though tales are progressively modified ideologically."(Zipes, *Fairy Tale* 105) A second approach stresses the historical relativity of meaning: textual variants of tales reflect the particular cultural and historical contexts in which they are produced. Bottigheimer's work is concerned with the complex relation between the collections by the Brothers Grimm and 19th century German society, and particularly the role played by Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm in shaping the fairytale genre, as well as the ideological implications of the tales, especially in terms of their reflection of social constructions of gender. Zipes focuses on the relations between fairy tales and historical,

cultural, and ideological change, especially how the meanings of fairy tales have been progressively reshaped as they have been appropriated by various cultural and social institutions through history. Zipes's studies of the fairy tale seek to relocate the historical origins of folk and fairy tales in politics and class struggle and thus fill a gap in literary histories of folk and fairy tales. His use of Marxist paradigms presupposes an instrumental link between literary texts and social institutions and ideologies. Whereas psychoanalytic theorists see fairy tales as reflecting child development, Zipes sees them as having a formative socializing function. He adapts early Marxist and cultural historicist approaches, which stressed emancipatory, subversive, and utopian elements in folk and fairy tales, arguing instead that, as folktales were appropriated by and institutionalized within capitalist bourgeois societies, the emergent culture industry sought to contain, regulate, and instrumentalize such elements, but with limited success. Thus contemporary fairy tales are neither inherently subversive nor inherently conservative; instead, they have a subversive potential which the culture industry both exploits and contains in an effort to regulate social behaviour.

As denoted earlier, this research shall attempt to assess German fairy tales collected by the Brothers Grimm as well as Mizo folktales, both oral and written. The Brothers Grimm were the first collectors to attempt to preserve fairy tales. Marie-Loiuse von Franz asserts that the Grimm brothers:

> Were the first in Germany to collect fairy tales and arouse interest in other countries to do the same (Franz,15)

The brothers not only attempt to preserve the plot of the tale but also the characters as well as the style in which they were told. The brothers spent their formative years first in the German town of Hanau and then in Steinau. Their father's death in 1796, about a decade into their lives, caused great poverty for the family and affected the brothers for many years. It was historian and jurist Friedrich von Savigny who spurred their interest in philology and Germanic studies -a field in which they are now considered pioneers- while they attended the University of Marburg in Germany. At the same time, they also developed a curiosity for folklore, which grew into a life-long dedication to collecting German folktales.( Hetting, 23)

The Grimm brothers were also influenced by romanticism which arose in the 19th century. This movement appealed the brothers because it stimulated interest in traditional folk stories and to them, these stories represented a pure form of national literature and culture. With the goal of researching a scholarly treatise on folktales, the brothers established a methodology for collecting and recording folk stories that became the basis for folklore studies. Between 1812 and 1857 their first collection was revised and published many times, and grew from eighty six stories to more than two hundred. In addition to writing and modifying folktales, the brothers wrote collections of well-respected German and Scandinavian mythologies and in 1808 wrote a

definitive German dictionary (*Deutsches Wörterbuch*) that remained incomplete in their lifetime. On December 20, 1812, they published the first volume of the first edition of *Children's and Household Tales* (German: *Kinder- und Hausmärchen*), containing eighty six stories; the second volume of seventy stories followed in 1814. For the second edition, two volumes were issued in 1819 and a third in 1822, totaling a hundred and seventy tales. The third edition appeared in 1837; fourth edition, 1840; fifth edition, 1843; sixth edition, 1850; seventh edition, 1857. Stories were added, and also subtracted, from one edition to the next, until the seventh held two hundred eleven tales. All editions were extensively illustrated, first by Philipp Grot Johann and, after his death in 1892, by Robert Leinweber. The earliest editions of *Children's and Household Tales* included many sexual references as well as violent issues which in recent times have been sanitized to meet children's suitability. The popularity of the Grimms' collected folk tales endured well beyond their lifetimes. The tales are available in more than hundred translations and have been adapted to popular Disney films such as *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, *Sleeping Beauty*, and *Cinderella*. (Hetting, 56)

As marginalized communities are increasingly alleviated, a growing need to affirm and own one's roots has emerged. Attempts have been made to place those left out by history (both as an academic discipline and as a segment of the past that is recorded in and sanctioned by the present)back into a history which is much more various, inclusive and tolerant of gaps and holes. With it, scholars from the different communities take renewed interest in folklore and its study.

Since the mid-nineteenth century, when folklore started to earn a significant attention among scholars all over the world, it has developed and continues to develop in all communities both as oral and written forms. Since at least the beginning of the nineteenth century, scholars have become aware that stories of a particular region are found in other regions as well. Although, all variants are not similar, there are some which share resemblances and this, perhaps, is because the sameness of the human psychology everywhere led to the invention of stories with similar plots in two or more regions. This very possibility enabled one to conduct extensive research on any tales from across the globe in connection with another tale from another region. The Mizo tales, selected for the research, share the same basic elements as those found in other regions, including German tales, and thus, a reading of the two become possible. Different types of folktales have been classified though a continuing debate which is that, these forms often overlap and therefore, cannot be specifically differentiated. In the Mizo tongue, "*thawnthu*" is the term given to all forms of traditional narrative, and thereby, rendering the distinction even more complicated.

The history of Mizo literature in the written form covers a brief span of about a hundred years, prior to which it exist in the oral repository of culture, tradition and folklore. (Rev. Liangkhaia, 187) That there had been high degree of literary sensibility in their history is indicated by the rush of development after the advent of literacy. A century ago, not a single Mizo could read or write and the Mizo alphabet was only developed by the pioneer missionaries,

Rev FJ Savidge and Rev JH Lorrain in 1893.(Liangkhaia, 188) However, knowledge, tradition and tales have been handed down by word of mouth and through these oral narratives, history and cultural identity have been preserved. In fact, an oral narration of the Mizos denotes that the tribe had began by emerging from a cave called *Chhinlung*.[7] Thus, it is rather the oral tradition, in the absence of a written language, that had given the Mizo his identity, origin and history. R. L Thanzawna opines:

> If we remember, however, that long before man wrote down his thoughts and emotions, he expresses them in songs. Untouched by learned influences from without, these songs are crystallized into the living language of the people – folksongs and folk stories were born out of such full and spontaneous expression which were then orally passed on from generation to generation. As we follow history of any literature through all its transformations, we are brought into direct and living contact with the motive forces of the inner life of each successive generation. (Thanzawna, 1)

Thus, Mizo folktales reflect individual traits as well as the collective social attributes, the economic system as well as the tradition of the Mizos. The existence and the persistence of the tales depend, to a large extent, on the experiences of the people as these contribute to the structure of the stories. Characters such as the cruel stepmother, the abused child, the heavenly

maidens, the underdog hero, the tiger-man and woman as well magical objects and performances are some of the collective motifs that stemmed out of incidents in the society. R. Thangvunga has fittingly asserted:

> In common with other tribal communities of the country, the very life of (Mizo) society was throbbing with the rhythm of folk literature. The telling of legends and stories, enthusiastic singing of fresh (un-weather-beaten) songs celebrating the latest victory and exploits, riddles and moral fables, reverberating with the sound of guns, and the merry, merry festival days of singing and dancing days and nights, were the central focus of their social life. No joy, no sorrows, no victory, no success in hunting was not but a communal affair. It was all for one, one for all kind of existence the modern world has almost forgotten.( Thangvunga)

The earliest collection of Mizo folktales documented in the written form was found in Thomas Herbert Lewin (Thangliana)'s *Progressive Colloquial Exercise in the Lushai Dialect* in 1874. This book contains three Mizo folktales, "Chemtatrawta", "Lalruanga" and "Kungawrhi". Twenty years later, in 1898, Major Shakespeare included ten Mizo folktales in his book on the Mizos and people from the larger part of India (*vai*) called *Mizo leh Vai Thawnthu.* In 1919, as many as twenty two tales were assembled into a collection called *Legends of Old Lushai* by a Welsh missionary, F.J Sandy.(Khiangte, xiii) The first Mizo to undertake the task of

documenting and publishing Mizo tales was Nuchhungi who in 1938, published *Serkawn Graded Readers: Mizo Thawnthu* which contains thirty one tales.(Khiangte, xiv) Nuchhungi was one of the earliest educated Mizos. This compilation consists of tales on Mizo mythology, their philosophy, superstition, tradition, supernatural credence and their penchants and detestation. This book was included in the Mizoram Board of School syllabus for primary level for many years. Her footsteps were followed by P.S Dahrawka (1896-1978) twenty years later in 1950 when he published *Mizo Thawnthu* containing twenty one tales (Khiangte, xiv). Over the last few decades, the task of documenting these Mizo tales have been undertaken prominently by Lalhmachhuana Zofa, Vanlallawma, Laltluangliana Khiangte even as the oral tradition of relating the tales is being maintained and encouraged.

Many Mizo folktales are didactic in nature. The themes advocate goodness and hold up a mirror to the lives of the folk. Punishable offences include cruelty to a step-child, jealousy, pride and treachery. Folktale themes revolve around character and almost all Mizo folktales are named after the prominent characters. Tales almost always carry a moral while religious themes are non-existent in the body of Mizo folktales. Money is never used although trade in the form of barter features prominently in some tales. Themes of romance and relationships are common.

A single Mizo tale may have multiple themes and motifs in it and therefore, can come under more than one category of folktale. Animal tales commonly feature the monkey as a

trickster. For instance, in "Zawngte leh Sazaw thu"/"The Monkey and the Palm Civet" (Nuchhungi I.8)[8], a monkey tricks a palm civet to ride his swing that has been partly gnawed by the monkey himself so that he could witness and laugh at the poor palm civet as he falls. Anthromorphism is also a very common feature and usually, tigers figure as such character. In "Kungawrhi" (Nuchhungi II.4), a *Keimi*[9]or Tiger-man, who can transform from a tiger to a human, carries off Kungawrhi for his wife. The snake is yet another character very often found in Mizo animal tales. He frequently assumes the role of a leader and especially in "Chhungleng leh Hnuaileng Indo" / "The War between the Creatures of the Air and the Creatures of the Land" (Margaret Pachuau, 46)[10] it is the snake who leads the creatures of the land to war. "Chawngchilhi" (Tribal Research Institute, 15)[11] also reveals the story of a young maiden who falls in love with a snake and bears its children.

Mizo tales are often laden with jokes and anecdotes that are enriched predominantly by the unchallenged hero of Mizo folktales named Chhurbura. Whether it be in translation or in the original Mizo, Chhurbura has been the undisputed fool and his character is unique. A critical scrutiny of Chhurbura's narratives within the ambit of folkore however, denotes that he was not quite the fool and that he is actually a wise character who is adept in trade and commerce, and an admirable intriguer who is also brave and selfless. It is rather his magnanimity that has led others to take advantage of him. A rereading of his tales will reveal that he is, in truth, a witty conniver who can easily outdo his fellow humans as well as the ogres and spirits in the mythical world. In

a particular tale called " Chhura Bellam Zuar Tur"/"Chhura Sells Earthen Pots" (P.S Dahrawka III.10)[12] the hilarious depiction of Chhurbura losing his way while on his way to trade pots has often been the subject of ridicule and laughter. It has overshadowed any other details that can be detected in the tale such as his expertise in trade. He sells pots and barters goods with fairness. The belief of the Mizo folks in the supernatural and their strong animistic tendencies also found their way into the tales they told. According to the story "Lalruanga leh Keichala"(Nuchhungi, IV.3), mankind is supposed to have first learnt the art of magic from a deity called Vanhrika, the keeper of all knowledge.

Fairy tales involve an underdog hero or heroine who is put through great trials and often must perform seemingly impossible tasks, and with magical assistance, he or she secures his or her birthright or a suitable marriage partner. We find this particular pattern in the story, "Mauruangi" (Tribal Research Institute, 18 ) Like her western counterparts, the fairy tale heroines such as Cinderella and Snow White, she also finds escape from her tough life in marriage to a prince. Mauruangi is cruelly mistreated by her stepmother but all the while, she manages to avert hunger and stay beautiful with the aid of her death mother's magical help who alternately take the forms of a catfish and a tree, providing Mauruangi with food when she is overworked and starved by her stepmother. When she hears the news that Mauruangi has been sought in a marriage by a *Raja*[13], her jealous stepmother murders her by pouring boiling water over her. Her dead body, however, is found by a serow who, by blowing over her, brings her

back to life and takes her home to look after his child. Meanwhile, Mauruangi's step-sister Bingtaii has managed to convince the *Raja* and his servants that she is indeed Mauruangi. However, Mauruangi is found by the *Raja's* servants and the two women are made to fight a duel. Mauruangi, who has been given better weapons, kills Bingtaii and she is finally reinstated to her rightful place.

Tales of ogres and ogress also feature prominently in Mizo tales. In a tale of Chhurbura called "Chhura Sekibuhchhuak Neih Dan"/"How Chhura wins his *Sekibuhchhuak*" (P.S Dahrawka III.12), Chhura threatens the ogress or *Phung*[14] by grilling her children and thus, makes a deal with her in exchange for their lives. This incident earns him the revered *Sekibuhchhuak*,[15] the mighty horn of plenty. Romantic tales are particularly interesting as lovers brave atrocities to be together. "Zawltlingi and Ngambawma" (P.S Dahrawka II.8) depicts the tragedy of two lovers who take their lives so that they can be together in *Pialral*[16]or Paradise. "Chemtatrawta" (Margaret Pachuau 28) is again a very fine example of a formula tale or a cumulative tale that spins around a man named Chemtatrawta who is bitten by a prawn which ensue a series of events involving different being blamed and ultimately the story circulates back to the prawn and Chemtatrawta.

As mirrors of culture, both the Grimms' and Mizo folk and fairy tales reflect the elements of culture and through the projection of violence and fear, instill didactic aspects even as the self as a wholesome entity is examined. Hallowell has remarked:

> I cannot help believing that much valuable material that would deepen our understanding of culture lies awaiting those who will systematically study oral narratives in relation to all aspects of society….When, in addition, we discover that all their narratives, or certain classes of them, may be viewed as true stories, their significance for actual behavior becomes apparent. For people act on the basis of what they believe to be true, not on what they think is mere fiction.(Hallowell 482-488)

While the same yearnings are expressed, each culture has a unique response that has been made richer by details from its society and the local ecology. The study shall attempt to study parallel views as well as divergent elements in both German tales and the Mizo tales from the angle of violence and fear. Jack Zipes comments on the Brothers Grimm:

> The Grimms were German idealists who believed that historical knowledge of customs, mores and laws would increase self-understanding and social enlightenment.(Zipes, *Fairy Tale* 14)

This opinion is valid for all other transmitters of the oral or written tales. Over the centuries, folk and fairy tales have retained important fragments of their original storyline. They have, in the process, developed culturally specific details and elements and conveying universal human problems. The Grimms' fairy tales, for instance, reflect the transitional change in German society from feudalism to early capitalism and the changing contours of the French Revolution from emancipatory movement to nationalist militancy and dictatorship.(Tatar, *The Annotated* 45)

On the surface, these tales progress in peaceful fantasy and with exotic land of wonder where innocent children and magical beings converge, they appear seemingly devoid of evil. However, there are dark and evil forces that lurk beneath and a closer inspection of these seemingly innocent tales reveals various facets of iniquity that require attention. Bruno Bettelheim suggests that:

> In practically every fairy tale good and evil are given body in the form of some figures and their actions, as good and evil are omnipresent in life and the propensities for both are present in every man. It is this duality which poses the moral problem, and requires the struggle to solve it.(Bettelheim 8-9)

Violence, as detected in the tales, denotes inherent human nature which often poses as a threat to vulnerable victims and therefore, hinder their self-realization. Freud denotes that violence is often a hindrance in a culture:

> The tendency to aggression is an innate, independent, instinctual disposition in man... it constitutes the powerful obstacle to culture.(Freud)

Tales of monsters eating children, parents beating their young, and witches putting spells and curses on beautiful maidens are only a few of the many fantastical examples of violence, cruelty, and fear evident in folk tales. These elements, in turn, work to distort the self while resulting in a fractured and an insecure self for each of the victims. Hannah Arendt opines:

> The human condition is such that pain and effort are not just symptoms which can be removed without changing life itself; they are the modes in which life itself, together with the necessity to which it is bound, makes itself felt. For mortals, the "easy life of the gods" would be a lifeless life. (Arendt)

In the tales, abused children are haunted and tormented by the physical and emotional trauma they suffer, helpless maidens trapped by curses become passive and fragmented and victimized men sway in confusion as their fates and destinies become thwarted. In some tales the purpose may be to instill caution while others demonstrate or grow out of forms of discipline that have been administered to children in the past. According to Guggenbuhl:

> In groups, children encounter existential challenges that we also battle with in adult life: betrayal, intrigues, overcoming fear, feuds, quarrels and jealousy. They

> are faced with the ugly sides of mankind but also learn to mobilize capabilities in order to deal with these dark forces. (Guggenbuhl, 9-10)

In the tales of the Brothers Grimm such as “Cinderella”, “Rapunzel”, “Hansel and Gretel”, there are instances of child abuse that have been meted out by wicked characters such as stepmothers and witches. Cinderella is treated as a pest, a slave confined to a life of drudgery by her stepmother and sisters. Rapunzel is denied the life of a princess by a wicked witch who locks her up in a tower. Hansel and Gretel are abandoned by their father and stepmother to die in a forest where they are eventually captured by a witch who plans to eat them.

Also, in Mizo tales such as “Raihrahtea”, “Mauruangi”, “Liandova te Unau”, “Nuchhimi”, “Ngaiteii”, there are similar indications of emotional and physical abuses of children where wicked stepmothers, witches or even orges function as the agents. Rairahtea, Mauruangi and Liandova and his brother are all victims of stepmothers who regard them as burdens and therefore, refuse to feed them. Ngaiteii is thrown into the flood, against her will, that might swallow up her village because her father’s spirit in the flood demands her. In tales such as “Keimingi”, a man marries a tigress while in “Sichangneii,” a swan maiden from heaven is captured and taken as wife by a mortal.

This violence administered upon numerous defenseless characters instill fear into them and in turn, torments their whole existence. At the same time, it can be denoted that while the

presence of witches and other dark forms hurl existence into turmoil, there are yet other figures with beastly exterior or other supernatural forms who initially appear different and fearsome but turn out to be compassionate beings responsible for generating fortunes and health. In "The Pig King", Meldina, a princess, marries a man cursed to be a dirty pig but in the end, the curse is lifted through the princess' intense love and then they rule their kingdom contentedly together.

Renowned scholars from all over the world such as Jack Zipes, D.L Ashliman, Maria Tatar and Angela Carter have collected folk and fairy tales and have rendered them from the oral to the written form. A brief account of some prominent figures under folk and fairy tale assortment from the earlier times to a more recent period might offer more insight into the aspect of folk and fairy tales in general. In Europe specifically, the most prominent writers include the Brothers Grimm, Charles Perrault, Hans Christian Anderson, Gabrielle–Suzanne de Villeneuve, Andrew Lang, Giovanni Francesco Straparola and Italo Calvino. Among the collectors of folktales, the Brothers Grimm are perhaps the most well known. The Brothers Grimm, Jacob (4 January 1785 – 20 September 1863) and Wilhelm Grimm (24 February 1786 – 16 December 1859), were German academics and they are among the best known writers of European folk tales, and their work popularized such stories as "Cinderella", "The Frog Prince", "Hansel and Gretel", "Rapunzel", "Rumpelstiltskin", "Sleeping Beauty", and "Snow White". Their collection of tales consists of physical and emotional violence and the vast majority of these did not originate as tales that were meant for children. The fact that the brothers added

cautionary advice to the introduction of their collection *Children and Household Tales*in which they suggested parental guidance was necessary to steer children toward age-appropriate stories in the volumeindicate that the contents were considered violent for children. However, the Brothers Grimm also insisted on not eliminating any tales from the collection because they believed that all the tales were of value and that they reflected inherent cultural qualities.

These oral narratives circulate in multiple versions, reconfigured by each telling to form kaleidoscopic variations with distinctly different effects. Charles Perrault (12 January 1628 – 16 May 1703), another great storyteller, also has his own versions of “Little Red Riding Hood”, “Donkeyskin”, “Bluebeard”, and “Little Thumbling” which had also been documented by the Grimm brothers. Perrault's tales are primarily moralistic or didactic, with elements of Christian teaching (Neil, 126). For example Griselidis, of his first tale, achieves goodness through the blessing of God; although she is not of noble birth, the moral of the tale is that in her ordeals she proves herself worthy to be a wife to a nobleman. On the other hand, "Les Souhaits", was probably written to shock the sensibilities of Perrault’s aristocratic audience, is a story about a common woodcutter who neither knows what to do with the gift of three wishes nor deserves the heavenly gift; because of his low birth and stupidity he squanders the wishes.In Perrault’s tales, men are allowed to be passionate whereas women are punished for passion.(Neil, 129). Both Griselidis and Donkeyskin must assume the sin of all women and undergo experiences of penitence and repentance for their sins, thereby absolving the male characters. Generally the

women begin in a state of sin: their experiences or ordeals purify and deliver them while simultaneously making them powerless. Sleeping Beauty, for example, was born guilty and, because of her sin of curiosity was punished with a century of sleep as penance before returning to live in the world where she is subordinate to her prince who wakens her. Women who suffer the sin of pride are punished and some women, such as Sleeping Beauty's mother, are depicted as evil. Sleeping Beauty's mother-in-law, described as an ogre and jealous of her son's wife and children, orders them to be cooked and served for dinner. In the end, Sleeping Beauty survives, while the mother-in-law suffers the fate she devised for her daughter-in-law and grandchildren, and dies in the cook's pot. "Little Red Riding Hood" teaches children the dangers of disobedience, and "Puss in Boots" teaches boys to be heroic and witty in spite of low social stature and small size. According to Zipes, girls and women are meant to be passive and yet show desirable wifely qualities of "patience, grace, charity" according to Zipes (Zipes, *Oxford Companion* 236-238). Perrault described in minute detail settings such as Versailles, contemporary fashions, and cuisine, as a means of presenting a depiction of modern society. He developed simple stories by individualizing characters and adding themes and morals relevant to his time: writing of widowed women with the problem of daughters without dowries or of peasants' lives at times of famine (Zipes, *Oxford Companion* 236-238). For example in "Bluebeard" the wife uses her husband's fortune to provide dowries for her sisters.

Italo Calvino (15 October 1923 – 19 September 1985) has his own “Red Riding Hood” story called “The False Grandmother” while Madame Beaumont (26 April 1711 – 8 September 1780)and Straparola (c. 1480 – c. 1557) both documented their own “The Frog Prince” versions titled “Beauty and the Beast” and “The Pig King” which focus upon courtship between human and enchanted beings. Calvino began to undertake the project that led to the outcome of the *Italian Folktales* in 1954, influenced by Vladimir Propp's *Morphology of the Folktale*; his intention was to emulate the Brothers Grimm in producing a popular collection of Italian fairy tales for the general reader. He did not compile tales from listeners, but made extensive use of the existing work of folklorists; he noted the source of each individual tale, but warned that was merely the version he used. He included extensive notes on his alterations to make the tales more readable and the logic of his selections, such as renaming the heroine of *The Little Girl Sold with the Pears* Perina rather than Margheritina to connect to the pears, and selecting *Bella Venezia* as the Italian variant of *Snow White* because it featured robbers, rather than the variants containing dwarfs, which he suspected were imported from Germany. Madame Beaumont was one of the first to write fairy tales for children. Her most important work is *The Great Fairy Tale Tradition: From Straparola and Basile to the Brothers Grimm.* She also wrote others based on traditional fairy tale themes. In her works, she captures human longing for the triumph of good over evil, for a happy marriage based on enduring love, and for the virtue to be valued more than gold. She conveys splendor, excitement and the appeal of her work has remained timeless.

Straparola (c. 1480 – c. 1557) was an Italian writer and fairy tale collector from Caravaggio, Italy. He has been termed the progenitor of the literary form of the fairy tale in Europe. In the pictures that he draws, Straparola illustrates life with a touch of pathos, as in the prologue to the second Night, when he tells of the laughter of the blithe company, ringing so loud and so hearty that it seemed to him as if the sound of their merriment yet lingered in his ears. There was, therefore, good reason why Straparola's imaginary exiles from the turbulent court of Milan should have sought at Murano, under the sheltering wings of St. Mark's Lion, that ease and gaiety which they would have looked for in vain at home; there were also reasons, equally valid, why he should make the genius of the place inspire, with its jocund spirit, the stories, with which the gentle company gathered around the Princess Lucretia wiled away the nights of carnival. In the fables of adventure, and in every other case where such treatment is possible, Straparola deals largely with the supernatural. All the western versions, except Straparola's, of the story best known to us as "Gilletta of Narbonne" and as "All's Well that Ends Well," are worked out without calling in auxiliaries of any unearthly character. (Encyclopedia Mythica, 131)

Hans Christian Andersen (April 2, 1805 – August 4, 1875) is yet another brilliant writer whose noted children's stories include “The Steadfast Tin Soldier”, “The Snow Queen”, “The Little Mermaid”, “Thumbelina”, “The Little Match Girl”, and “The Ugly Duckling”. His fairy

tales can be read simply as magical adventures, but for the discerning reader they contain much more, bristling with characters that are drawn from Andersen's own life and from the many worlds he traveled through. Despite the Christian imagery recurrent in the tales (typical of nineteenth century fiction), these are remarkably earthy, anarchic, occasionally even amoral stories — comical, cynical, fatalistic by turns, rather than morally instructive. "I seize on an idea for grown-ups," Andersen explained, "and then tell the story to the little ones while always remembering that Father and Mother often listen, and you must also give them something for their minds." And unlike the folk tales collected by the Grimms, set in distant lands once upon a time, Andersen set his tales in Copenhagen and other familiar, contemporary settings, mixed fantastical descriptions with common ordinary ones, and invested everyday household objects (toys, dishes) with personalities and magic. Nineteenth century readers were particularly affected by the way in which the tales gave voice to the powerless— the young, the poor, the very old — and the manner in which violence is counter-attacked by imbuing them with special strength, wisdom, and connection to the natural world (in opposition to the artifice of reason or the follies of society). Gerda, for instance, goes up against her rival (the rich, dazzling, coldly intellectual Snow Queen) armed only with her youth and compassion; in “The Emperor's New Clothes”, a child displays more wisdom than the King. This theme is found in traditional folk tales (the good-hearted peasant girl or boy whose kindness wins them riches or a crown), but Andersen gave such figures new life by placing them in contemporary settings, layering elements of sharp

social critique into their stories. Though Andersen's humor is indeed a salient characteristic of the tales (when they are well translated), what many readers remember most about Andersen's work is its overwhelming sadness. The Little Match Girl dies, the Little Mermaid is betrayed by her prince, the Fir Tree lies discarded after Christmas, while sighing over its past glories. Even tales that end happily — “The Snow Queen”, “The Ugly Duckling”, “Thumbelina”, “The Wild Swans” — are heart-wrenching in their depiction of anguish which they have endured along the way.

For some time now sociohistorians and folklorists have maintained that each variant of a particular story will have its own meaning, within a given cultural context. An important implication of this argument is that interpretations of texts are also determined by the cultural context in which they are formulated. As Tatar points out, ‘”every rewriting of a tale is an interpretation; and every interpretation is a rewriting”(Tatar, *The Hard* 86) Any given tale will accrue a range of interpretations, as it is interpreted and reinterpreted. The possibility of arriving at a definitive textually grounded interpretation is infinitely deferred partly because of the nature of folkloric material and the impossibility of collecting every version and variant, and partly because any interpretation is in part, the product of the culture in which it is produced. Hence there are various approaches to the folk and fairy tale and many diverse interpretations, but no single “correct” interpretation. On the other hand, however, progressive critical and creative

interpretations reveal a history of ideology as well as a history of adaptation, interpretation, as well as reception.

## NOTES

[1] The Mizos belong to a community in Mizoram situated in the periphery of Northeast India and which is the twenty-third state of India. It is a hilly region, bordered by Bangladesh in the west, Myanmar in the east and south and Assam and Manipur in the north. The majority of the Mizos are Christians and are in an inherently vibrant, sociable and closely knit society.

[2] Numerous tales across the globe have been collected and stored online with easy accessibility in *Encyclopedia Britannica*.

[3] The Aarne-Thompson tale type index is a multivolume listing designed to help folklorists identify recurring plot patterns in the narrative structures of traditional folktales, so that folklorists can organize, classify, and analyze the folktales they research. Tales are organized according to type and assigned a title and number and/or letter developed by Antti Aarne (1867-1925) and published as *Verzeichnis der Märchentypen* in 1910, the tale type index was later translated, revised, and enlarged by Stith Thompson (1885-1976) in 1928 and again in 1961.

[4] In 17$^{th}$ century France, these salons were regular gatherings hosted by prominent aristocratic women, where women and men could gather together to discuss the issues of the day. At court, contact between men and women was socially constrained and ritualized; and many topics of conversation were considered inappropriate for well-bred ladies. In the 1630s, disaffected women began to gather in their own living rooms (salons) in order to discuss the topics of their choice: arts and letters, politics (carefully, for the Sun King's spies were everywhere), and social

matters of immediate concern to the women of their class: marriage, love, financial and physical independence, and access to education. This was a time when women were barred from schools and universities; when arranged marriages were the norm, divorce virtually unheard of, birth control methods primitive, and death by childbirth common. These women, and the sympathetic men who were increasingly attracted to their lively gatherings, came to be called *précieuses,* for they perfected a witty, inventive, *précieux* mode of conversation.

[5] The insertion within the inclusion marks indicates the name of the collector of the tale as well as the serialized number assigned for the tale in the collection, Zipes, Jack.*The Complete Fairy Tales of the Brothers Grimm.*New York: Bantam Books, 1987.Print, and henceforth this manner shall be employed to indicate the source of a tale.

[6] "Folklore" is sometimes regarded as the equivalent of the Ger.*Volkskunde.* But folklore is, properly speaking, the "lore *of* the folk", while *Volkskunde* is lore or learning *about* the folk, and includes not only the mental life of a people, but also their arts and crafts.

[7] The Mizos, so goes the legend, emerged from under a large covering rock known as *Chhinlung*. Two people of the Ralte clan, known for their loquaciousness, started talking noisily while coming out of the region. They made a great noise which made their god, called *Pathian* of the Mizos, to throw up his hands in disgust and say "enough is enough". He felt too many people had already been allowed to step out and he closed the door with the rock. History often varies

from legends. But the story of the Mizos getting out into open world through a rock opening is now a part of the Mizo fable.

[8] The insertion within the inclusion marks indicates the name of the collector of the tale as well as the number assigned for the tale in the collection, Nuchhungi & Pi Zirtiri, *Serkawn Graded Readers: Mizo Thawnthu,* 3rd ed. Aizawl: Mualchin, 2010. Print.

[9] *Keimi,* a person who can transform from human to tiger or vice versa according to his or her will. A very prominent figure in Mizo tales.

[10] The insertion within the inclusion marks indicates the name of the collector of the tale as well as the serialized number assigned for the tale in the collection, Pachuau, Margaret L. *Handpicked Tales from Mizoram.* Kolkata: Writers Workshop, 2008. Print, and henceforth this manner shall be employed to indicate the source of a tale.

[11] The insertion within the inclusion marks indicates the name of the collector of the tale as well as the serialized number assigned for the tale in the collection, Tribal Research Institute. *Mizo Thawnthu.* 2nd ed. Aizawl: R.K. Printing Press, 1997. Print, and henceforth this manner shall be employed to indicate the source of a tale.

[12] The insertion within the inclusion marks indicates the name of the collector of the tale as well as the serialized number assigned for the tale in the collection, Dahrawka, P. S. *Mizo Thawnthu.* 5th ed. Aizawl: Thankhumi, Chhinga Veng, 2008. Print, and henceforth this manner shall be employed to indicate the source of a tale.

[13]*Raja,* a king from the neighbouring kingdom. They belong to the main Indian culture, to an entirely different ethnic group and have no similarity with the Mizos in terms of culture or race.

[14] *Phung,* a dreadfully wicked but dim-witted ogress.

[15]*Sekibuhchhuak,* a Mizo version of the Greeks' Cornucopia, a magical horn that generates meat at one end and rice at the other end.

[16]*Pialral,* a heavenly abode to which the Mizos believed that their spirits would depart after death.

# CHAPTER 2:

# DYNAMICS OF DARKNESS AND FEAR

Darkness and fear have both assumed metaphorical significances in literature. “Darkness” signifies negativity, the presence of shadows, evil and foreboding, the unknown, hidden meanings and unexplored zones while “fear” is often generated by these very causes because the feeling of revulsion usually occurs after something frightening is seen, heard, or otherwise experienced. It is the feeling one gets after coming to an awful realization or experiencing a deeply unpleasant occurrence. Sigmund Freud has given a clear definition of fear:

> It is a reaction to the perception of external danger, viz., harm that is expected and foreseen. It is related to the flight reflex and may be regarded as an expression of the instinct of self-preservation. And so the occasions, viz., the objects and situations which arouse fear, will depend largely on our knowledge of and our feeling of power over the outer world. (Freud, 231)

Fear is characterized by obscurity or indeterminacy in its treatment of potentially horrible events; it is this indeterminacy which leads to the sublime. According to Ann Radcliffe, fear "expands the soul and awakens the faculties to a high degree of life" (Radcliffe, 142). As such, the experience of fear induced by going through darkness enables one to identify the morals and values of life better as well as appreciate the positive aspects in life. Darkness stands in apparent contrast to open surfaces, as a hidden nugget of meaning deep within the surface rather than the aura of the visible appearance on the exterior. Darkness has been interpreted as “mental or

spiritual blindness; lack of knowledge or enlightenment, especially in religion and morality: as heathen darkness…obscurity of meaning; lack of clearness or intelligibility" (Wordnik, 1) A study of darkness necessitates unearthing the hierarchy of meaning, layer after layer, to the deep message or hidden truth. This observation demonstrates that penetrating to the interior of an idea or a person is possible and must be interpreted in order to meet the actual implications, especially in terms of the realm of folk and fairy tales.

Often shadowed by their undisruptive exterior, folk and fairy tales' darkness behind the shadows are often overlooked or not realized because of the predominance of entertaining and appealingly fantastic elements. They provide more amusement and delight rather than instill fear. Therefore, the intrinsic values they carry beneath their seemingly innocent layers tend to be treated as perhaps implausible. However, an important function of folk and fairy tale is to preserve and promote cultural and personal values, to impart both placid as well as violent societal aspects, but they are done so entertainingly so that they would endure. "Like the sugar coating on a bitter pill, the fictitious plot of a moral story guarantees its delivery." (Ashliman, 4) This chapter shall examine the dynamics of the moral, the values exposed through darkness and fear, and the representation of violence through a study of the various Grimms' fairy tales as well as Mizo tales. Lisa Hunt opines that the dark settings in folk and fairy tales are the very essence of moral instructions:

> Fairy tales often employ these settings as metaphors of the shadow. They are the wild, untamed symbols of our own landscapes, where creative thinking and intrinsic energies reside and beg to be released. It is here where we meet frog princes, wise old men, a golden goose, a ravenous wolf, imposing giants, spirit messengers and all manner of creatures that help us shed the constraints of a rational mind. It is here where we let go and become self-aware. It is under the dappling light that we recognize our full potentials and find our way through the tangle of brush. Through the darkness of paths unknown, we have the possibility of seeing the light. (Hunt, 1)

Folk and fairy tales exist, especially for children, to hold attention and they must, therefore, entertain and arouse curiosity. In the process, they also spur the readers' imagination, help children in particular to develop their intellect and to clarify their emotions. They help to regulate anxieties and aspirations, help to recognize difficulties and in turn, provide solutions to the problems that might approach. It provides avenues to understanding complex personalities, in exercising the various mechanisms of resistance and espousal necessary for facing life. This is so because, man is inevitably exposed to society and undeniably must learn to cope with its conditions. Folk and fairy tales, in that context, endow possibilities. As Bruno Bettelheim opines:

> By dealing with universal human problems, particularly those which occupy the child's mind, these stories speak to his budding ego and encourage its development, while at the same time relieving preconscious and unconscious development. (Bettelheim, 271)

Thus, folk and fairy tales, when viewed with their shadows, reveal a powerful social vision and in turn convey moral teachings as a means to understanding the self. Bruno Bettelheim again asserts:

> For a story truly to hold the child's attention, it must entertain him and arouse his curiosity. But to enrich his life, it must stimulate his imagination; help him to develop his intellect and to clarify his emotions; be attuned to his anxieties and aspirations; give full recognition to his difficulties, while at the same time suggesting solutions to the problems which perturb him. In short, it must at one and the same time relate to all aspects of his personality—and this without ever belittling but, on the contrary, giving full credence to the seriousness of the child's predicaments, while simultaneously promoting confidence in himself and in his future. (Bettelheim, 5)

They also accentuate the imperfections found in a culture such as hatred, grief, hunger, abuse, selfishness and wretchedness. Every tale which has been selected for the research serves as a

vehicle for social protest and allows counter-hegemonic thoughts and actions and unconscious anxieties to be expressed.

As products of social life, these tales denote didactic stories, thus having moral instruction as an ulterior motive. Whether appended or not, the moral of a story is usually not difficult to ascertain. In these tales, the moral of the tales typically centers around the preservation of both personal and cultural values. A personal value is absolute or relative and ethical value, the assumption of which can be the basis for ethical action. Rokeach opines:

> Personal values provide an internal reference for what is good, beneficial, important, useful, beautiful, desirable, constructive, etc. Values generate behaviour. (Rokeach, 45)

Personal values exist in relation to cultural values, either in agreement with or divergence from prevailing norms. A culture is a social system that shares a set of common values, in which such values permit social expectations and collective understandings of the good, beautiful and constructive. Without normative personal values, there would be no cultural reference against which to measure the virtue of individual values and so cultural identity would disintegrate. Rokeach again asserts:

> Values relate to the norms of a culture…cultural values identify what should be judged as good or evil…they are abstract concepts of what is important and worthwhile for society (Rokeach, 75)

Many of the values that can be found in the tales are the very threads that bind families and communities together in a hostile world. These are "diligence, honesty, generosity, dependability, perseverance, courage and a unique balance of self-reliance and selflessness." (Ashliman, 4) These, however, are often shown to battle with evil issues and in the end, are shown to come out victorious. Thus, these tales reflect both personal and cultural values. Various conflicting values are occurring everyday, the constructive values must essentially persevere in order to maintain a subdued life and folk and fairy tales mirror these very aspects of life. There are also many other values that are reflected and which are explicit or gruesome to the extent of discomforting sensitive modern readers. Sexism, racism, anti-semitism, persecution of people deemed to be witches and a drive towards retribution are some of the ideals unapologetically advanced by traditional tales that modern readers find offensive.

It must be taken into account that the moral values imbibed in folk and fairy tales not only direct themselves towards children but also towards adults as well. In fact, these tales were originally related to meet adults' yearnings and this very fact is the reason for the excessive inclusion of exhibitionism, rape and voyeurism. Sheldon Cashdan denotes:

> Fairy tales were never meant for children. Originally conceived of as an adult entertainment, fairy tales were told at social gatherings, in spinning rooms, in the fields, and in other settings where adults congregated- not in the nursery. (Cashdan, 2)

Folk and fairy tales capture the meaning of morality through vivid depictions of the struggles between good and evil where characters must make difficult choices between right and wrong, or where heroes and villains contest the very fate of imaginary worlds. These stories supply the imagination with important symbolic information about the world and appropriate responses to its inhabitants. Alasdair MacIntyre sums this up comprehensively:

> It is through hearing stories about wicked stepmothers, lost children, good but misguided kings, wolves that suckle twin boys, youngest sons who receive no inheritance but must make their own way in the world and eldest sons who waste their inheritance..., that children learn or mislearn what a child and what a parent is, what the cast of characters may be in the drama into which they have been born and what the ways of the world are. Deprive children of stories and you leave them unscripted, anxious stutterers in their actions as in their words (MacIntyre, 4)

Another common function of folk and fairy tales is to offer storytellers and their audiences a socially acceptable platform for the expression of otherwise unspeakable fears and taboos. Tales often warn any would-be tempter that he or she may not escape the wrath of an intended victim and his or her protectors. By offering make-believe solutions to real-life problems, it functions in a time honoured fairy tale tradition.

> We find in them rules or behavior on how to cope with these things. Very often it is not a sharp ethical issue but a question of finding a way of natural wisdom. (Franz, 192)

Folk and fairy tales denote that these struggles against difficulties in life are unavoidable and are intrinsic part of human existence, but they also denote that if one firmly and strongly holds oneself against all these, including all unjust hardships, one can master these adversities and emerge victorious.

> The cautionary tale makes an example of its protagonist, the very figure with which children identify, rather than of its adult villain, and thus becomes a true horror story. (Tatar, 8).

This is probably the reason why there are blatant depictions of violence in both the Grimms' tales as well as the Mizo tales selected for the study. Violence is exerted predominantly in the form of dark human treachery that strikes against virtuous characters. It impales them and instills

deep terror that often renders them to be helpless. The Grimms' tales, in particular, have often met sharp criticism. The Grimms, however, discerned that characters in fairy tales, if subjected to violence, have the immediate sympathy of the listener or reader. So, often they turn their hero and heroine into tragic martyrs. The most popular collection of tales by the Grimms, *Children's and Household Tales,* even after Wilhelm Grimm had extensively reworked to make the stories more appropriate for children, have been harshly criticized for the cruelties they depict. The brothers, however, defended themselves, claiming the need to accurately record tradition, and they correctly argued that the cruel elements are an important aspect of folklore. In order to understand the reason behind the depiction of violence in the tales, "placing these tales in cultural and historical context and questioning their psychological penetration is often necessary". (Zipes, *The Great Fairy*, 56-67) The very reason that led the Grimm brothers to collect German folk and fairy tales was mainly due to the spirit of nationalism revived in the nineteenth century. They wanted to impart the ideals and values of the great German past and they felt that folk and fairy tales are important facilitators of all these. Through these stories imbibed with rich cultural meanings as well as values, the brothers presented moral teachings that would enable readers to reflect upon themselves and reconstruct their lives. As such, the popularity of the Grimms' collected folk tales endured well beyond their lifetimes. (Grimm, iv-vi)

It took Wilhelm and Jacob Grimm fifteen years to collect and edit the stories from story tellers around the German country side, primarily in Hessia, the county that included the town of Gottingen where they taught at the University. In 1812, the brothers Grimm published the first volume of what was innocently entitled *Kinder und Hausmarchen* (*Fairytales for Children and Use Around the Home*). Wilhelm and Jacob were impressed with the straightforward honesty and naturalness of the tales. They instilled in the tales, both personal values as well as the cultural values of the Germans.[1] In the foreword to their second volume of the fairy tales, the brothers Grimm regretted that the custom of storytelling was on the wane. They bemoaned that with the demise of the story telling ritual, a tradition which nurtured the collective cultural spirit, was doomed:

> They specifically remarked on a powerful yet humble sense of grace that permeated these stories—a connection to ground and a deeper source of spiritual nourishment which further cultivated a sense of meaning on moralistic arguments. (Bernheimer, 12-13)

For many years, readers and scholars deplored the Grimms' collection for its raw, uncivilized content. They felt that these folk and fairy tales mirror all too loyally the entire medieval worldview and culture with all its stark prejudice, its crudeness and barbarities. The Grimms, however, defended themselves claiming that they were crucial for understanding the facet of life. Therefore, they refused to oblige to offended adults who objected to the gruesome

punishments inflicted upon the villains. In "Snow White" (Grimm 53)[2] the evil stepmother is forced to dance in red-hot iron shoes until she falls down dead. This tale features such elements as the magic mirror, the poisoned apple, the glass coffin, and the characters of the evil queen and the seven dwarfs. Envy and pride, like ill weeds, grow taller in the heart of the queen every day, until she has no peace day or night. Eventually, the queen orders a huntsman to take Snow White into the deepest woods to be killed. As proof that Snow White is dead, the queen demands that he returns with her lungs and liver, so that, like a true brute, she could feast on it.

> Finally she called her huntsman and said, "Take the child out into the forest, I never want to lay eyes on her again. You are to kill her and to bring me back her lungs and liver as proof of your deed. (Zipes, *The Complete Fairy Tales,* 182).

Such brutality and cannibalistic tendency is punished in the end and the moral denotes that pious, subservient and innocent girls like Snow White are rewarded with fortunes and a royal husband in the end. Despite being poisoned with a comb, a lace and an apple that render her unconscious consecutively, she still triumphs in the end because she is not treacherous and evil like her stepmother.

> The evil queen was so petrified with fright that she could not budge. Iron slippers had already been heated over a fire, and they were brought over to her with tongs.

> Finally, she had to put on the red-hot slippers and dance until she fell down dead. (Zipes, *The Complete Fairy Tales,* 188).

This is a story in which a child has been victimized by an adult. Adult anxieties and jealousies cause the adults in the tales to act against the children- the children being the objects of the adult's jealousy.

In "The Goose Girl"(Grimm 89) a treacherous servant is stripped, thrown into a barrel speckled with sharp nails, and dragged through the streets. A young princess is stripped of her title by a servant who takes advantage of the princess when they are travelling alone. The princess, though sad, is good at heart and exchanges her clothes with her. This imposter marries the prince while the princess has to tend to the geese. In the end, the truth is revealed and the princess refuses to spare the imposter because in fairy tales, justice is usually served.

> “She deserves nothing better,” said the false bride, “than to be stripped completely naked and put inside a barrel studded with sharp nails. Then two white horses should be harnessed to the barrel and made to drag her through the streets until she’s dead.” “You’re the woman,” said the king, “and you’ve pronounced your own sentence. All this shall happen to you.” (Zipes, *The Complete Fairy Tales,* 301).

Some readers and listeners might possibly shy away from the Grimms' tales because of their reputation for violence. Like all the great fairy tales, the Grimms' tales invite a closer drawing of analogies between the imaginary world and the real world. It supplies the imagination with information that the self also uses to distinguish what is true from what is not. They awaken and nurture the moral imagination through the depiction of crude, raw, realistic violence in various forms. These may be in the form of parent-child conflict, incest, cannibalism, kings subjugating subjects or orphans condemned by society. These instances introduce moral principles and virtues as practical instruments for achieving success. These tales also seemingly advocate the assumptions that standards of social utility and material success are the measurements of the value of moral principles and virtues and that this pedagogy would transform the minds or convert the hearts of young people. They starkly project societal realities and its negative elements such as the despair of the weak, the darkened envy of the poor, the greed of the rich, and the aggression of the strong with the effects that these tales become sites of struggle between morality and immorality. Only a pedagogy that awakens and enlivens the moral imagination will persuade one that courage is the ultimate test of good character, that honesty is essential for trust and harmony among persons, and that humility and a magnanimous spirit are greater than the prizes that are won by selfishness, pride, or the misuse of power. This is the very essence of folk and fairy tales that can be found when one scratches the apparent surface of fun and frivolity.

Moral imagination is, in essence, the very process by which the self makes metaphors out of images given by experience and then employs these metaphors to find and suppose moral correspondences in experience. Moral imagination, therefore, impels the need to actively visualize and inquire. The richness of the moral imagination depends upon experience. Lack of experiences would not cultivate active moral imagination whereas rich experiences would equip a person to face the stern realities of life. Children, especially, are open to this crucial formation through experiences provided and therefore, folk and fairy tales become extremely vital as instruments of moral shaping.

Tales that provide events to nurture and build the moral imagination generate thinking for children and even adults as well. Often it is regarded that the impoverishment of the moral imagination in children is their inability to recognize, make, or use metaphors. They may lack an awareness of morality and they might be confused or perplexed about its basis or personal ownership. When provided with a story, it raises their ability to question and thus, they are able to find the inner connections of character, action, and narrative provided by the author's own figurative imagination. In this aspect, folk and fairy tales function as medium because they encompass a world of darkness and light. Darkness feature in the forms of sinister preys, wicked witch and wizards, ogres and curses and induce fear and terror to characters and readers alike. But, in the end, this darkness is defeated by light in the form of the inherent good in man. Folk

and fairy tales transport the reader into “other worlds” that are fresh with wonder, surprise, and danger. They challenge the reader to make sense out of those “other worlds”, to navigate his or her way through them, and to imagine himself or herself in the place of the heroes and heroines who populate those worlds. The safety and assurance of these imaginative adventures is that risks can be taken without having to endure all of the consequences of failure; the joy is in discovering how these risky adventures might eventuate in satisfactory and happy outcomes. Yet the concept of self is also transformed. The images and metaphors in these stories stay with the reader even after he has returned to the "real" world.

Though the tales of the Grimm brothers encompass crude, coarse and even grotesque elements and despite a number of filtering and polishing these tales by repeated editions, the brothers could not or would not, remove many of these elements, defending that they are an integral part of life itself. And through the portrayal of these elements as well as virtues, the tales offer moral teachings to readers.The Brothers Grimm’s version of “Cinderella” (Grimm 21) reveals a powerful inclination towards victory for the benevolent. The tale opens with the dying mother insisting that the girl be good and pious.

> …she called her only daughter to her bedside and said, “Dear child, be good and pious. Then the dear Lord shall always assist you, and I shall look down from

> heaven and take care of you." She then closed her eyes and departed. (Zipes, *The Complete Fairy Tales,* 79).

In this statement, the apparent intention of the Grimms to draw readers towards Christian piety cannot be missed. The dying mother firmly insist that her daughter should be virtuous in order to win the assistance of the Lord. The moral of the tale has been transformed into a parable of Christian piety, even as it retains the savage episode requiring the violent mutilation of the feet of the stepdaughters and pecking out the eyes of the stepmother by the birds. In this tale, Cinderella's father does not die but seems to be oblivious to Cinderella's hardship and the stepmother and stepdaughter's cruelty. Cinderella is rightly compensated for all the denials against her joy meted out to her by her cruel stepmother and stepsisters. Her father brings her a branch that she asks for and she plants it on her mother's grave where it turns into a beautiful tree. This works in her favour. On the tree are two birds who give Cinderella anything that she asks for. On two occasions, they help her pick a bowlful of lentils that has been thrown into a pile of ash by Cinderella's cruel stepmother in order to prevent her from going to a ball the king has arranged.

Cinderella then runs to the tree where she asks the birds for a gold gown and gold and jeweled slippers which they give her. This helps her win the love of a prince at the ball and he comes searching for her so that he could give her back one of the shoes that she has forgotten at

the ball when she fled. The stepsisters mutilated their feet in order to fit it into the shoe and twice, the prince rides away with each of them in turn but on both occasions, it is the birds who reveal the deception. As they pass Cinderella's tree the birds tell the prince about the blood in the shoe and how his real bride still waits.

> "Looky, look, look at the shoe that she took
>
> There's blood all over, and the shoe's too small.
>
> She's not the bride you met at the ball". (Zipes, *The Complete Fairy Tales,* 83).

The prince insists on seeing her and as is natural, the shoe fits her. At Cinderella's wedding the two birds peck out her stepsisters eyes so that they would be blinded as long as they live for their falseness and wickedness. The ending, along with the details of the mutilation of their feet can be regarded as evidence of the brutal, violent turn taken by the Grimms' tales. However, they seem indispensable in order to bring evil to justice. When the sisters find out that she is the one that fits the glass slipper, "They threw themselves at her feet begging her pardon for the harsh treatment they had made her endure" (Zipes, *Radical Theory* 453). They do this in order to redeem themselves of their mistreatment of Cinderella earlier in the story. This appeals to readers who believe deeply in repentance for sins. Thus, the plot moves in favour of the virtuous and humble while the wicked suffer at the end.

Many tales are actually aimed specifically towards instructing young girls how to behave in a proper manner. In each story, the “good” girl is rewarded with prizes such as jewels, royal status or beauty. She is rewarded these gifts because when given a choice of gifts, she chooses the humblest gift. Cinderella, for instance, is not greedy or selfish like her "evil" sisters or stepmother who are punished by curses and extreme punishment. Thus, these tales instruct young girls to avert from selfishness and vanity. Even though this overt violence seems to contradict with the readers’ ethos and thus seeming to repel that audience, reading a fairy tale lets the reader escape from the social constraints placed on them. As William Bascom writes,

> Some of the contradictions between folklore and culture are thus explained as wish fulfillment or escape from sexual taboos on a fantasy level by mechanisms comparable to those found in dreams or daydreams…Folklore reveals man's frustrations and attempts to escape in fantasy from repressions imposed upon him by society (Bascom, 340-343)

The Grimms’ fairy tales are, thus, particularly gory. Maria Tatar writes, "More often, the Grimms made a point of adding or intensifying violent episodes" (Tatar, *The Hard Facts*, 365). Violence is projected often as punishment for a transgression. This not only satiates the reader’s desire for retribution, but also seems to be a manifestation of what the reader wants to happen to the antagonists of these stories. There is a level of satisfaction in the thought that unspeakably

violent things will happen to those that transgress. For instance, in the version of "Cinderella" (Grimm 21) written by the Grimm Brothers, the step-sisters who had mistreated Cinderella earlier in the story each have their eyes pecked out by doves in the end. The reader may believe that they deserve such punishment for their transgressions. In a way, one attains a sense of satisfaction out of this bloody act. A reader may grimace at the detail, but comes to understand that these things are meant to happen to “bad” people. The same instance is seen in "Snow White"(Grimm 53). The "evil" stepmother attends Snow White's wedding reception at the end of the story and is forced to wear hot iron shoes. She then is compelled to dance in the iron shoes until she dies of severe exhaustion.

In “The Juniper Tree"(Grimm 46), the stepmother eventually gets a millstone dropped on her head because she kills the little boy in the story. It is the little boy that drops this millstone, crushing the stepmother and exacting justice on his assailant. Sometimes in folk and fairy tales there seems to be an act of violence that is entirely unwarranted. In "The Juniper Tree," (Grimm 46) when the stepmother slays her son, chops him up into bits, and serves him to her husband in a stew because she hates him for the sole fact that he will inherit a part of her husband's fortune when he dies. This act seemingly has no redeeming qualities. It repulses the reader without offering any kind of redeeming quality. However, these cruel acts impose moral imagination upon readers and rouse judgment which condemns these cruel acts. They can be regarded as

cautions for adults: those who threaten and abuse children become themselves targets of brute violence. The millstone is an instrument of revenge that punishes adults for injuring the young and innocent. Thus, the moral intent of the tale remains an integral aspect of the tale.

Another example of this is in the Grimms' "Fitcher's Bird"(Grimm 47). In this tale, the antagonist, the sorcerer, threatens to kill the main character for her simple transgression of curiosity. Though she has done nothing to threaten the sorceror's well-being, he attempts to kill her because she has found his secret room where he hides the corpses of his previous wives. In "The Maiden Without Hands", (Grimm 31) the main character's hands are cut off because her father, a miller, makes a deal with the devil. She is an innocent bystander made victim by the evil forces in the story. The miller is offered wealth by the devil if the miller gives him what stands behind the mill. Thinking that it is an apple tree, the miller agrees, but it is his daughter. When three years has passed, the devil appears, but the girl has kept herself sinless and her hands clean, and the devil is unable to take her. The devil threatens to take the father if he does not chop off the girl's hands, and she lets him do so, but she weeps on her arms' stumps, and they are so clean that the devil could not take her, so he has to give her up. This denotes the theme of docility and obedience towards parents.

> He went to his daughter and said, "My child, if I don't chop off both your hands, the devil will take me away, and in my fear I promised I'd do it. Please help me

> out of my dilemma and forgive me for the injury I'm causing you. "Dear Father," she answered, "do what you want with me. I'm your child." Then she extended both her hands and let him chop them off. (Zipes, *The Complete Fairy Tales,* 110)

These children rarely do anything to deserve to be the target of such an act. Also, as children, they tend to be seen as the most innocent characters in a story. Thus, the repulsion of this act is immense and makes the reader cringe. The purpose of these seemingly senseless acts of violence is to vilify those that commit them. In this way, the second act of violence which has brought about the antagonist's demise seems all the more warranted. Violence begets violence. The violence committed by the main characters of these tales is justified in almost the same way in which killing someone in self-defense is acceptable.

Themes of deviant sexuality also exist in many of the folk and fairy tales selected for the study. Usually, this takes the form of an incestuous act that drives the child away. In tales such as "All Fur"(Grimm 65) the sexual advances of the father drive the daughters to assume a disguise.

> Suddenly he fell passionately in love with her and said to his councilors, "I'm going to marry my daughter, for she is the living image of my dead wife"(Zipes, *The Complete Fairy Tales,* 239)

Horrified by her father's evil intentions, she demands an impossible favour from him in the hope that it would dissuade him. She requests a cloak made of a thousand fur and three dresses as golden as the sun, silvery as the moon and as bright as the sun. But her father persisted and meets these demands and therefore, she is regrettably both driven away and emotionally injured. She has to escape and serve as a servant in another kingdom, stripped of her sense of worth, her title as princess and compelled to tolerate subjugation. Such an act is deplored and a counter hegemonic thought is often expressed within the tale itself. In this tale, it is the king's councilors who are horrified by their king's decision and who utter that it is a sin:

> When the councilors heard that, they were horrified and said, "God has forbidden a father to marry his daughter. Nothing good can come from such a sin, and the kingdom will be brought to ruin". (Zipes, *The Complete Fairy Tales,* 239)

Themes of family are also prevalent in folk and fairy tales and the value in the portrayal of family is that no matter how evil a person may be, he or she usually has close ties with other blood relatives. As Maria Tatar writes, "The nuclear family furnishes the fairy tale's main cast of characters just as the family constitutes its most common subject" (Tatar, 369). Familial bonds are strong in the fairy tale. The ultimate conclusion of many of the tales is marriage to a prince that can end financial woes and loneliness. Marriage is the "happily ever after". Otherwise, happiness does not happen in fairy tales. There is no doubt that the familial unit is of great

importance. Families are expected to act as a cohesive unit, with the parents being responsible for their children's actions and families expected to live together under one roof. This sometimes goes to the extreme revulsion of resorting to violence in order to advance the family's present status. For instance, in the version of "Cinderella" (Grimm 21) by the brothers Grimm, Cinderella's stepmother urges her own children to cut off the toe and heels of their feet to trick the prince into marrying them.

> So her mother handed her a knife and said, "Cut your toe off. Once you become queen, you won't have to walk anymore."….So her mother handed her a knife and said, "Cut off a piece of your heel. Once you become queen, you won't have to walk anymore." The maiden cut off a piece of her heel, forced her foot into the shoe, swallowed the pain, and went to the prince". (Zipes, *The Complete Fairy Tales,* 83)

The stepmother expects her children to go to great lengths to obtain success. This is a reflection of her expectations that her children will become more successful than her. Also, such brutal force is exerted upon the daughters in an attempt to vicariously enjoy royal lavishness.

For every act of violence that befalls heroes and heroines of fairy tales, it is easy enough to establish a cause by pointing to behavioral flaws. The aggression of the witch in "Hansel and Gretel" (Grimm 15) for example is often traced to the gluttony of the children."Ngaiteii"

(Nuchhungi III.5)[3] is a Mizo story that cautions one to be obedient and patient. The tale depicts the story of a young girl who is abducted by her father's spirit because she does not heed the warnings of her grandmother. The story denotes that Ngaiteii lives alone with her grandmother and one day, while looking for yams in the jungle, she grows thirsty. Her grandmother goes down to a gorge several times to fetch water for her. Finally, when she grows tired she asks her to go on her own with a warning that she must not say "*E Khai*"[4] when she sees the gorge. But as Ngaiteii looks down into the gorge, she forgets the caution and exclaims "*E Khai*". It so happened that in this very gorge resides her dead father's spirit and immediately, on hearing Ngaiteii's voice, seizes her. This illustrates the consequences of disregarding caution when one faces adversity. Often, parents and grandparents are depicted to be full of wisdom. They signify awareness accrued with better experiences to detect and avert dangers. When the grandmother learns of the misfortune, she begs the spirit to return her and he did, with the condition that he would come back for her in a few days. When both grandmother and daughter resists, Ngaiteii's father counteracts by flooding their villages. In the end, Ngaiteii has to be sacrificed much to the grief of the villagers.

The Grimms' "Little Red Cap"(Grimm 26) conveys the dangers of talking to strangers but simultaneously addresses differing issues. Embedded in the narrative is also an instruction on

manners. Little Red Cap's mother advises her daughter to be well mannered as she hands her cakes and wine for grandmother.

> When you're out in the woods, walk properly and don't stray from the path. Otherwise you'll fall and break the glass, and then there'll be nothing for Grandmother. And when you enter her room, don't forget to say good morning and don't go peeping into all the corners of the room. (Zipes, *The Complete Fairy Tales,* 93)

The story emphasizes the importance of listening and being obedient to one's parents. It also warns girls of the danger of conversing with deceitful men who may mislead such young maidens into partaking in improper acts of violence. As Little Red Cap leaves home for her grandmother's, she promises to "do everything right" to her mother but fails to heed the advice by wandering off the path and subsequently is trapped in the belly of a wolf. This wicked wolf lures her into the deep forest, tempting her with the beautiful flowers that beg to be plucked while he himself scampers off to eat the grandmother. When he has gobbled up the grandmother, he dresses himself in her clothes and awaits for Little Red Cap to arrive. He also gobbles up Red Cap and sleeps, satiated. Fortunately, a huntsman, sensing the unusual, discovers the crime and snips the wolf's belly open with a pair of scissors and rescues them. At the end of the story, on being saved, Little Red Cap tells herself: "Never again will you stray from the path and go into

the woods, when your mother has forbidden it" (Zipes, *The Complete Fairy Tales,* 95) The Brothers Grimm are thus, intent on sending a moral message and they did so by making the heroine responsible for the violence to which she is subjected. Folk andfairy tales have traditionally been a narrative genre that sought less to entertain than to enlighten. It also strives to stimulate self-discipline in the face of the more mysterious and unwholesome aspects of maturity. The cold metallic core of fairy tales is their sharp-edged examination of the eternal conflict between children who must inevitably grow up and establish their independence and their parental caretakers who often appear to lack the capacity for recognizing the line between giving their children too much independence and not giving them enough. In many folk and fairy tales, the dark woods feature as symbolic representation of the frightening world of adulthood and the big bad wolves or rather, vicious men out there ready to exploitand pounce upon the innocence of children.

"Little Red Cap" (Grimm 26) is taken primarily as a metaphor to warn children about deception. The plot device that has Red Cap taking off on her journey to grandmother's house should be viewed in terms of a metaphoric journey toward maturity. The woods in fairy tales are not only dark and mysterious, but more importantly they are teeming with temptation. This temptation is represented by a wolf who is closer to pure evil incarnate. Her repetitive use of the parental imperative that her mother told her what to do and what to beware proves that all the

lessons on maturity have been appropriately wedged inside her consciousness, but Little Red Cap has not taken the opportunity to engage critically with these life lessons. It is only when Little Red Cap ultimately learns the most important life lesson-that no real protection can be afforded by a mere cape and hood-that she comes to fully appreciate that the warnings and prohibitions.

"Cinderella"(Grimm 21) is the ultimate tale of the struggle between good and evil and the ultimate triumph of good over evil. As the tale unfolds, there are important insights that can be noted. Misfortunes and complicated circumstances can befall upon good-natured people, in spite of their unquestioning virtue as is seen in the case of Cinderella's plight. Cinderella is an orphan and her stepfamily is unloving. Instead of becoming despondent, Cinderella looks elsewhere for friendship. The story teaches man that comfort and friendship can be found if one chooses to look for them. Cinderella is treated unfairly and unkindly. Instead of returning evil for evil, Cinderella chooses to remain kind and thoughtful. The tale depicts Cinderella as being industrious and uncomplaining. Her work ethics teaches one that tasks, while unpleasant, can be approached in a constructive manner. Cinderella is forced to live in poverty while those around her enjoy creature comforts. At this juncture, the tale teaches about enjoying simple pleasures, about endurance, and about the importance of maintaining an optimistic attitude and holding onto hope. When Cinderalla is not allowed to attend the three day festival and put to impossible chores, two pigeons arrive to ease her sufferings. Aided by magic, they clothe her in fine gold

and silver and send her off to the festival. The birds thus, inspire Cinderella to define her goal and develop a plan to achieve it. It shows that though it would not be easy, sometimes one can make the impossible possible.

Cinderella is a fairy tale embodying the element of unjust oppression as well as triumphant reward. It delivers the basic theme of the persecuted heroine who emerges victorious, regardless of the circumstances. The story focuses upon a girl whose attributes are unrecognized and she unexpectedly achieves recognition or success after a period of obscurity and neglect. Tater rightly claims that in the tale of Cinderella, "One is more fascinated by her trials and tribulations at the hearth than by her social elevation." (Tatar, *The Annotated Classic Fairy Tales*, xvi) Walter Benjamin applauds the feisty determination of fairy tales heroes and heroines and states:

> The wisest thing-so the fairy taught mankind in olden times, and teaches children to this day- is to meet the forces of the mythical world with cunning and with high spirits.(Benjamin, 67)

Mizo tales also appealingly depict character and virtue while also depicting the wits and craftiness of the characters as they fight for their very own assertion. In these tales, virtue glimmers even as wickedness and deception are exposed. These stories enable readers to face the undistorted truth about themselves while compelling them to consider what kind of people they

yearn to be. In the same manner, the collectors' deliberate moral insertion into these tales points to an attempt to promote these tales as paths to valuable lessons. Nuchhungi, claims, in a preface to her collection *Serkawn Graded Reader* that this book has served to mould better men in the Mizo society:

> Kum kha leh chen kha Mizoram naupangten zirlaibu pakhatah an lo hmang tawh a, kha lehkhabu lo zir ve tawhte tan kan rama mi pawimawh te leh kohhrana mi pawimawh chherchhuahna hmanraw te tak te a lo ni ve reng a ni. (Nuchhungi, iii)
>
> (For many years, children in Mizoram have used this as a textbook in the curriculum; for them, this book has served to mould great agents as well as church leaders in the society)

Thus, these Mizo folktales function as cautionary tales which make an example of their protagonists, the very figures with which children identify, rather than of their adult villains, and thus they become true horror stories that teach values.[5]

"Kawrdumbela" (Maragaret Pachuau)[6] is another folktale that depicts the outcome of covetousness, conceit and greed. Kawrdumbela is a hideous man who is resented by all in his village. When he secures the chief's daughter as his wife with the help of a witch, Vazunteii, his new bride detests him outright. However, fortune smiles on him as he catches a magical fish that

tells him the secret to becoming handsome if he frees it. The fish suggests that he should scrub himself with the smoothest stone in the river and as he does, he becomes a fair, attractive and handsome figure much to the delight of his wife. When the chief learns of this news, he immediately is filled with a sense of envy. He decides that he would also do the same in order to be better than Kawrdumbela. He goes down to the river, catches the fish and demands that he be given the same secret. The fish, however, is a different magical fish that offers secrets to becoming ugly rather than handsome. It advises him to choose the roughest stone from the river banks and to bathe and scrub using this stone. When he does as directed, he turns utterly loathsome.

> After a while the fish said, "Go and bathe and scrub yourself with a rough stone. After he had done as he was instructed, he realized that his body was bruised and battered. He rushed home in great consternation and everyone who saw him fled in fear. (Pachuau, 20)

Everyone who comes across him scampers away in fright and abhorrence. This story reveals the ultimate truth, that misfortunes can also befall upon those who are consumed by greed in all forms, including, jealousy over the beauty of others.

"Mauruangi" (Margaret L. Pachuau)[7] is yet another striking Mizo tale that denotes a further struggle between good and evil and the inherent virtuous character one can possess. Some

readers and listeners might regard such tales as gruesome because there is blatant depiction of cruelty meted out to orphans. However, such a depiction is apt since it essentializes a closer drawing of the correlation between the imaginary world and the real world. The moral imagination is roused through a depiction of violence in the form of parent-child conflict, murder, abuse both in physical and verbal as well condemnation and disregard by society. Mauruangi is perhaps, the epitome of an ideal individual. Despite being constantly mistreated by a heartless father and a wicked stepmother, she still grows up into a woman who possesses virtue and a sense of intrinsic worth. Mauruangi's adulterous father pushes her mother into a river and kills her and then, marries another woman. Her stepmother assigns her to a number of heavy chore while her very own daughter, Bingtaii, rests and sleeps and eats as she pleases.

> Her stepmother admonished Mauruangi and beat her up severely. However, Mauruangi made no response and would tend to the jhum meticulously every day.(Pachuau, 74)

Mauruangi silently suffers these abuses and has to oblige for she has no other alternatives. She must somehow learn to fit in and adjust in a world that viciously mistreats her:

> Fairy tales begin with conflict because we all begin our lives with conflict. We are all misfit for the world, and somehow we must fit in, fit in with other people, and

> thus we must invent or find the means through communication to satisfy as well as resolve conflicting desires and instincts. (Zipes, *The Irresistible*, 2)

The extreme despair that Mauruangi endures drives her to seek solace. This solace can be found only in the river that has drowned her mother. It is not the river itself that draws her towards it but the remnants of her memories, both pleasant and tragic, of her mother that desolately haunt her; pleasant because this river, which has stolen her mother away from her, is perhaps a reminder of those comfortable times when her mother was alive (this is where she last saw her alive) and tragic, because this very river is also a grim reminder that her mother has been engulfed in the water never to return. However, folk and fairy tales subvert the normal execution of life by turning the impossible to possible. Extraordinarily, animals talk and inanimate objects are rendered alive. Help comes in the most atypical ways and yet these are never conveyed as far-fetched. They are the very means that suggest that providence appears to the reticent and subjugated.

> A journey through the dark of the woods is a motif common to fairy tales: young heroes set off through the perilous forest in order to reach their destiny, or they find themselves abandoned there, cast off and left for dead. The road is long and treacherous, prowled by wolves, ghosts, and wizards — but helpers also appear along the way, good fairies and animal guides, often cloaked in unlikely

> disguises. The hero's task is to tell friend from foe, and to keep walking steadily onward. (Windling, 1)

Mauruangi too, must leave home and go to the river that flows in the forest to find her support. When Mauruangi goes to the river that drowns her mother to grieve, her mother who has turned into a giant catfish comes up to her and asks her about her condition. On hearing her plight, her mother feeds her with rice and meat and tells her to return whenever she is hungry.

Mauruangi's journey is not a literal journey through the dark woods as travelled by Little Red Cap. Rather, it commences from the point of her abandonment by her family to the successive abuse and denials and eventually to her propitious marriage in the end. Thus, hers is a metaphoric journey of life that initially does not seem to treat her right but ultimately mends the path that leads her to a happy ending. Though ill treated and starved, Mauruangi defies all odds and grows up alongside Bingtaii. She works diligently as ordered by her stepmother, while Bingtaii sits idle all day. When her labour in the jhum impresses *vai lalpa*[8], a kingor a Rajah from a foreign land, both the stepmother and Bingtaii thwarts her impending happiness. The chief decides to marry Mauruangi but Bingtaii, with the help of her mother, takes her place. Mauruangi is left once again dejected and alone even as the chief takes off with Bingtaii to his land. In the end, Mauruangi must struggle for her rightful place and her very own survival when she has to fight with Bingtaii in a duel. The theme of a lovely, sweet natured, virtuous girl

harassed by a wicked step mother seems to be of universal interest. Bingtaii and the wicked stepmother embody brutality but despite their eagerness to disrupt Mauruangi's life, their attempts prove futile. By putting her to endless tasks and replacing her as a bride to the king, they expect to foil her fortune but justice prevails and their ultimate downfall in the end reveals the fact that good triumphs over evil. Mauruangi may be seen as representing her western counterparts, the fairy tale heroines like Cinderella and Snow White. Like them, she also finds escape from her harsh life in marriage to a "prince" because this elevates her status and rescue her from the clutches of her cruel family. These instances introduce moral principles and virtues as instruments to achieving victory in life.

In "Rairahte"(Nuchhungi, IV.2), episodes of violent trials and tribulations occur which, from the moral grounds, again elucidate the triumph of good over evil.Abused by his archetypal stepmother, Rairahtea suffers immensely. After a series of alternating misfortunes and fortunes, he emerges victorious in the end. From the very start of the story, Rairahtea has been mistreated. He has a stepmother who assigns him endless chores and finally, sells him off to sailors.

> Hmanlai hian fahrah pakhat hi a awm a, a hming chu Rairahtea a ni. Nuhrawn a hrawn a, a rethei em em mai a; hna hrehawm tak tak hi a thawk thin a….Rairahtea chu a nuhrawn chuan tangka khotea khatin a hralh ta a. (Nuchhungi, 80)

> (Once there was an orphan named Rairahtea. He had a cruel stepmother, was very poor and was made to do colossal chores….Rairahtea was sold off by his stepmother for a potful of coins.)

Within folk and fairy tales, magical items can function to move the plot forward, providing both power for the hero of the story and power for those who oppose him or her. The use of magic is often transformative of the character, if not the world.

For Rairahtea, transformation comes in the guise of his *Bahhnukte,*[9]a magical item, that he acquires from a giant magical snake. With this, he aids the helpless sailors and frees their vessels stuck on the shoreline. Consequently, he wins the trust and kindness of the leader and secures a stable position on the vessel. This piece of magical item serves as a powerful tool to elevate him from his initial, degenerated state.

> The belief in objects and substances endowed with supernatural powers touches all human cultures. Talismans, sacred relics, and good-luck tokens are found everywhere….to true believers, they can serve as material links to superhuman powers and thus be worth any cost to acquire and hold. The wondrous events common to fairy tales everywhere often rely on physical artifacts.(Haase, 598)

It is continuously his *Bahhnukte*, mutually merging with his innate benevolent temperament that promotes his status. His acts of kindness and goodwill wins the heart of their leader to the extent of facing a number of fatality to secure a wife for Rairahtea:

> A tukah chuan khua a lo var a, lawngpu chu Reng lal fanu dil turin a kal ta a. Reng lal in chu zuk thlen chuan in chu sipai thuah sarihin an lo veng khup mai a. Sipai thuah khat pawl chuan an lo bia a, "Engnge I lo tih dawn?" an ti a. Lawngpu chuan, "In lal fanu hi…." a ti hman chauh va, a lai takah an sat chum a an inthlanga tui hmar luang chu an lentir ta daih a.
>
> (When morning came, the captain went to seek the hands of the daughter of the *Reng* chief for Rairahtea. The chief's house happened to be guarded by seven lines of sentries. The first line asked. "What have you come here for?". But no sooner had the Captain replied, "This princess of yours….", he was lacerated in the middle and thrown into the river that flowed to the north. )

Rairahtea's concern for those close to him constantly yields great endeavors. He goes in search of his leader and brings him back to life.

> Chutichuan a bahhnukte kha a keng a, "Ka pu Rulpuia thu, thutak te ka bahhnukte khua leh tui ka chanpui dawn meuh chuan, ka pu thi hnu kha lo nung leh rawh se," a han ti a. Chu veleh a pu thi tawh hnu chu a kiangah a lo ding ta reng a. A

> puchuan mak a ti hle mai a. "E! hetiang a nih chuan ka kal leh bawk ang," a ti a, a kal leh ta a.(Nuchhungi, 94)
>
> (Then he took hi *bahhnukte* and chanted, "Great snake, mighty one, if I am to build a kingdom with my *bahhnukte,* revive my master from the deaths." Immediately the captain, his master, arose and stood next to him. The captain himself was astonished. "If this be the provision, then I shall make another attempt," said he, and off he went. )

The leader becomes deeply grateful to Rairahtea for saving his life and therefore, he in turn seeks a wife for Rairahtea in spite of fatal obstacles. Maria Tatar comments:

> Heroes and heroines alike must sever ties with their family, but through the helpers and donors they encounter en route to a second home, they enter an intricate weave of relationships that envelops and protects them. The fairy tale world is a world in which compassion counts - the good deeds of the heroes and heroines single them out from their siblings and mark them as the beneficiaries of helpers and donors. (Tatar, 79)

The leader is immediately slain to death by the guards of the *Reng Lal*[10], whose daughter he has decided to request to be the wife of Rairahtea. However, when Rairahte brings him back to life,

the leader feels deeply indebted and decides to face the same threat. This denotes the fact that the compassion of Rairahtea has won the support of the leader.

The significance of the *Bahhnukte* as a distinctive marker for Rairahtea is indicated when Rairahtea's evil wife steals it away. The once powerful and wealthy Rairahtea, is reduced to a nobody with no wealth. Like the story of Cinderella, however, the item is recovered and the wife is duly punished. In the end, one witnesses the resolution of a conflict and the subsequent victory of virtue over vice. This tale starkly project societal realities and its negative elements such as the despair of the weak, the darkened envy of the poor, the greed of the rich, and the aggression of the strong with the effects that these tales become sites of struggle between morality and immorality.

This story also reveals the Mizo values such as *Tlawmngaihna (*altruism*)*[11]*,* honesty and concern for orphans. Rairahtea is given all the attention because of his acts of kindness and because he is a good-hearted orphan, people treat him kindly. A common incident in every culture has always been that there have been, are and will always be orphans in society and folk and fairy tales imbibe heavily from society. They reveal the injustices often meted out to orphans and also the good fortunes that befall these orphans if they behave well. It also serves as a vehicle that relays the fact that violence eventually is exerted upon evil characters and often, they die or are punished in the most horrific manner. Rairahtea avenges himself by forcing his

adulterous wife and her partner to fall from heaven with his magic. They fall with such heavy force that they die immediately.

Often these folk and fairy tales convey morals that teach one to be responsible and subservient. “Chepahakhata” (Nuchhungi, III.6) is a tale that depicts an irresponsible husband who suffers due to his laxity. Chepahakhata has always been a very ugly man who has, for this very reason, also failed to find a wife. When he has finally given up his endless quest after a long search, he happens to meet a witch. This kind witch takes pity on him and marries him. His wife showers him with riches and grants him a kingdom and makes him the king. When he pays a visit to his subjects, he is garnished in splendor and treated with a grand feast, and in the midst of these delights, he forgets his family altogether. When his daughter pleads with him to return, he makes no efforts:

> A pa hnenah chuan, “Ka pa, lo haw tak tak tawh rawh, I lo hawn loh chuan kan kal bo daih dawn e,” a ti a. Chepahakhata chuan, “Aw le, ka lo hawng tak tak ang,” a ti a. Nimahsela hawn reng reng chu a tum leh ta lo va.(Nuchhungi, 53)
>
> (She said to her father, “Father, you must really come home this time. If you do not, we are going away.” Chepahakhata replied, “Yes, I shall definitely come home.” But he did not have any inclination to return home. )

His wife grows impatient and when their daughter fails several times to bring him back home, she flies into rage. She turns the entire kingdom into a plantain field and with their daughter, goes up to *Pu Vana.*[12]

Chepahakhata is reduced to the man he had been before, someone who is detestful, poor, hungry and homeless. He manages to survive only because his daughter from heaven takes pity on him and sends him the magical pot that refills with food on its own. He becomes a scavenger who roams the earth with no place to stay and several times, he has to rely on his wits alone in order to defeat enemies. Thus, morals and values represent a large part of the lives of people in folk and fairy tales as well as real life. They are a way for people to justify their action or lack of action. They can also dictate the ways in which people react to those around them. Stories work with people, for people and always stories work on people, affecting what people are able to see as real, as possible and as worth doing or best avoided. More than mere curiosity is at stake in this question, because human life depends on the stories they tell; the sense of self that those stories impart, the relationships constructed around shared stories, and the sense of purpose that stories both propose and foreclose.

Extraordinary heroes, as has been discussed, are the embodiments of their culture, they are larger than typical figures in ordinary life because they are exemplars of their society's aspirations and sociopolitical conflicts. When a hero dies, he illustrates not just his own personal

weaknessness but the failings of a society at large. As a result, these heroes serve as social guidelines for behavior and are regarded as having a certain historical and cultural truth embodied in them. The protagonists also remind readers and listeners of themselves, and the quests and questions of these protagonists are on the same personal level as them. As a result, folk and fairy tales can be regarded as personal entertainment, as engaging fictions reflecting one's ability to laugh at oneself as well as to overcome one's deepest dreams and fears. The use of fantasy, magic, both good and evil, the confronting of a problem, the successful resolution of that problem, the use of a sympathetic protagonist and his or her triumphs, all contribute to making these folk and fairy tales vehicles of moral teachings in a society that is constantly strived with conflicts and issues. Adam Gidwitz remarks:

> Every child has cut himself. Every child has been bruised and bled. And so, evry child knows that the blood stops eventually, the wound scabs over, the bruise yellows and heals. Fairy tale violence teaches a child that every emotional wound heals. That salty tears dry. That no matter the pain, victory is possible. (Gidwitz, 78)

In both the oral and the written form, folk fairy tales have always assumed the status of didactic tales. According to Zipes, "Fairy tales were first told by gifted storytellers and were based on rituals intended to endow meaning to the daily lives of members of a tribe" ( Zipes,

*Fairy Tale as Myth,* 10). Such tales assisted the community in developing explanations for natural occurrences, such as changes in the seasons or weather, and served as ways to structure the meanings of communal events such as harvesting, hunting and marriage.

In the transition from the oral tradition to the literary tradition of folk tales, fairy tales evolved into literary tales that "addressed the concerns, tastes, and functions of court society" (Zipes, *Fairy Tale as Myth,* 11). Interestingly, the institutionalization of the fairy tale as a literary genre was originally intended for educated adult audiences and only later for children. Prior to the sixteenth century, there were no literary fairy tales for children (Zipes, *Fairy Tale as Myth*, 22). The question now arises as to why folk and fairy tales assume the status of children's tales from the sixteenth century. Following Zipes' thought, the literary fairy tale for children emerged with "the rise of a 'state of childhood'" by the end of the sixteenth century due to the "rise of a greater discrepancy between adult and child as the civilizing process became geared more instrumentally to dominate nature" (Zipes, *Fairy Tale as Myth*, 22). At this time, the fairy tale began to be used as a tool to socialize the child by cultivating "feelings of shame" and by arousing anxiety in children "when they did not conform to more inhibiting ways of social conduct" (Zipes, *Fairy Tale as Myth,* 22). In examining the changes in society from the Renaissance to the present time, it can be suggested that society becomes too complex, too specialized and, as a result, too alien to the world of the child. Prior to the sixteenth century,

children lived and are depicted in art and literature as little adults. For example, children wore the same clothes as adults. The world of child and adult was one world, and virtually the same expectations were held for adult and child alike. Children worked with adults, and they also played with adults.(Zipes, *Fairy Tale as Myth, 30*) This implies that the child participates in the world of the adult. Hence, one can understand the moral implications and the heavy inclination towards violence in spite of them being tales for children because children mirror adults and learn from the stark and realistic circumstances reflected in the tales.

Thus, folk and fairy tales enable man to learn about themselves and the world they inhabit. They were written and told to mark an occasion, set an example, warn about danger, procure food or explain what seem inexplicable. These tales are told to communicate knowledge and experience in social contexts. Folk and fairy tales are informed by a human disposition to action- to transform the world and make it more adaptable to man's needs, while man would also try to change and make himself fit for the world. Therefore, the focus of folk and fairy tales, whether oral or written, has always been on finding magical instruments, or powerful people and animals, or circumstances, that will enable protagonists to assert themselves within a harsh environment, and in turn echoes moral teachings.

While the critic Bettelheim emphasized the value of "struggle" and "mastery" and saw in fairy tales an "experience in moral education", Benjamin asserts that the sense of morality that

has been endorsed in fairy tale is not without complications and complexities. As is seen in the tales studied, the plots move in favour of the goodhearted who confront and resist malice exerted upon them. While it can be agreed that promoting toughness against difficulties through these good characters may be a good manner for the child, it may not necessarily concur that cunning is a quality one wishes to encourage by displaying its advantages. It can be detected that the moral economy of the fairy tale does not necessarily concur with the didactic agendas set by parents. Instead, folk and fairy tale characters may be seen to be lying, cheating, or stealing their way to good fortune.

But despite this issue, a very worthy outcome is the fact that moral imagination is bound to have been stimulated and sharpened. These stories depict the core darkness of humanity stripped of all pretensions and in doing so, mirror the unappealing aspect of life itself. In the process, they also denote how these spiteful elements often induce fear and insecurities upon humanity itself. In the end, what these folk and fairy tales offer are powerful images of good and evil and to show how to love through the examples of the admirable characters. This will spur the imagination to translate these experiences and images into the constitutive elements of self identity and into metaphors one will use to interpret one's own world. One will, thus, grow increasingly capable of moving about in that world with moral intent. When the moral imagination is wakeful, the virtues come to life, filled with personal and existential, as well as

social, significance. The virtues that the tales instruct can take on a life that attracts and awakens the desire to own them for oneself. They adopt forms of moral pedagogy to make persons into mature and whole human beings, able to stand face to face with the truth about themselves and others, and desiring to correct their faults and to emulate goodness and truth wherever it is found. Values reflected in the tales also carry the full burden of concerns over the decline of morality. Through these tales, teaching value, whether family values, democratic values, or religious values, is touted as the remedy for our moral confusion.

## NOTES

[1]A long time ago, when listeners crowded close to solid tiled stoves that warmed an entire thatch roofed old farm house in Germany, these drastic stories spoke of ancient truths, warming the intent listeners— who usually were adults rather than children - with the assurance that evil would not go unpunished, that good would win out and that there was order and justice in the world. This was the very essence which made up the entire collection of the Grimm brothers.

[2]The insertion within the inclusion marks indicates the collector and the serialized number assigned for the tale in the collection of Grimms' fairy tales, Zipes, Jack. *The Complete Fairy Tales of the Brothers Grimm*. New York: bantam Books, 1987 and henceforth, this manner shall be employed to indicate the source of a tale.

[3] The insertion within the inclusion marks indicates the collector and the serialized number assigned for the tale in the collection, Nuchhungi & Pi Zirtiri. *Serkawn Graded Readers: Mizo Thawnthu*, 3rd ed. Aizawl: Mualchin, 2010. Print. and henceforth, this manner shall be employed to indicate the source of a tale.

[4]*"E Khai"* is a Mizo term for exclaiming a surprise. It is roughly equivalent to "Oh" or "Wow" used to express wonder or astonishment.

[5] Folktales in Mizoram began to reach print just at a point when education was established in the state by the Christian missionaries in the early 1900s and it was immediately incorporated into the school curriculum. Further, this inclusion into the school curriculum happened at a very crucial point in time when Christianity was firmly established and as such, they were easily harnessed into service as stories for children with a few key changes made- changes that divested the tales of their violent twists and vulgar turns of events to make room for moral instruction and spiritual guidance. Those who produced the anthologies of folktales usually had an ever watchful eye on the models generated by the Church.

[6] The insertion within the inclusion marks indicates the collector and translator of the tale in the collection, Pachuau, Margaret. *Handpicked Tales from Mizoram*. Kolkata: Writers' Workshop, 2008. Print, and henceforth, this manner shall be employed to indicate the source of a tale.

[7]The insertion within the inclusion marks indicates the collector and translator of the tale in the collection, Pachuau, Margaret L. *Folklore from Mizoram*. Kolkata: Writers' Workshop, 2013. Print. and henceforth, this manner shall be employed to indicate the source of a tale.

[8]*vai lalpa,* a king from beyond the boundaries of the Mizo community.Usually referred to as a Rajah, a person who rules in the plain areas.

[9]*Bahhnukte,* similar to the Greek's Cornucopia, is a magical item that can draw forth anything that the owner desires.

[10]*Reng Lal*, a chief in Tripura.

[11] *Tlawmngaihna*. Altruism, selflessness, sacrifice and all constructive values.. This is a very admirable trait of the Mizos in general and encompasses all virtue. It continues to be practiced within a very close knit community like such as the Mizo society and is responsible for instilling a sense of solidarity and unity within the society.

[12] *Pu Vana,* regarded as a celestial being by the Mizos. He is believed to dwell in an abode in the sky.

# CHAPTER 3:

# FEARFUL BEASTIES

# AND

# MYSTERIOUS MAIDENS

Violence signifies the fact that the universe contains two radically different kinds of beings or substance-matters. The issues engaged in folk and fairy tales find resonance with the Freudian concepts of instincts, life and death instincts, and the structural theory of the mind propounded by Freud. Freud defined instincts variously but most cogently as "a concept that is on the frontier between the mental and somatic, as the psychical representative of the stimuli originating from and reaching the mind, as a measure of the demands made upon the mind for work in the consequence with its connections with the body." Freud developed the theory of instincts in relation to the concept of libido and the consequent foundation of the psychosexual phases of development. However, violence as a component of the libidinal drives became increasingly important and could not be ignored. It was therefore elevated to the status of a separate instinct. It was further realized that humans were neither exclusively nor essentially good. Freud introduced his final theory of life and death instincts in 1920. Freud postulated that the death instinct is a dominant tendency of all organisms and their cells to return to a state of inanimateness. The death instinct represented the aggressive or violent instincts and Freud later separated the libidinal and aggressive instincts from the ego and located them in a vital stratum of the mind which is independent of the ego. This line of thought led to the further differentiation of the psyche as per the "Structural Theory" into the id, ego, and superego. (Freud, 66)

The characters in folk and fairy tales manifest characteristics of the structural theory of the mind. Violent perpetrators would seem easily recognizable as the id, seeking instant

gratification, having an aggressive instinct, and having no moral or social mores that need be followed. They take pleasure in violence and similar to the death instinct ultimately may lead to their own destruction. Violence, in all its forms, sometimes drives characters to seek protection by transforming their appearances to defend themselves from its executors while at other times, it drives evil characters to assume disguises to revert to the role of a monster or a beast. This chapter shall dwell upon the various beastly characters and strange supernatural beings who are initially seen as fearsome or otherwise, mysterious, but may soon be revealed as bringers of fortunes. Their true selves are often hidden or disrupted by the dark exterior that they possess and it is usually by facing violent trials and tribulations, within a society that imposes its own idea of beauty and repulsiveness that they find their true selves. It shall also explore other characters who use either disguise or magic to alter themselves so as to fulfill their narcissistic desires which they could not attain otherwise. In folk and fairy tales, when a form is taken on involuntarily, the thematic effect is one of confinement and restraint; the person is bound to the new form. Voluntary forms, on the other hand, are means of escape and liberation; even when the form is not undertaken to effect a literal escape, the abilities specific to the form, or the disguise afforded by it, allow the character to act in a manner previously impossible. By far, the most common form of shape-shifting is the transformation of a human being into an animal (or conversely of an animal into human form). More rarely, the transformation may be into a plant or object, or into another human form (that is, fair to ugly, or vice versa).

Folk and fairy tales are replete with shapeshifting, matamorphosis and disguises. These core elements often serve to enthrall, entertain or intensify the plots of the tales. The richness of the visual elements and descriptions in the tales enhances the overall story arc and although the tales are meant to entertain the general population, there are certain areas that beg to be studied in depth. Magic will vanish with too much rationalisation, and folk and fairy tales derive their power from the enigma of enchantment and from the playful charm of the anthropomorphism. The transformation of the characters in folk and fairy tales has been defined as:

> Shapeshifting, transformation, metamorphosis, transmogrification, morphing, or transmorphing... a change in the form or shape of a person, especially: a change from human form to animal form and vice versa; a change in appearance from one person to another "Shapeshifting" often refers to characters who change form on their own, whether voluntarily or involuntarily, and for a time; "metamorphosis", to permanent changes from any source, and any degree of willingness; "transformation", to externally imposed change of form.( Merlyn, 1)

Folk and fairy tales speak through beasts to explore common experiences – fear of sexual intimacy, terror and violence and injustice as well as struggles for survival. Marina Warner comments:

> A tradition of articulate, anthropomorphised creatures of every kind is as old as literature itself: animal fables and beast fairytales are found in ancient Egypt and Greece and India, and the legendary Aesop of the classics has his storytelling counterparts all over the world, who use crows and ants, lions and monkeys, ravens and donkeys to satirise the follies and vices of human beings and display along the way the effervescent cunning and high spirits of the fairytale genre. (Warner, 43)

These beasties often take the form of animals that would pose a real threat – wolves, tigers, bears and warthogs. But they can also assume a more domestic, less terrifying animal appearance – a ram, a frog, a bird, a hedgehog. There are also instances of characters taking the form of beasts who are indescribable or they may even be ogres and other supernatural beings. In every case, the outer form conceals the inner man, and very often, striking circumstances overturn the beast's fate and restore him or her to his or her proper identity. Beastly folk and fairytales like these follow a narrative arc: the story begins with a spell or a curse that binds the hero or heroine under a terrible disguise, and after a passage of ordeals and horrors, closes with recognition and fulfillment. Sometimes the plot follows emotional or psychological logic, but not always; a great deal of the impact of this literature depends on the stark absence of explanation, on the sheer mysteriousness of the premises and outcome. At other times, the stories have beasts and

mysterious maidens who are simply antagonistic from beginnings to ends and may function as the instigators of all misfortunes in the tales.[1] Beasts may also often be depicted as adversaries, wicked witches or stepparents who thwart the lives of the protagonists. In folk and fairy tales, metamorphosis has the old meaning of magical and radical change experienced by the subject, who may well have initiated as well as lived through the process. The keys to such transformation are reversibility and repeatability or irreversible unless a spell is lifted by magic. This transformation implies and emphasizes an external agent of change and may also concern changes in the nature of inanimate material. Thus, in folk and fairy tales, metamorphosis tends not to be arbitrary. Often it reveals the real nature of the subject and does not happen by accident for it comes from the nature of the subject. At other times, it occurs due to a curse inflicted upon a character. An abhorred metamorphosis is likely to have generated the story and resolve the story itself through a recognition of the true identity of the protagonist.

In many folk and fairy tales, transformation from human to other animate and inanimate objects occur when a magical chase is involved. A magical chase occurs where the pursued endlessly takes on forms in an effort to shake off the pursuer, and the pursuer answers with other shape-shifting, as, a water nixie is countered by a human couple by turning into a toad and a frog and an evil stepmother is escaped by her stepchildren only by turning into a duck and a pond. The pursued may finally succeed in escaping or the pursuer may succeed in capturing. This

aspect is evident in the Grimms' "The Nixie in the Pond", (Grimm 181)[2] when a young wife is separated from her husband who has been captured by a water nixie. She desperately searches high and low for him and finally stumbles upon an old woman on a mountain who tells her the fate of her husband. It is from this moment that one witnesses the power of transformation through magic. Metamorphosis is a magic and radical change in shape experienced, normally through an act of will by its subject. When some external agent of change is involved, this transformation is a preferred choice for the character who changes. Magical items often serve as powerful tools to rescue helpless victims who are trapped in evil spells. In this tale, the woman gives her a golden comb and instructs her to comb her hair by the pond whilst thinking of her husband and then when finished, to lay the golden comb upon the sand. As the nixie steals the comb her husband's head emerges from the millpond. The man's wife returns to the old woman of the mountain who gifts her with a golden flute, bidding her to play and to do the same with the golden flute as she has done with the golden comb. The woman returns to the millpond and does so as she is bidden, to play whilst thinking of her husband. Leaving the flute on the sand upon finishing the golden song of her heart, the nixie loots a second time. As the flute submerges, half her husband's body emerges. The third time, she receives a golden spinning wheel from the old woman; upon the nixie's procuring of the spinning wheel of gold, her husband emerges completely from the millpond, and he steals his wife's hand with view for escape, to get far away

from the millpond. Tempestuous, the nixie tries to drown them, but the man's wife calls upon the old woman of the mountain, who turns her into a toad and him into a frog.

> Then, in her fear, the wife called out to the old woman to help them, and at that very moment they were transformed; she into a toad, he into a frog. When the flood swept over them, it could not kill them... (Zipes, *The Complete Fairy Tales,* 530)

The ensuing flood of the nixie's wrath sunders them. They regain their human forms on dry land, However, the flood has separated them far apart and only in the end, they could be reunited. Transformation, for the couple, is a mechanism that strengthens their bond. As mere mortals, they are vulnerable and weak against the powerful and wily nixie who commands the millpond. However, when the old woman turns them both into a toad and a frog, the water nixie is no longer a threat for they can survive the flood that engulfs them and also escape the very water that imprisons them. While they would have been separated or even drowned as defenseless humans, with the aid of magical alteration they could evade death and continue to live “happily ever after”, thus sealing their undying union.

In “Sweetheart Roland” (Grimm 56), a girl gets her stepsister killed by switching places at night, when she learns that her evil stepmother connives to kill her after they are asleep. This tale reveals yet another effective magical transformation whereby the girl and her lover escape

the wrath of the evil stepmother only by changing themselves into a duck and a pond respectively. They must assume disguises in the form of both animate and inanimate objects thus, turning into entirely different entities. Very often, the characters such as these lovers, must change shapes at the cost of losing their own selves in an effort to be free from the clutches of their adversaries. The girl in the tale, has to resort to being a duck and her lover, Roland, to being a lake, using the magic silver wand they had stolen from the witch, her stepmother:

> When the maiden saw the old woman coming, she used the magic wand to turn her sweetheart Roland into a lake and herself into a duck that swam in the middle of the lake. (Zipes, *The Complete Fairy Tales,* 197)

The witch is powerless to lure the duck towards her, and has to return home that night. Often, turning into other beings or objects gives control to the characters who otherwise would be incapable. When, the next day, the witch catches them again, she turns Roland into a fiddler and herself into a flower in a brier-hedge.

> Meanwhile the maiden and her sweetheart resumed their natural forms...Then the maiden changed herself into a beautiful flower growing in the middle of the brier hedge, and her sweetheart was changed into a fiddler.197

The witch asks permission to pick the flower, and gets it, but when she crawls into the hedge, Roland plays his fiddle, which forces her to dance until the thorns tears her to death. Punishment and retribution could be executed only because the lovers have turned into entities unachievable when they were humans. Roland goes to his father to arrange for the wedding, and the girl remains as a red boundary-stone. Unfortunately, a wicked woman who has been attracted to Roland intervenes with magic and makes Roland forget his lover. Saddened, the girl turns herself into a flower, thinking that someone would trample her. The emotional upheaval and extreme sorrow of the girl is expressed by her wish to be trampled to death. Also, her capitulation as a flower accentuates the core issue of all folk and fairy tales- that magic prevails in the world of folk and fairy tales and emotions and lives are interconnected with the mysterious.[3] Fortunately, a shepherd picks the girl who has turned into a flower lying on the ground and takes her home. He finds that whenever he leaves, all the housework would be done in his absence. At the advice of a wise woman, he throws a white cloth when he sees something move in the morning, and this reveals the girl.

> In the wink of an eye, he ran over and threw the white cloth over the flower, and suddenly the transformation came to an end: a beautiful maiden stood before him, and she confessed that she had been the flower and had kept house for him. (Zipes, *The Complete Fairy Tales,* 198)

She agrees to keep house for him. The consecutive transformations into animals and flowers and the relentless quests of the lovers prove fruitful when they are reunited in the end. At Roland's wedding, all the girls attending the wedding starts to sing, as is the custom, and Roland recognizes his true love and marries her instead of his new bride.

Another such instance can be seen in the Grimm's "Foundling" (Grimm 51). A forester finds a baby in a bird's nest and brings him back to be raised with his daughter Lena. They call the child Foundling, and he and Lena love each other. One day Lena sees the cook carrying many buckets of water to the house and asks what she is doing. The cook tells her that the next day, she would boil Foundling in it. Lena goes and tell Foundling, and they flee. The cook, afraid of what the forester would say about his lost daughter, send servants after them. Foundling turns into a rosebush while Lena becomes a rose that blooms on it. The servants fail to recognize this transformation and they go back empty-handed. Like Roland's lover, Lena and Foundling must resort to becoming flowers in order to evade their pursuers. When the pursuers tell the cook they had seen nothing but the rosebush and the rose, she chides them for not bringing back the rose. They go in search again, and Foundling turns into a church, and Lena, a chandelier in it. Such an instance denotes that in folk and fairy tales, mysteries and magic have been accepted as normal and what may not be condoned or unattainable in reality is feasible. When the pursuers fail to return them, the cook sets out herself and as such, Foundling turns into a pond and Lena a duck

in it. The cook kneels down to drink up the pool, but Lena catches her head and draws her into the pond to drown. In the end, the children goes safely home again.

> When the cook arrived and saw the pond, she lay down beside it and began to drink it up. However, the duck quickly swam over, grabbed her head in its beak and dragged her into the water. The old witch was drowned, and the children went home together. (Zipes, *The Complete Fairy Tales,* 177)

As frail children, they stand no chance against the larger and stronger cook but with the aid of magic and wit, they could easily triumph over their superiors.

A similar Mizo tale called "Rahtea" (Tribal Research Institute, 25)[4] describes the plight of a young boy, Rahtea, who turns into a cicada to escape being tortured to death by his stepmother and father. Mizo tales have abundant elements of magical chase where the pursued would transform magically in order to escape the pursuer. The subjugated characters such as orphans, wives and servants are often aided by magic to evade the wrath of the exploiter. The strong didactic bent in these tales often work in favour of the persecuted and magic is employed to exult these good characters as against the evil ones who, in opposite effect, suffer dreadful consequences. "Rahtea" begins with a young boy who is denied proper clothing and food by his stepmother. In an attempt to permanently remove Rahte from their lives, the cruel stepmother pretends to be critically ill and pleads with her husband to sacrifice their son as offerings to

appease the causes.[5] When Rahtea overhears this conversation, he is mortified and he runs away from home. Despite numerous pleas from his family, such as his elder brother, his grandmother and his own father, Rahtea refuses to return home. Their appeal goes thus:

Rahte, Rahte, lo hawng rawh,

I nu'n khuang a chawi dawn e,

I pa'n khuang a chawi dawn e,

Rahte, Rahte, lo hawng rawh." (Tribal Research Institute, 130)

("Rahte, Rahte, come home,

Your mother's hosting a feast

Your father's hosting a feast,

Rahte, Rahte, come home")

But, Rahtea holds steadfast to the *Thingsir*[6]tree whose nectar he has been feeding on:

"Ka thin, ka lung in ei ai chuan,

Thingsiri par ka tlan e,

Ka puar e, ka fan e" (Tribal Research Institute, 130)

( Rather than you eat my lungs and liver,

On the *Thingsiri* flowers, I shall feed

Full and filled, I am")

He knows well that he is not wanted at home and because he knows they would relentlessly pursue him, he turns into a cicada in the end and flies away while claiming:

"Ka nu mi ngai manang che,

Keiin ka ngai manang che- reng" (Tribal Research Institute, 131)

(Mother, do not pine for me

As neither do I, for you")

With these words, he turns into a cicada and flies away, never to be abused. In the world of magic, even orphans seek and find freedom through endless means including, growing wings to fly away. In all such tales, nature works in accordance with the elements of the fantastic to accommodate the persecuted and the disadvantaged- tragic lovers, orphans, subservient men, women and children. As Rutkoski opines:

Nature merely needs to make its own inevitable metamorphoses (the ravages of time and the elements and predation) collude with or offset our inner

> metamorphoses. Here the changeableness of the world provides a ready vehicle for the externalization of our own desire and its destabilizing effects. In this fantasy, the game once against played against nature's transformative clock now incorporates it.(Rutkoski, 2)

"Tualvungi and Zawlpala" (Zama)[7] depicts the tragic story of two lovers who are determined never to part even after death and like the tale of Rahtea, magic turns their tragedy to a happy ending. The lovers turn into butterflies and thus, the mysterious incident (the transforming action to butterflies) in the tale is what enables them in the end despite the antagonist's advances. Tualvungi is a woman of exceeding beauty who falls in love with the equally handsome Zawlpala. The two eventually marry and live very happily together. However, tragedy befalls upon them soon after Tualvungi is courted by Phuntiha, the Raja of Tripura.

> He was named Phuntiha by his subjects, a very apt name really since it meant that no one dared to complain in his presence. He was of a tyrannical disposition, always wanting to possess the best of everything. It was no wonder then, that when he heard of Tualvungi's great beauty, he at once set off to visit her village with the intention of marrying her should her beauty please him. (Zama)

When Phuntiha inquires about her, Zawlpala reluctantly tells a lie and denotes that she is his sister because he knows Phuntiha would kill him if he reveals that he is her husband. One

immediately witnesses the failing and timidity of Zawlpala who is unable to protect even his own wife. Phuntiha at once offers to pay the bride price for Tualvungi to which Zawlpala deliberately demands a stupendous sum hoping he would not be able to meet such huge demands. But Phuntiha achieves the impossible and carries away Zawlpala's beloved to his lands. Many years later, Tualvungi hears the news that Zawlpala has died. Despite obstacles laid out by Phuntiha, Tualvungi goes at once to the grave, digs it again and jumps into it and persuades an old woman to kill her. Not to be outdone by the lovers, Phuntiha chases after his wife and convinces the woman to kill him, perhaps in the hopes of catching his wife even after death. Gallagher claims that metamorphosis or transformation enable characters to perform or become what would otherwise be impossible:

> Metamorphosis, a concept so prevalent in ancient writings….was a particularly advantageous device to conjure up magical situations in *Marchen*(fairy tales). A crucial aspect of the device of using metamorphosis is that it transports the reader to a supernatural romantic fairy-tale world where the ordinary laws of realism no longer operate. (Gallagher, 27)

As humans, the greatest power the lovers can exert is to die together but enchantment works in their favour after death. They turn into two beautiful butterflies and although the persistent

Phuntiha also turns into a black, repulsive butterfly, he could not turn into the same type and he pursues yet relentless, forever powerless to catch up with the two identical butterflies.

> But the spirits of Zawlpala and Tualvungi, determined never more to be parted by Phuntiha, flew out of the grave together in form of beautiful butterflies. The persistent Phuntiha flew out after them, and this is why today, a butterfly couple flying together are always followed by the third behind them - never quite catching up. (Zama)

The tale of "Lasiri and Lasara"/ "Two Sky Women and Two Earth Men" (Jacob)[9] is yet another interesting story that depicts two young sky women who have fallen in love with two men from earth. The very fact that celestial beings and mortal men mingle and interact already points towards a fantastical and mysterious story. To heighten the appeal, the events that follow, with the transformations and strange occurring, make the tale even more interesting. Every night they rejoice at the sisters' polished bamboo floors in the sky. But this is thwarted by the ugly and jealous *Bakvawmtepu*[8] who wants the sisters for himself. As such, one night he goes up pretending to be the brothers but the sisters, through, cunning and wit are able to push him back to earth through a hole by asking him to shift many times claiming that they do not have enough space to sleep. When the actual brothers call out to the sisters, they are suspicious lest they be *Bakvawmtepu* again. Offended by the rejection, the brothers resolve never to return even as the

sisters hastily chase after them on realizing their mistakes. But whenever the sisters are about to catch up with them, the pride of the brothers which has been bruised comes into play. Therefore, they would decide to tranform themselves into something else leaving the sisters to figure out the clues. The first time, they change themselves into hair-combs.

> "Let's disguise ourselves," said Thangsira. "How?"
>
> "Let's turn into hair-combs. If they pick us, we will be re-united with them. If not…"
>
> So the two brothers bent down and hid themselves, and turned into hair-combs and lay on the path. *(*Jacob)

When the sisters refuse to pick them up, they again change into glass bangles hoping to be picked up by the sisters. The sisters, in their haste to catch up with the brothers, ignore them and the third time, they transform themselves into a river and a bridge. Lasari could easily cross the bridge but the bridge creaks and sways every time Lasiri steps onto the bridge. Lasari, therefore, decides to carry her across but the bridge breaks and they drown. The two brothers, miserable and pining after the sisters, transform themselves into *Fartuah*and *Vaube*[7] trees repectively and agree to bloom together every year.

> Thangzaia said,
>
> You turn into Fartuah tree,
>
> I'll turn into Vaube tree,
>
> And let's bloom together every year.(Jacob)

It can be noted that in the tales that involve a pair, the transformation usually pair two characters into two particularly complementary forms as has been denoted in "Lasiri and Lasara". These forms accentuate the acute connections between them, who love each other deeply. This means of transformation suggests that they are part of a coherent whole and that they lack wholeness when they are not together.

In many instances, folk and fairy tales also deal with transformations with a more negative spin to it. Violence is often inflicted in order to redeem a character from a spell-bound state to a normal condition. Gallagher remarks:

> In the topos of the fairy tale, the metamorphosis further marks the boundaries between good and evil in the example of the evil witch, who malevolently transforms a male hero into an animal. The spell is broken so that the animal can return to normal human form either by the afflicted human being or a relative carrying out the decreed task…(Gallagher, 29)

The well known tale of “The Frog Prince” (Grimm 1) is one example, wherein a royal prince is cursed by a witch into the form of a frog, and can only be returned to his human shape with a maiden’s violent infliction. He is violently thrown against a wall when he angers the princess who despises his repulsive, cold form and immediately, the curse is lifted.

> Soon after she had got into bed, he came crawling over to her and said, “I am tired and want to sleep as much as you do. Lift me up, or I’ll tell your father!” This made the princess extremely angry and after she picked him up, she threw him against the wall with all her might. “Now you can have your rest, you nasty frog!”. However, when he fell to the ground, he was no longer a frog but a prince with kind and beautiful eyes. (Zipes, *The Complete Fairy Tales,* 4)

Two other stories, “Brother and Sister”(Grimm 11) and “The Seven Ravens,”(Grimm 25) use transformation as punishment. In the former, the obstinate brother is turned into a deer when he drinks from an enchanted pool, despite his sister’s warnings. Tired of the cruel mistreatment they endure from their wicked stepmother, who is also a witch, a brother and sister run away from home one day. Their cruel stepmother has bewitched all the water on their way. When they come upon a well, the sister hears a sound that says "Whoever drinks of me will become a tiger."( (Zipes, *The Complete Fairy Tales,*38) Desperately, the sister begs her brother not to drink from the well, lest he transform into a wild animal and tear her to pieces. So they go back on

their way, but when they come to the second spring the sister heard it say, "Whoever drinks of me will become a wolf."( (Zipes, *The Complete Fairy Tales,*38) Again, the sister desperately tries to prevent her brother from drinking. Reluctantly, he eventually agrees to his sister's pleas but insists he would drink at the next spring they encounter. And so they arrive at the third spring, and his sister overhears the rushing water cry, "Whoever drinks of me will become a deer."( (Zipes, *The Complete Fairy Tales,*39) Unfortunately, she can no longer refrain him from doing it because the brother has already drunk from the water, and changes into a deer.

"The Seven Ravens" (Grimm 25) is the tale of seven brothers who, after failing the simple task of retrieving baptismal water for their younger sister, were turned into ravens with a careless word from their father. In both stories, the victims of the transformation are eventually returned to their human forms, after a specific task is performed. The former necessitates the burning of a witch while the latter indicates sacrifices made by the only sister of the seven brothers. This is what Marie-Louise von Franz calls "compensatory tendensies" which demands that compensatory tasks be performed in order to restore things to normal and she claims "Such compensatory tendensies are to be found in fairy tales everywhere" (Franz, *Shadow and Evil in Fairy Tales*, 147). In "Brother and Sister" (Grimm 11), as the initial feeling of despair cleared up, the brother and sister decide to stay and live in the woods forever. When a king decides to marry the sister, a wicked witch intervenes, killing the sister and replacing her with her own

daughter. Thus, both the brother and the sister suffer tragic transformations and are pulled apart. When the king realizes the truth, on catching the sister's ghost, the two wrongdoers are duly punished. The witch's daughter is banished while the witch herself is burned alive. As soon as the witch is burned to ashes, the curse on the brother is lifted and he receives his human form again. Thus, sacrifices and punishment must be meted out in order to restore the harmony that the witch and her daughter have disrupted.

> The daughter was taken into the forest, where wild beasts tore her to pieces, while the witch was thrown into a fire and miserably burned to death. When there was nothing left of her but ashes, the fawn was transformed and regained his human form. ( Zipes, *The Complete Fairy Tales,*42)

In "The Seven Ravens" (Grimm 25), when the brothers fail to return with the water as requested by their father, their father curses them and so they turn into ravens. When their youngest sister is grown, she sets out in search of her brothers. She attempts to get help first from the sun, which is too hot, then the moon, which craves human flesh, and then the morning star. The star helps her by giving her a chicken bone and tells her she will need it to save her brothers. She finds them on the Glass Mountain. But having lost the bone, she chops off a finger to use as a key thereby sacrificing herself for their wellbeing and rescues them. Adam Gidwitz claims that this story denotes the necessity of shedding blood sometimes for the welfare of others:

> But what this solution does is that it takes all the guilt this girl was feeling – about the transformation of her brothers, about the lost chicken bone- into blood. It turns emotional pain into physical pain. (Gidwitz, *57)*

Many transformations involve a change of shape in order to obtain new abilities which would be unattainable in their initial form. A young character may learn of his or her shape-shifting abilities, and exploring them becomes part of a development or progress for them. Some are able to change form only if they have some item, usually an article of clothing. Most of these are innocuous creatures — even if they are werewolves or tiger-person. In the Mizo tale "Chawngvungi and Sawngkhara" (Dahrawka, II.5)[10], Sawngkhara endlessly pursues Chawngvungi for his bride. But the unfortunate, ugly appearance of Sawngkhara does not appeal to Chawngvungi and she determinedly ignores him. Sawngkhara has to resort to magic and transform into a bird and also has to use a certain love potion in order to woo Chawngvungi who otherwise would have never paid attention to her. Desperate to woo her, he resorts to a love potion and applies it on her wrist band. From that day, Chawngvungi becomes so obssessed with him that she could no longer do her chores. But her mother could not accept this change of heart and Sawngkhara is not allowed to enter their house in order to court her. Sawngkhara then turns himself into a bird and perches on a tree near Chawngvungi's jhum; he sings calling out her name for three days. Still, her mother would not relent. Tired of waiting, he administers the love

potion on the broom that Chawngvungi's mother has been using and finally, she also becomes infatuated with him and welcomes him into the house. In his case, his transformation into a bird becomes a tool for drawing Chawngvungi's attention. The bird's melodious voice touches Chawngvungi's heart and she could not ignore it:

> A tukah chuan Chawngvungi leh a nu chu lovah an feh ta a. Sawngkhara chu savate-ah a chang a, an fehna vauah chuan a lo hram a, "Chawngler, Chawngler" a va ti a. Chu chu Chawngvungi chuan a nu hnenah chuan-
>
> Ka nu kan vauah sava te chuan
>
> 'Chawngler, Chawngler' a ti e;
>
> Haw rawh, i haw then ang ka nu," a ti a. ( Dahrawka, 139).
>
> (The following day, Chawngvungi and her mother went to their jhum to farm. There Sawngkhara had turned himself into a little bird and sang "Chawngler, Chawngler" from across the field. When she heard this Chawngvungi said,
>
> "Mother, even the little bird across the field is singing
>
> 'Chawngler,Chawngler'
>
> Come, mother, let us go home." )

Thus, the magical transformation proves fruitful for Sawngkhara and this ability helps him win a wife for himself.

The Grimms' "Fitcher's Bird" (Grimm 46) relates the story of a sorcerer who assumes the guise of a poor man to "go begging from house to house to catch beautiful girls. No one knew where he took them, since none of the girls ever returned." (Zipes, *The Complete Fairy Tales,*155) He appears at the doorstep of a kind man in the guise of a poor beggar and using his magic, he draws the eldest of his three daughters into his basket and takes her home as his wife. His ability to disguise himself through magic helps him several times to gain for himself wife after wife who always suffer the same tragic fate of being chopped to pieces after a show of slight disobedience.

In some cases, a man steals the article and forces the shape-shifter, trapped in human form, to become his bride. This lasts until she discovers where he has hidden the article, and she can flee. The Mizo tale, "Sichangneii" (Dahrawka, I.6) is a brilliant portrayal of such a case. A man traps a lovely swan maiden named Sichangneii who comes from the sky. She and her sister would come every dusk to bathe in a small pond that is owned by the man. When he notices that the water has been dirtied whenever he comes to it in the morning, he decides to catch the culprit. He catches Sichangneii and chops off all her feathers. He imprisons her as his wife and

she bears him seven sons. Eventually, Sichangneii discovers her feathers through her youngest son and escapes:

> Tlumtea chuan, "Ka nu, Ka pain min awm ni chuan englo chang kan tawn a, kan lam siau siau va, kan hlim viau thin asin," a ti ta a. (Dahrawka, 77)
>
> (Tlumtea confessed, "Mother, when father is around, he made us play with feathers and this made us all very happy.")

The elder sons are desperate to hold on to their mother but the innocent, goodhearted, Tlumtea again suggests that she looks stunningly beautiful. Perched on the window sill, she asks:

> "Fate u, ka mawi em," a han ti a. A fa upa te chuan "Mawi lo, i zahpuiawm roh. Mi'n an hmu reu reu ang che, lo haw rawh," an ti sap sap a. Tlumtea erawh chuan, "Mawia, ka nu i mawi ngawt ania," a ti a...chuta tang chuan van lamah a thlawh kaisan ta daih mai a. (Dahrawka, 77)
>
> (My sons, am I beautiful?", she asked. The boys replied, " Not at all, mother, you look disgraceful. Come back home lest people see you. But Tlumtea said, "No, Mother, you look lovely."…and she flew, away from that place and her children, up towards the sky.)

The family suffers a number of ordeals and trauma after their mother has left. Their father kills himself in distress because he misses her terribly and wishes her to return home. The orphaned sons roam about, helpless, poor and homeless until finally, Sichangneii takes them back under her wing. Barbara Fass Leavy has argued that a woman as a "swan maiden" symbolizes a subdued female:

> In most cultures, woman was a symbolic outsider, was the *other*, and marriage demanded an intimate involvement in a world never quite her own. (Leavy, 2)

Some transformations are performed in order to remove the victims from their position, so that the transformer can usurp it. "In Brother and Sister" (Grimm 11), when two children flee their cruel stepmother, she enchants the streams along the way to transform them. While the brother refrains from the first two, which threatens to turn them into tigers and wolves, he becomes uncontrollably thirsty at the third, which turns him into a deer. In "The Frog King" (Grimm 1), a young prince is transformed into an ugly frog by a witch and he loses his kingdom only to regain it back when the spell on him is broken by the princess. "The Raven" (Grimm 93) depicts the story of an impatient queen who wishes that her infant child would turn into a raven and in turn, she could have some peace and quiet. Her wish is instantly fulfilled and the transformed child flies away into the forest.

> Once upon a time there was a queen who had a daughter that was still so little she had to be carried in her mother's arms. One day the child was very naughty, and no matter what the mother said, she would not keep quiet. (Zipes, *The Complete Fairy Tales,*315)

The wish is blurted out by the selfish queen against her own flesh and blood who displays tantrums as is typical of a child. The selfish queen wants a space on her own and this desire culminates in her extensive wish to do away with her own daughter.

> She opened the window and said,"I wish you were a raven and fly away! Then I'd have my peace and quiet." No sooner had she said those words than the child was changed into a raven and flew from her arms out through the window. (Zipes, *The Complete Fairy Tales,*315)

The six swans who have previously been princes are also transformed by their stepmother in the "The Six Swans" (Grimm 49) The tale is about a king who has seven children (six sons and a daughter) and when he remarries, he has them kept in the forest so no one can find them for fear that the new queen would resent them. When the queen finds out she is filled with rage. So she sews shirts that are magical so that whoever wears them would turn into swans. The queen traces the children and puts the shirts on them, and instantly the six brothers are all transformed into swans.

> She threw a shirt over each one of them, and as soon as they were touched by the shirts, they were turned into swans and flew away over the forest. The queen went home, delighted with herself, thinking that she was rid of her stepchildren. (Zipes, *The Complete Fairy Tales,*169)

The most pertinent and most instructing issue in relation to transformation in folk and fairy tales is perhaps the numerous instances of marriage between humans and animals and these relationships are not generally portrayed as wicked or immoral. What makes these tales attractive is the manner in which this marriage between animals and human is deeply entrenched in the myth of romantic love even as its representational energy is channeled into the tense moral, economic and emotional negotiations that complicate courtship rituals. Marriage tales are often completed with happy endings in which the animal magically transforms into a desirable human being, often of high status. In other cases, they are sometimes moralistic, ending with the destruction of the animal lover or the desertion of the human partner. There are some tales of animal paramours who become conventional human mates and numerous accounts of supernatural brides who when they recover the means of freedom, leave their mortal partners. Although there are variations in animal-bride stories, there is a basic plot. Generally an animal takes on the form of a woman and marries her lover who is an ordinary human. The couple lives together for a while and children are born. But eventually the husband commits an error or violates some prohibition, causing the wife to revert to her animal form and leave him, taking the

children with her. In many versions, the animal first becomes a woman by casting off her pelt and she must regain that pelt in order to turn into an animal again. In some of the tales of human-animal marriage, the roles are reversed: the animal is the groom and the woman is the bride. Even when such marriages are doomed to failure, often a gift is left behind in the form of children, wealth, good fortune, or the acquisition of magical skills (such as the ability to find fish or game in plentiful supply). Such wished-for children may become monstrous brides or bridegrooms. Other such characters have no explanation for their forms, because their tales focus on the person who must marry them.

In certain cases, the hero or heroine must marry, as promised, and the monstrous form is removed by the wedding. Animal-bridegroom tales often focus and represent explorations of the transforming effects of sexual and romantic love, along with its dangers. “The Frog King” (Grimm 1) relates the tale of a princess who has been forced to entertain a frog because of a promise made and who ultimately accepts him when he turns into a handsome prince. When a young princess accidently drops her golden ball in a well, she is distressed but a frog, who is actually a prince cursed by a witch, comes to her rescue. This frog promises to retrieve her ball in exchange for her companionship back as the palace. She agrees but runs away as soon as she gets her ball back. When the frog comes knocking at the palace door to settle the promises, the king orders the princess to carry out the promise.

> Then the king said, “If you’ve made a promise, you must keep it. Go and let him in.” (Zipes, *The Complete Fairy Tales,*3)

The princess detests the ugly frog who insists that he dines with her, shares her plate, sits with her and even beds with her. It frightens her because this hideous frog continues to shamelessly disrupt her space, especially the sanctity of her royal bed.

> The princess began to cry because the cold frog frightened her. She did not even have enough courage to touch him, and yet, now she was supposed to let him sleep in her beautiful, clean bed. (Zipes, *The Complete Fairy Tales,*4)

But the king adamantly refuses to comply with her tearful retorts, firmly resolving to force her daughter carry out the promises made.

> But the king gave her an angry look and said, “It’s not proper to scorn someone who helped you when you were in trouble.”So she picked up the frog with her two fingers, carried him upstairs, and set him down in the corner. Soon after she had got into bed, he came crawling over to her... (Zipes, *The Complete Fairy Tales,* 4)

The curse on the prince is lifted when the princess hurled the frog against the wall in a fit of extreme anger and impatience. This can be interpreted as a coming of age moment where the

initial repulsion, apprehension and fear of physical contact with a male is conquered, sometimes with acts involving violent retorts on the part of the female. In keeping with her father's wishes, she marries the prince and they ride off to his kingdom. Interestingly, the beautiful princess who reacts with aversion, loathing or anger to the beastly exterior of her prospective spouse seems no less likely to effect a magical transformation than her tenderly and affectionate counterpart. Despite her father's admonition, this princess balks at the idea of letting the frog into her bed and reveals a princess who is perfectly capable of commiting acts rivaling the coldblooded violence of dashing a creature against the wall. The frog, who is supposedly beastly, turns out to be more compassionate than the princess who is self-absorbed, ungrateful and cruel. He not only forgives her but also take her his wife. Looking at relationships between mortal women and animal bridegrooms, Marina Warner writes:

> In her encounter with the Beast, the female protagonist meets her match, in more ways than one. If she defeats him, or even kills him, if she outwits him, banishes him, or forsakes him, or accepts him and love him, she arrives at some knowledge she did not possess; his existence and the challenge he offers is necessary before she can grasp it.(Warner, 45)

Sometimes the bridegroom removes his animal skin for the wedding night, whereupon it can be burned. "Hans My Hedgehog"(Grimm 108) falls under this grouping. A wealthy but

childless merchant wishes he has a child, even a hedgehog, and comes home to find that his wife has given birth to a baby boy, that is a hedgehog from the waist up. When he becomes an adult, he decides to take a wife of his own. But due to his unusual condition, he could not secure a bride for himself. As such, Hans Hedgehog punishes these princesses who reject him with sharp prickes. Fortunately, a very kind princess decides to accept him as husband and with sheer joy, he promises her that his prickles will not harm her. Then he suggests to the the king, the father of the kind princess, that he should build a big fire on their wedding night. When Hans takes off his hedgehog skin, four servants who have been assigned to burn his skin immediately spring into action. With this act, Hans becomes a handsome young man. The princess, who has fallen in love with Hans even while he is half a hedgehog, lives in content with the transformed groom. It is simply the power in which the bride is capable of appreciating complexities which others have not recognized in the half-hedgehog man, that makes the marriage successful.

On relationships between mortal men and Animal Brides, Midori Snyder writes:

> It is the task of the hero to wrestle with the ambiguous power of the fantastic world and return with its fully creative potential in hand. The young Prince proves his loyalty and compassion, and from the [animal's] beastly skin there emerges a beautiful bride. The bride is unlike her mortal counterparts, no matter how brave and courageous they may appear in the other tales, for she presents a union, a

> partnership between the human hero and the creative forces of the fantastic world.(Snyder, 2)

The animal bride and bridegroom can be considered to represent the wild aspect embedded in man. They represent the wild within lovers and spouses, the part of them that they can never fully discern. They represent the others who live unfathomable lives right beside man — cat and mouse and coyote and owl; and the others that live only in the dreams and nightmares of the imagination. For thousands of years, their tales have emerged from the place where man draw the boundary lines between animals and human beings, the natural world and civilization, women and men, magic and illusion, fiction and the lives that man lives.

Despite the profusions of transformations and the ease with which men slip in to the role of beasts, there is a deeper significance to these metamorphoses, to the seeming interchangeability of man and beast. To begin with, it is important to note that men such as Bluebeard and monsters such as Beat fulfill the same paradigmatic function and are virtually all bridegrooms. The central female figures of the tales in which they appear are, therefore, either newlyweds or girls about to enter the state of (in this case) unholy matrimony.

> Often they have been coerced into marriage by a father who has frivolously promised to hand over the first living thing that meets him on his arrival home or who seeks financial gain through the favorable marriage of his daughter. (Tatar, 170).

Therefore, it can be interpreted as the heroines perceiving their grooms and husbands as beasts and monsters. Fairy tales, after all, are notoriously hero-centric: figures and events in the tale are all presented from the perspective of the central figure, in this case the heroine, who sees in her future husband, nothing but the incarnation of inhuman impulses, a creature capable of violent mutilation and murder. Oddly enough, it is generally the human bridegrooms who indulge in shockingly uncivilized behavior and remain unrepentant to the bitter end. Their bestial counterparts, by contrast, are models of decorum and dignity. A ferocious or repugnant countenance can prove wholly misleading in fairy tales. Contrary to the conventional wisdom about fairy tale appearances, physical ugliness is not necessarily a sign of moral deformity; it can throw moral beauty or other merits and distinctions into sharp relief.

Thus, Mizo folk tales and the Grimms' fairy reflect earlier times when man lived in close proximity with nature and transformation from one being to another seemed a natural occurence. They also reflect the idea that in most ancient traditions was rooted the belief that between man and animal as well as all other elements of the universe,there is no permanent separation because they all bear a trace of their common origin. Therefore, they are intricately linked and consequently, there is the possibility of transition from one form to another or even hybridization of different forms into one being. Both Mizo and Grimm tales dealing with shapeshifting tend to have both positive and negative spin to it. In the tales examined, the victims of the transformations are eventually returned to their human forms, after a specific task is performed.

These stories, which may be intended as an explanatory tale to shed light on the protagonists' transformations , are also obviously cautionary tales. They are tales that warn against the dangers of being too egotistical. None of the shapeshifted protagonists, in terms of transformation from human to animals, gain any special boon from their animal form, though the characters in the folk and fairy tale do find ways to adapt and exist happily, though they are still elated to be human again. This theme firmly situates the animal as something less than human, something undesirable, even when the human mind is in control of the bestial body. This suggests that the loss of humanity or the beast winning over human reason, is a danger of shapeshifting and transformation in the tales.

The different beasts, magical elements (both animate and inanimate) and mysterious maidens , through transformation and magic, have been found to comprise of three types. The first comprises of monsters, these include wolves and bears, but also the man-eating giants who threaten to devour the hero as he makes his way through the world. The second group consists of social deviants; among them are the robbers and highwaymen who waylay innocent young women, murder them, chop up their corpses, and cook the pieces in a stew. The third is composed of women. These are the various cooks, stepmother, witches and mother-in-law with voracious appetites for human fare, sometimes even for the flesh and blood or for the liver and heart of their own relatives. These people inhabit the fairy world and make the tales exciting while also helping to engender the plots of the tales. The stories of shape-shifters, animal people,

fox wives, cat brides and bear husbands let us cross the borders between many worlds, at least in imagination. Thus, through the power of story and magic, men wear many shapes and inhabit many skins, but remain men beneath these allegedly repulsive exterior. The tales clearly asserts human nature as possessing two aspects, leaving open the question of what these aspects constitute. Perhaps they consist of evil and virtue; perhaps they represent one's inner animal and the veneer that civilization has imposed. Often this duality or transformation from one object to another tends to imply a malign or seductive relationship between a surface personality and a submerged aspect of that personality which haunts the surface self, often also, threatening degradation. Tales involving man-woman relationships frequently end in scenes of integration that makes it clear that any marriage of the two halves of the self is likely to be fatal. This is consistent with a general tendency in folk and fairy tales to treat the imploring side of the self as inherently obscene. A contrasting aspect is the fact that although transformation does occur to some of the characters, it does not diminish their personality, even in the state of turning into an animal forms, thus, retaining their innate humane qualities. Often, it enables them to secure good fortunes in this state and turns the story to a positive outcome that enables them to triumph.

## NOTES

[1]These transformation may represent evil characters and these in turn may be personification of the evil forces that man faces in life: natural disasters, fearful wild animals, wicked men and even hunger.

[2]The insertion within the inclusion marks indicates the collector and the serialized number assigned for the tale in the collection of Grimms' fairy tales, Zipes, Jack. *The Complete Fairy Tales of the Brothers Grimm*. New York: bantam Books, 1987 and henceforth, this manner shall be employed to indicate the source of a tale.

[3]The lives of animals, according to Jungian concept, are shaped by "call patterns", a certain mode of fighting, of courting, of aggressive mood and of flights when facing dangers. They regard that this same pattern occur to a certain extent on the human level. As such, patterns of animal behavior and human sometimes overlap, at the onset of certain extreme case, especially when the fear instinct is triggered by a frightful incident. In folk and fairy tales, these are common occurrence rendered easier by magic.

[4]The insertion within the inclusion marks indicates the collector and the serialized number assigned for the tale in the collection, Tribal Research Institute. *Mizo Thawnthu,* 2nd ed. Aizawl: RK Printing Press, 1997. Print, and henceforth, this manner shall be employed to indicate the source of a tale.

[5] In Pre-colonial Mizo Society, the tradition of sacrificing animals to the spirits was observed on the occasions of marriage and death, festivals as well as to cure the sick. This task was handled by the priests called *Sadawt* and *Bawlpu* who performed the rites with selected animals. In "Rahtea", the wife has specifically asked for the sacrifice of Rahtea, which is a horrifying demand, not typically practiced.

[6]*Thingsir*, a small tree that bears fruit with sweet nectar.

[7]The insertion within the inclusion marks indicates the translator of the tale , Zama, Margaret Ch. "Tualvungi and Zawlpala." *MizowritinginEnglish*. 9 Feb 2009 Web 12 April 2013.

[8] *Bakvawmtepu*, a bear with human attributes who is hideous and wicked.

[9]The insertion within the inclusion marks indicates the translator of the tale , Jacob, Malsawmi."Two Sky women and Two Earth Men."*MizowritinginEnglish*.Web 12 April 2013.

[10]The insertion within the inclusion marks indicates the collector and the serialized number assigned for the tale in the collection, Dahrawka, P.S. *Mizo Thawnthu*, 5th ed. Aizawl:

Thankhumi, Chhinga Veng, 2008. Print, and henceforth, this manner shall be employed to indicate the source of a tale.

# CHAPTER 4:

# NEGOTIATING POWER DYNAMICS WITHIN THE DARK ENCLAVE

Folk and fairy tales reflect a culture that provides a site of negotiation between two binaries or oppositional forces. Cultural studies reveal culture as a site of struggle between the resistance of subordinate groups in society, and the forces of incorporation operating in the interest of the dominant groups in society.Thus, power dynamics assume a predominantly significant place in the evaluation of cultural evidences in a text. Hall is of the opinion that "culture is the site at which everyday struggles between dominant and subordinate groups are fought, won and lost". (Procter, 11) The study of culture tries to define this constant struggle in terms of social, economic and political order. There cannot exist a culture without the interplay of power, therefore, cultural studies try to negotiate and try not to put one thing over the other, as in high and elite, or low and mass culture. As Julie Rivkin and Michael Ryan have stated:

> Culture is both a means of domination, of assuring the rule of one class or group over another and a means of resistance to such domination, a way of articulating oppositional points of view to those in dominance. (Rivkin and Ryan, 1025)

A study of folk and fairy tales, thus, reveal culture - the functioning of the social, economic, and political forces and power structures that produce all forms of cultural phenomena and endow them with their social "meanings", their "truth", the modes of discourse in which they are discussed, and their relative value and status. According to Hall,

> The study of culture involves exposing the relations of power that exist within society at any given moment in order to consider how marginal, or subordinate groups might secure or win, however temporarily, cultural space from the dominant group.(Procter, 2)

Accordingly, within the realm of folk and fairy tales, there lies the relations of power that exist within a society. This in turn may reveal the means by which subordinate sections of the society can win a cultural space for themselves against the hegemonic group. Society, as denoted in these tales, recreates it's "others". This construction of identity is bound up with the disposition of power and powerlessness in each society. The postcolonialist critic, Edward Said argues that all these "actualities" are difficult to accept as most people "resist the underlying notion: that human identity is not natural and stable, but constructed, and occasionally even invented outright". He further claims that "human history is made by human beings", that history includes the "struggle for control over territory" and so is "the struggle over historical and social meaning". (Said, 332) Postcolonial critics claim that the development and maintenance of every culture requires the existence of another different and completing alter-ego, since identity is a construction which involves establishing opposites and "Others" whose actuality is always subject to the continuous interpretation and re-interpretation of their differences from the "us'". Consequently, folk and fairy tales also become sites of unguaranteed political struggle between dominant and subordinate groups. They represent voices for the voiceless, of the marginalized

other fighting back against the center because these tales champion the feats of children against cruel parents, of helpless women against ruthless males and the subjugated lower members of the society against the dominants.

Power, then, becomes a very significant case in point in folk and fairy tales, especially in terms of the projection of social division. "Power" has been interpreted as a phenomenon that is ever present and can both produce and constrain the truth. It emanates from everywhere, from all levels of the society. According to Michel Foucault, power is a relation that has been institutionalised in a way that can produce the illusion that power is a fixed essence that some people have and others do not and the underprivileged cannot move beyond destroying those who have this power. Foucault suggests that every person, no matter how low down in the hierarchy, has the capacity to disrupt and change relations of power and have a destabilising impact on the system even if at a miniscule level. He opines:

> Relations of power are not in themselves forms of repression. But what happens is that, in society, in most societies, organizations are created to freeze the relations of power, hold those relations in a state of asymmetry, so that a certain number of persons get an advantage, socially, economically, politically, institutionally, etc. And this totally freezes the situation. That's what one calls power in the strict sense of the term: it's a specific type of power relation that has been

> institutionalized, frozen, immobilized, to the profit of some and to the detriment of others. (Foucault, *Power*, 1)

This system of power relationship has been clearly reflected in the Grimms' and Mizo folk and fairy tales. An analysis of the tales exposes the power relationships between parents and children, adults and children in general as well as between men and women and the haves and the have nots. Folk and fairy tales more often engross readers and listeners with the wonderful magic spells that lie apparent on the surface. This often obliterates their real historical and social basis and abandon one to a wondrous realm where class conflict does not exist and where harmony reigns supreme. Yet, behind its exterior, lurks a shadow that encompasses all sorts of power struggles over kingdoms, rightful rule, money, women, children and land. Their real enchantment emanates from these dramatic conflicts. This chapter specifically examines the fluidity of the power that characters exercise: domination, collusion, resistance, and agency. It also examines how power is exercised by identifying the power of domination through agency. Through this detection, there is an expose of which characters benefit from the power exercised, and how they benefit as well as others who are disadvantaged from power and how.

In essence, the meaning of the fairy tales can only be fully grasped if the magic spell is broken and if the politics and utopian impulse of the narratives are related to the socio-historical forces. As Zipes opines:

> These enchanting, loveable tales are filled with all sorts of power struggles over kingdoms, rightful rule, money, women, children, and land, that their real "enchantment" emanates from these dramatic conflicts whose resolutions allow us to glean the possibility of making the world, that is, shaping the world in accord with our needs and desires.(Zipes, *Breaking*, 23)

Power is the ability to influence the behaviour of people. The term authority is often used for power which is perceived as legitimate by the social structure. Power can be seen as evil or unjust, but the exercise of power is accepted as endemic to humans as social beings. In a community, power is often expressed as upward or downward.

> With downward power, a community's superior influences subordinates. When a community exerts upward power, it is the subordinates who influence the decisions of the leader. (Greiner and Schein, 89)

The Grimms' and Mizo tales echo communities that divide themselves into hierarchies, between royalty and subjects and even within the micro level of family as well. Very often in the tales, one witnesses power exertion moving from subordinates to leaders which ultimately leads to differing outcomes in the end, often in favour of the subordinates. There are times too, however, when the subordinates are disempowered and meet distressing fates in the end. Thus, the tales denote that power circulates throughout society and in spite of the palpable hierarchical system

that can be detected in the tales, the power distribution pattern does not follow a top-down phenomenon. This pattern, instead, may render the weak as dominants in certain events while at other times, the same pattern may render them as entirely helpless, thus, leading to their tragic ends. Much of the recent sociological debate on power revolves around the issue of the enabling nature of power. Power can be seen as various forms of constraint on human action, but also as that which makes action possible. Michel Foucault defines power as "a complex strategic situation in a givensocial setting" (Foucault, 127). Being deeply structural, his concept involves both constraint and enablement. It is possible to examine regimes of power through the historicised deconstruction of systems or regimes of meaning-making constructed in and as discourse, that is to see, how and why some categories of thinking and lines of argument have come to be generally taken as truths while other ways of thinking/being/doing are marginalised. According to Zipes, folk and fairy tales "awaken our regard for the miraculous condition of life and to evoke profound feelings of awe and respect for life as a miraculous process, which can be altered and changed to compensate for the lack of power, wealth, and pleasure that most people experience" (Zipes, *Why Fairy Tales,* 848-9)

Folk and fairy tales often focus on the meaning, production and reception of a tale within its historical, social and cultural context. As products of sociohistorical circumstances, they reflect conditions, values, religious beliefs, social concerns, politics and ideologies, informing

the lives of a certain people at a specific time. Although tale types and motifs may be spread widely across geographical and cultural borders suggesting a certain universality each version of a tale depends on the context in which it was produced, received and interpreted. Therefore, each version communicates a different message tailored to its audience, sometimes reinforcing and sometimes subverting or questioning social values pertaining to the time and place in which it was conceived.

> The stories of class struggle and gender conflict blend sadism with slapstick to produce a form of festive violence that targets either the top dog or the underdog as victim, and that observes neither temporal nor spatial limits to its reach.(Tatar, 168)

Lutz Rohrich suggests that folktales are “a reflection of the reality in which they were produced, the characters and the settings being based upon real people and their surrounding culture. In that sense, folk tales mirror the stages of socialization of one specific group of people, and each version is representative of its own cultural context”.(Rohrich, 199) Characters that dominate usually belong to the higher rank in the social structure. Marvin Harries comments:

> A society's structure is comprised of its domestic economy (social organization, kinship, division of labor) and its political economy (political institutions, social hierarchies), while its superstructure consists of the ideological and symbolic

> sectors of culture; the religious, symbolic, intellectual and artistic endeavors. (Harris, 658)

The term "sociocultural system" embraces three concepts: society, culture, and system. A society is a number of interdependent organisms of the same species. A culture is the learned behaviour that is shared by the members of a society, together with the material products of such behaviour. Hierarchy in a society is, according to Max Weber, divided into three components, class, status and power. Class refers to a person's economic position in a society. Status is a person's prestige, social honor, or popularity in a society. Weber noted that political power was not rooted in capital value solely, but also in one's individual status. Finally, power denotes person's ability to get their way despite the resistance of others.(Weber, 92) Weber implies that by power, it means the chance of a man, or a number of men "to realize their own will in communal action, even against the resistance of others."(Weber, 121) He denotes that the base from which such power can be exercised may vary considerably according to the social context, that is, historical and structural circumstance.

These three components feature endlessly in all folk and fairy tales. Social stucture comprises of kings and queens who often through economic means and status, assume power and dominate other characters. There are also sparodic mingling of merchants, wealthy nobles, farmers, hunters, servants, housewives, slaves. They range from those belonging to the highest to

the lowest in the social hierarchy. Usually, the protagonists belong to the lower end of the spectrum. According to D.L Ashliman:

> Fairy tale protagonists typically come from the lowest group, the proletariat, and as the tale progresses they nearly always engage in a conflict with the rich and the powerful, ultimately gaining victory through cunning and magic. (Ashliman, 147)

Folk and fairy tales follow rigid social structures and therefore, the agents of violence and subordination usually rest on the higher classes: kings fare well, queens can get rid of unwanted threats, wealthy noblemen can have wives of their choices from any classes and in the micro level of family, the parents reign supreme and children often suffer at their hands. Zipes has rightly stated, thus:

> The most striking characteristic of the traditional tale lies in the fact that the social institutions and concepts which we discover in it reflect the age of feudalism. Thus the question of the origin of the folktale coincides with that of the origin of literature in general.(Zipes, *Fairy Tales,* 30)

Clearly the folk tales that were collected in the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries preserved aesthetic patterns derived from pre-capitalist societies. They did so because these patterns, in the form of transformed elements and motifs, continued to reflect and speak to the conditions of the people and the dominant ideology of the times to a great degree.

The characters in the Grimms'[1] and Mizo[2] folk and fairy tales come from two extreme ends of the social structure. At the bottom are woodcutters, tailors, cobblers, peasants, swineherds, goose girls, kitchen maids, cottagers, crofters and discharged soldiers. At the top are princes, princesses, kings and queens or chiefs and their family. However, heroes and heroines usually belong to the lower strata of the society and if they are princes and princesses, they are such in name only and are typically quite powerless at the tale's beginning, as witnessed in the "The Frog King"(Grimm 1)[3] in which the prince is a simple, ugly toad who has been cursed to live helplessly in a well in the dark forest. There is "The Twelve Brothers"(Grimm 9) in which the twelve princes are turned into ravens from the very start of the tale, not because they have committed a crime, but because their father misinterpreted their behavior. "Snow White"( Grimm 53) relates the tale of a young princess who must fight for her survival against her evil stepmother. She is denied a royal life of luxury in the palace and instead, has to keep house for her friends, the seven little dwarfs who receive her into their house in the forest. It can be noted that folk and fairy tale derived its perspective from the socio-political concerns of the respective authors. Jack Zipes claims that the Grimms collection of tales also originated from the common people who were struggling against the aristocrats during the eighteenth century when the tales were documented.

> As pre-capitalist art from, the folk tale presents, in its partiality, for everything metallic and mineral, a set and solid, imperishable world…. particularly in the

> seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in Germany….the main characters and concerns of a monarchical and feudal society are presented, and the focus is on class struggle and competition for power among the aristocrats themselves and between the peasantry and aristocracy, and among the peasants. ..this is why the people were carriers of the tales: the Marchen catered to their aspirations….(Zipes, *Breaking*, 35)

As such the hero is not only a subjugated prince or peasant, but a bourgeois protagonist, generally speaking an artist, the creative individual, who has numerous adventures and encounters with the supernatural in pursuit of a "new world" where he will be able to develop and enjoy his talents. Eugen Weber comments:

> A number of stories begin with the son or sons leaving home, very young, either to earn money or to escape the misery they knew. This is absolutely true to life well into the nineteenth century. The eight Yearold Coignet guarding his sheep in the forest, the eleven-year old boy from the Pyrenees arrested in Paris in 1828 for selling engravings without a permit, and the twelve-year old boy a policeman noted among the rebels of 1832, all confirm stories like that of the three brothers who have nothing left to eat…(Weber, 98)

The quest is no longer for wealth and social status (though class struggle is involved) but for a change in social relations. "Hansel and Gretel" (Grimm 15), for instance, depicts two children who are taken into the woods and abandoned by parents who cannot or will not care for them. When a great famine settles over the land, the woodcutter's second, abusive wife decides to take the children into the woods and leave them there to be by themselves, so that she and her husband will not starve to death, because the children also needs to be fed and therefore, they have to eat away a certain portion of the family's daily meal.. The stepmother, who holds the reins in the house, has the ultimate power to decide the fate of the children. She is the villain who makes no effort to disguise her hatred of the two children who dare not counter her. She denotes her hatred for the children when she claims that, once abandoned in the woods, the children will never find their way back home:

> "I'll tell you what," answered the wife. "Early tomorrow morning we'll take the children out into the forest where its most dense. We'll build a fire and give them each a piece of bread. Then we'll go about our work and leave them alone. They won't find their way back home, and we'll be rid of them."( (Zipes, *The Complete Fairy Tales,* 53)

When her husband protests, she calls him a fool and warns him that all four of them will die of starvation. In this tale, the power rests on the parents and they misuse it; it is selfishness pure and simple that motivates the stepmother's plot to lead the children deep into the forest. The father's

empathy with Hansel and Gretel lacks the passion necessary to resist the strength of his wife's resolve:

> "No, wife," the man said. "I won't do this. I don't have the heart to leave my children in the forest. The wild beats would soon come and tear them apart."(Zipes, *The Complete Fairy Tales,* 53)

It is not long before he falls in with her plan and collaborates in the project of abandonment. In this tale, it is the subordinates who must be sacrificed both out of murderous resentment exerted by the dominants and to ensure the survival of these very people who are in power.

Even when a tale exonerates one or both parents of malice by implying that abandoning children is the lesser of two evils (between suffering due to hunger and brutish self interest), the children are left to fend for themselves because parents have been too incapacitated to provide. One way or another, the parents who are in power are to blame and begin to emerge at the least as monsters of negligence. "A Tale About the Boy who Went Forth to Learn What Fear Was"(Grimm 4) also tells the story of a boy who is disowned by his father and sent into the world to find his own way. In the tale the father disowns his son because his son innocently breaks the leg of a Sexton who attempts to frighten him and as such is simply defending himself. His horrified father turns him out of the house, so the boy sets out to learn how to shudder and

assert himself into a world that misunderstands and mistreats him. His father's parting words are spiteful and agonizing:

> "Learn what you want," the father said. "It's all the same to me. Here's the fifty talers. Take them and go out into the wide world, but don't tell anyone where you come from or who your father is because I'm ashamed of you." (Zipes, *The Complete Fairy Tales,* 13).

The mutilated heroine of "The Maiden without Hands"( Grimm 31), although apparently safe from further abuse, also walks away from her father's house and into the woods. In the tale, a miller is offered wealth by the devil if the miller gives him what stands behind the mill. Thinking that it is an apple tree, the miller agrees, but it turns out to be his daughter. When three years has passed, the devil appears, but the girl has kept herself sinless and her hands clean, and the devil is unable to take her. The devil threatens to take the father if he does not chop off the girl's hands, and she lets him do so, but she weeps on her arms' stumps, and they are so clean that the devil could not take her, so he has to give her up. But, the girl, now handicapped, decides to set out into the world, despite her father's wealth:

> Now the miller said to his daughter, "I've become so wealthy because of you that I shall see to it you'll live in splendour for the rest of your life."

> But she answered, "No, I cannot stay here. I'm going away and shall depend on the kindness of people to provide me with whatever I need. (Zipes, *The Complete Fairy Tales,* 110).

The youthful hero of "Iron Hans"( Grimm 136) fearing a beating from his father, runs away into the woods. This young prince is playing with a ball in the courtyard. He accidentally rolls it into the cage where a wild iron-skinned man picks it up and will only return it if he is set free. He states further that the only key to the cage is hidden beneath the Queen's pillow. Though the prince hesitates at first, he eventually builds up the courage to sneak into his mother's room and steal the key. He releases the wild iron-skinned man who reveals his name to be Iron Hans. The prince fears he will be killed for setting Iron John free, so Iron John agrees to take the prince with him into the forest. As it turns out, Iron Hans is a powerful being and has many treasures that he guards. He sets the prince to watch over his well, but warns him not to let anything touch it or fall in because it will turn instantly to gold. The prince obeys at first, but begins to play in the well, eventually turning all his hair into gold. Disappointed in the boy's failure, Iron Hans sends him away to experience poverty and struggle:

> "You've failed the test and can no longer stay here. Go out into the world, and you'll learn what it means to be poor...my power is great, greater than you think…"(Zipes, *The Complete Fairy Tales,* 445).

The heroine of “All Fur”( Grimm 65) flees into the woods to escape her father’s incestuous advances. A king promises his dying wife that he would not marry unless to a woman as beautiful as she is, and when he looks for a new wife, he realizes that the only woman that would not break the promise is his own daughter. The daughter tries to make the wedding impossible by asking for three dresses, one as golden as the sun, one as silver as moon, and one as dazzling as the stars, and a mantle made from the fur of every kind of bird and animal in the kingdom. When her father provides them, she takes them, with a gold ring, a gold spindle, and a gold reel, and runs from the castle the night before the wedding. She sleeps in a forest of a neighbouring land where the local prince hunts and his dogs finds her. She asks them to have pity on her and receives a place in the kitchen, where she works, and because she gives no name she is called "All Fur." From the status of a princess, this young woman has been forced to flee from the luxurious life of royalty and has been reduced to the level of a servant because of the inappropriate treatment meted out to her by her father.

> When the king’s daughter saw that there was no hope whatsoever of changing her father’s inclinations, she decided to run away. That night, while everyone was asleep, she got up and took three of her precious possessions; a golden ring, a tiny golden spinning wheel, and a little golden reel. She packed the dresses of the sun, the moon, and the stars into a nutshell, put on the cloak of all kinds of fur, and

> blackened her face and hands with soot. The she commended herself to God and departed. (Zipes, *The Complete Fairy Tales,* 240).

Unlike Cinderella, who endure humiliation at home and becomes the beneficiary of lavish gifts, this princess is mobile, active and resourceful. She begins with a strong assertion of will, resistant to the paternal desires that would claim her. Fleeing the household, she moves into an alien world that requires her to be inventive, energetic and and enterprising if is she is to restablish herself to reclaim her royal rank. “The Brave Little Tailor” ( Grimm 20) has a young tailor, who, finding his workplace too restraining, abandons his trade and sets forth to seek a better life. A tailor is preparing to eat some jam, but when flies settle on it, he kills seven of them with one blow. He makes a belt describing the deed, "Seven at one blow". Inspired, he sets out into the world to seek his fortune.

> The tailor tied the belt around his waist, and since he now thought that his bravery was too great for his workshop, he decided to go out into the world. (Zipes, *The Complete Fairy Tales,* 74).

With that, the king marries him to his daughter. His wife hears him talking in his sleep and realizes that he is merely a tailor. The king promises to have him carried off. By cunning and sheer will, he defeats a giant and then captures a unicorn as requested by a king. With this feat done, the king rewards him with his daughter and his prosperity enfolds.

Thus, in all these tales, one finds abused children fighting for their survival by fleeing from the confines that mistreat them. This asserts that even the most rigid institution and arrangement of power relations is inherently unstable, and concerted and subdued non-cooperation by those involved can lead to change. This does not indicate however, that the cost to individuals for such resistance might not be high, but it does bring action within the realm of possibility in the folk and fairy tale world rather than it being a matter of waiting for the grand moment of violent revolutionary overthrow. At the same time, this also means that everyone becomes responsible – not just a few. Seemingly insignificant acts of compromise all contribute to the ongoing disruption of unjust and oppressive systems just as an accumulation of seemingly insignificant resistances can ultimately lead to their breakdown. As such what is to be noted in all these tales is the fact that the protagonists are all children or youths and are subjugated by authority, usually the parents. They must search their new way by themselves, independent of traditional social structures. Neither family nor government offers aid but in folk and fairy tales, these subordinates are not alone. Magic pervades the tales, and through its help, they prevail. Power is invested solely in adults, who use their superior strength and intelligence to teach children a lesson. These stories, with their single-minded focus on the transgression/punishment pattern, their unique power relationsips, their explicit morals, their implicit call for conformity are the most relevant in the Grimms' collection as well as in many Mizo tales.

> Child abandonment, incest, famine, rape, identity theft, spousal abuse, madness, and plague: These are but some of the themes that nourish the tales, told through abstraction, depthlessness, everyday magic, and intuitive logic. (Bernheimer, 2)

Parent-child conflicts usually take a number of forms, the most common being the proverbial cruel stepmother's mistreatment of her husband's children. There are many cultural and psychological reasons as to why villains in folk and fairy tales are often depicted as stepmothers. Perhaps the most relevant and greatest issue is the restoration of justice. Many elements fit into into this framework - a child may be denied his or her rightful position in a family or a young adult may be denied personal choice in the selection of a mate. In most of the tales, what is to be noted is the strong presence of the wicked stepmother. She is perhaps the most ubiquitous powerful female character in folk and fairy tales. The open hostility which she displays toward her stepchildren is a stark feature in all the narratives. She exemplifies the "bad" mother who allows the fantasy of the "good" mother to remain; she is cruel, greedy, malicious and jealous. The stepmother is one of the most common villainous characters, and she is closely aligned with other hostile female characters, including witches, ogresses, enchantresses. She may overwork, starve, kill or eat the children. These acts of villainy are perpetrated against both male and female protagonists and this, in turn, portray her as a monstrous beast whether she actually takes the form of an actual beast or simply appear in a human form. If a tale includes the

stepmother's natural children, she almost always works toward their promotion while abusing her stepchildren.

> It must be remembered that women died young due to frequent child-bearing and unsanitary conditions. Thus, step-mothers were common in households, and this often led to difficulties with the children from former wives. In this respect, the tale reflects the strained relations but sees them more as a result of social forces. (James, 126).

The Mizo tale "Thailungi" (Margaret Pachuau)[4] portrays a cruel stepmother who barters Thailungi with a bale of iron. This story is a corroboration of the fact that the dominants often exert and exploit their power over their subordinates for the sole benefits of the hegemonic groups and the disadvantage of the victims. In this tale, the stepmother represent that power under whose regime, the young and helpless Thailungi suffers. For status and capital, the stepmother abuses her power and the abused girl gains nothing. She conspires with the trader to send Thailungi off to fetch water from the stream and to take her while she is at the task. Thailungi overhears the plan but is too frightened to protest. This tale depicts the strong, dominating presence of the stepmother who is consistently featured as evil, cruel and cunning. Thailungi reluctantly has to obey her vicious stepmother and as she goes out, she shudders at the

fate that awaits her, and as has been arranged, the trader captures her and take her away as price for the bale of iron.

> Thailungi could overhear the entire conversation and she was deeply disheartened. She could not even run away for fear of wild animals….And so very reluctantly the little girl went her way. The Pawihte travelers captured her quickly and took her to their land.(Pachuau, 15)

In "Rahtea" (Tribal Research Institute, 25) , a young boy is compelled to flee from home because his stepmother proposes to have him killed. She refuses to feed him, clothe him and assigns him to heavy chores. Ultimately, when she demands that he be sacrificed to cure her supposed illness, Rahte has to no choice but to escape the wrath of his stepmother.

> Rahtea a hi fahrah a ni a, a nu chu nuhrawn a ni a. A nuhrawn chuan a ti rethei em em thin a, silhfen tha pawh a nei lo va, kawr tet tak hi a ha thin a, chaw atan favai hram chauh a pe thin a, a cher em em a. (Tribal Research Institute, 129)
>
> (Rahtea was an orphan who had a stepmother. His stepmother treated him brutally; he had no proper clothes, his clothes were torn and for food, she served him rice husks and he grew thinner and thinner. )

“Rairahtea”(Tribal Research Institute, 26 ) is another Mizo tale in which a cruel stepmother sells her stepson to traders. When she learns that a group of sailors are in search of human sacrifice to release their ships that could not sail due to spells, she unhesitantly sells him to them for a pot of gold.

> Chu lawng tang thawi nana mihring an han zawn chuan tangka khote khatin a hralh ta a, Rairahtea chu Kawrpawlho hnenah chuan a awm ta a. (Tribal Research Institute, 133)
>
> (She sold him off for a pot of gold when they wanted a human to sacrifice so that their ships could be released, Rairahte now belonged to the sailors.)

The most daunting stepmother presence in all Mizo tales is perhaps Mauruangi’s stepmother who, like Cinderella’s stepmother, goes to the extent of not only disrupting Mauruangis existence but also thwarting her only hope of happiness through a marriage:

> Suddenly her stepmother took a pail of boiling hot water and poured it over her and Mauruangi died. Her body was thrown in the forest below the village, but a wild goat found it, and brought it back to life, and he kept her as a nursemaid.(Pachuau,76)

Another such instance is in “The Juniper Tree” (Grimm 47) in which the stepmother offers her stepson an apple and decapitates him with the lid of the chest “and his head flew off, falling among the red apples” (Zipes, *The Complete Fairy Tales,* 159). The evil stepmother chops his body and cooks stew out of him and serves them at dinner. His father also eats the stew when he comes home. The bones of the boy turn into a bird that sings about the events. Then the bird throws the millstone on his stepmother’s head and kills her, after which this very bird turns back into the boy again. The stepmother’s actions are horrific, and though justice finds her, it presents a twisted image of reality in which acts of cannibalism and brute forces would be frowned upon.

These tales also convey the sense that power somehow resides in the institutions rather than in the individuals that make the institutions function. As such, for the characters, rather than attack the instigators of abuses upon them, they prefer to venture into the world and face the larger system itself (that make the individual abusers function) in an attempt to create changes. This would improve their conditions as individuals and also bring improvement in the society itself. Thus, these inferior characters in the tales must undergo conflict and resolution process through which they can assert themselves. For the male protagonists, this must include strength, valor, and fortitude. In “The Story of the Boy who Went Forth to Learn What Fear Was” (Grimm 4), his challenge is to spend nights in a haunted castle. The first night, as the boy sits in his room, two voices from the corner of the room moans into the night, complaining about the cold. The

boy, unafraid, claims that the owners of the voices are silly not to warm themselves with the fire. Suddenly, two black cats jump out of the corner and, seeing the calm boy, propose a card game. The boy tricks the cats and traps them with the cutting board and knife. Black cats and dogs emerge from every patch of darkness in the room, and the boy fights and kills each of them with his knife. Then, from the darkness, a bed appears. He lies down on it, preparing for sleep, but it begins walking all over the castle. Still unafraid, the boy urges it to go faster. The bed turns upside down, but the boy, unfazed, just tosses the bed aside and sleeps next to the fire until morning. Thus, series of actions that determines the boy's ferocity are witnessed. The boy, on facing these challenges, has no choice but to face them because he has been rejected by his father and he must struggle to survive on his own.

As the boy settles in for his second night in the castle, half of a man's body falls down the chimney. The boy, again unafraid, shouts up the chimney that the other half is needed. The other half, hearing the boy, falls from the chimney and reunites with the rest. More men follow with human skulls and dead men's legs with which to play nine-pins. The amused boy sharpens the skulls into better balls with his lathe and joins the men until midnight, when they vanish into thin air. On his third and final night in the castle, the boy hears a strange noise. Six men enter his room, carrying a coffin. The boy, unafraid but distraught, believes the body to be his own dead cousin. As he tries to warm the body, it reanimates, and, confused, threatens to strangle him. The

boy, angry at his ingratitude, closes the coffin on top of the man again. An old man hears the noise and comes to see the boy. While showing the boy his ability to push an anvil into the ground, the boy splits the anvil and traps the old man's beard in it, and then proceeds to beat the man with an iron rod. The man, desperate for mercy, shows the boy all of the treasures in the castle. Thus, this boy earns wealth and riches and for surviving three nights in the castle, he is awarded a beautiful princess as a price by the king.

Another challenge a male protagonist may face is killing a dragon, as in "The Two Brothers" (Grimm 60). Two brothers who are twins, born of a poor broommaker, are compelled to leave their family because of a scheme planned by their uncle, a rich goldsmith. They are adopted by a huntsman and even they become great hunters. They move out and seek adventures and part their ways. One of the brothers rescue a princess by slaying a six headed dragon and would have married her had his head not been chopped off by an envious marshall of the king.

> Shortly after, with a great roar the seven headed dragon descended on the spot. When he caught sight of the huntsman, he was astounded, and he said, "Wat do you you think you're doing on this mountain?" "I've come to fight you," replied the huntsman. (Zipes, *The Complete Fairy Tales,* 217)

He is revived by a faithful hare, then roams the world for a year till he meets up with his brother and together, they seek out the princess and reveal the truth.

Rescuing a princess from monsters or ogres is a common element that can be found in many of the Grimms' tales. A very significant tale would be "Strong Hans" (Grimm 166) in which a very strong young man named Hans seeks out adventures and on one occasion, comes across a princess who has been captured by an ogre. He rescues the princess by beating the ogre with his club and flees while hiding her in a basket and carrying her across valleys to the land of her parents who offer the princess as prize for his deeds.

The protagonists usually have the least favored position in the social setup, including the family and they are usually the youngest son, youngest daughter or stepchild. Often they are openly unwanted by their parents. Many are chided for being too small, and "Little" can even be a part of their names such as Little Red Cap. Demeaning names such as Cinderella, Ash Lad, Donkey-Skin and Hans My Hedgehog are awarded to them. Frequently the male protagonist is a simpleton, although they do fare rather well in the second phase of the stories. Only with the aid of magic, are they able to establish a place for themselves in the society rather than having extraordinary skills, training or resources. In "The Worn Out Dancing Shoes" (Grimm 133), a king with twelve daughters offers the hand of one of them in marriage to the man who can discover how they escape from their locked room every night and dance their shoes to pieces. Many princes attempt to learn the secret, but all fail, forfeiting their lives. A recently dismissed soldier, too severely wounded to continue his military service, is confronted by an old woman

who, for no apparent reason, gives him a cloak that will render him invisible, then tells him how to use it to discover the princesses' secret.

> Then she gave him a little cloak and said, " When you put this cloak on, you'll be invisible, and you'll be able to follow all twelve of them." (Zipes, *The Complete Fairy Tales,* 53)

He follows the old woman's counsel and succeeds where many before him have failed. His wounds mentioned earlier play no role as the story progresses, but then neither does he rely on any special abilities. He succeeds because he has the magic cloak, a cloak that anyone could have acquired, and he has been in the right place at the right time. Thus, in the realm of folk and fairy tales, where fantasy mingle with reality and where anything is possible, magic becomes the source of power that signifies one's assertion in the social structure.

Thus, through the main characters in these tales, the concerns of a monarchistic and feudal society are presented, and the focus is on class struggle and competition for power among the aristocrats themselves and between the peasantry and aristocracy. Hence the central theme of most folk and fairy tales remains "might makes right." He who has power can exercise his will, right wrongs, become ennobled, amass money and land, win women as prizes. This is one of the reasons as to why the common people were the carriers of the tales: the tales catered to their aspirations and allowed them to believe that anyone could become a knight in shining armor or a

lovely princess, and they also presented the stark realities of power politics without disguising the violence and brutality of everyday life. These tales are realms without morals, where class and power determine social relations. Hence, the magic and miraculous serve to rupture the feudal confines and represent metaphorically the conscious and unconscious desires of the lower classes.

> A world inverted, an exemplary world, fairyland is a criticism of ossified reality. It does not remain side by side with the latter; it reacts upon it; it suggests that we transform it, that we reinstate what is out of place." Whatever the outcomes of the tales are-and for the most part, they are happy ends and "exemplary" in that they affirm a more just feudal order with democratizing elements-the impulse and critique of the "magic" is rooted in a historically explicable desire to overcome oppression and change society. (Fisher, Jerilyn and Ellen S. Silber, 126).

Magic is used as a weapon against injustice to level the playing field for the peasant in their class struggle against the aristocracy. Bourgeoisie who seized power and came to replace the aristocracy at the top tier edited the tales, highlighting magic to make them appear ridiculous and to relegate them to the children's realm. Power is then everywhere, in every relationship in the Grimms' and Mizo folk and fairy tales. Within this enclave, the populace is constantly subjecting it and being objects of it. It encompasses the relationships between parents and children, between

lovers, between kings and subjects, between men and women. This stands in accordance with Foucault's argument for many struggles by "women, prisoners, conscripted soldiers, hospital patients, and homosexuals against the particularised power, the constraints and controls, that are exerted over them...these movements are linked to the revolutionary movement of the proletariat to the extent that they fight against the controls and constraints which serve the same system of power".( Guimarães, 1) Female subjugation is a very palpable aspect of power relationships in many of the tales. The start of the nineteenth century, the very period during which the Grimms' *Nursery and Household Tales* was collected and published, was traditional in the sense that women were no more than subordinate domestic possessions. In, '"The Female Tradition", Elaine Showalter presents that:

> The middle-class ideology of the proper sphere of womanhood, which developed in post-industrial England and America, prescribed a woman who would be a Perfect Lady, an Angel in the House, contentedly submissive to men, but strong in her inner purity … queen in her own realm of the Home. (Showalter, 1108)

This holds true for most societies, including the German society. However, after being suppressed to this ideology for most of the eighteenthand nineteenth centuries, the beginning of the Edwardian period was the time when women began speaking out about various social injustices that were forced upon them for centuries. This was widely known as the suffragist

movement. Women sought to create a constitutional change, whereby they would be privileged to basic rights. Many women believed that because the "role of a woman" was in the home, she should not be denied a say in legislation that directly or indirectly influences laws, which impact the home. Women did not approach this social change with any violence, or force. This is unlike men, who have a history of using violent measures as a means to obtain peace or equality. (Barrie, 49) This was the politics behind the production of the Grimms' tales and as such, the political turmoil pertaining to women are reflected across the tales:

> The Madonna/whore construct is created for women through fairy tales and the man is emasculated. The treatment of women in the fairy tales is a reflection of and a response to the socio-historical events of the time in which they are composed. While the modern retellings of the tales still retain the powerful and demoniacal female antagonist, the protagonist usually gets what she wants through her own intelligence and resourcefulness (Marshall, 410).

Subjugation, passivity, voiceless existence as well as attempt at self-assertion by some are all aspects that find expression in the female characters. Especially in realm of gender, power is understood within the frameworks of class and social order; and the heroine's innocence and persecution are ideologically constructed. Consenting to heterosexuality and motherhood is portrayed as natural for women. Women are usually faced with daunting domestic tasks: to spin

straw into gold as in “Rumpeltstiltskin”(Grimm 55), to separate peas and lentils from ashes as in “Cinderella”(Grimm 21), to strip a large quantity of feathers from their quills as in “The True Bride”(Grimm 186) Alternatively, a fairy-tale heroine, now an emerging woman, may spend her time passively isolated: locked in a tower as in “Rapunzel”(Grimm 12), maintain a vow of silence as in “The Twelve Brothers”(Grimm 9), comatose in a glass tome as in “Snow White”(Grimm 53) or asleep barricaded behind an impenetrable hedge of thorns as in “ Brier Rose”(Grimm 50).

The Grimms’ comprehension of women is misogynistic at best. Their idea of a woman’s place in society becomes clear. Their approach to femininity is bipolar, a question of “good” and “bad”. A woman is “good” if she is passive, submissive and pious while a “bad” woman is assertive, demanding and constantly attempting to empower herself, even if it means involving wicked means. Much is revealed about these intended gender roles by examining characterization in “Cinderella” and “King Thrushbeard”. Cinderella is the paradigm of “pious and good”, while her stepsisters and stepmother are characterized as “treacherous and wicked at heart.” While this explanation seems simple, and is usually taken at face value, one has to consider the Grimms’ explanation of Cinderella’s goodness. Cinderella is apparently “good” only because she is pious and passive. She never does anything aside from looking beautiful to

warrant such praise. In fact, nearly all heroines in Grimms' fairy tales are beautiful -- from Cinderella to Brier Rose to Rapunzel to Little Red Cap - and therefore "good."

Specifically, Cinderella is good because she is beautiful, passive, innocent, and beguiled. She is victimized by her "wicked" stepmother and stepsisters, who are "beautiful and fair in the face, but treacherous and wicked at heart."(Zipes, *The Complete Fairy Tales,* 181) They force her to wear rags and act as a servant in order to break her spirit and undermine her beauty status. Zipes denotes:

> In making Cinderella a metaphorical slave, these women are another tool of the Grimms' to serve the mechanism of patriarchy. Whenever a woman in a fairy tale possesses or acts with power, they act in favor of the patriarchy (Zipes, *Fairy Tales*, 148).

In the tale, the stepmother realizes that the only way to gain social status and succeed on the system's terms is to marry her daughters into wealth. She knows that the power of a woman directly correlates the beauty of a woman. Thus, her stepdaughter is a threat who must be removed and therefore, is justified. Cinderella, in her own limited ways, also asserts herself but in a manner that is entirely different from the rest of her family. She seeks help, defies orders and marries the forbidden prince but does all these in a secretive, docile, humble manner in such a way that she does not cause disorder in the entire social setup. Jack Zipes comments:

> Cinderella does not turn her cheek but rebels and struggles to offset her disadvantages. In doing so she actively seeks help and uses her wits to attain her goal which is not marriage but recognition. The recovery of her lost slipper and marriage with the prince is symbolically an affirmation of her strong independent character. (Zipes, *Fairy Tales,* 30)

She uses her wits to gain a place for herself in a society that does not treat her right and also, by being “pious and gentle”, she earns sympathy from her kind friends. Her animal friends pity her situation and help her to escape her dreadful condition. Cinderella demonstrates her “goodness” through housework and submission, no doubt a way to reinforce that a “good” woman is always rewarded with an affluent marriage and unending happiness. Thus, beauty is more often associated with goodness and ugliness with evil and laziness and age. Beauty is rewarded and ugliness is punished. In “The White Bride and the Black Bride”(Grimm 135), the mother and daughter are "cursed" with blackness and ugliness. A woman, her daughter, and her stepdaughter are cutting fodder when the Lord comes up to them and asks the way to the village. The woman and the daughter refuse, and the stepdaughter offers to show him. So the woman and daughter becomes as black and ugly as sin, but the stepdaughter is offered three wishes. She chooses to be beautiful, to have an ever-full purse of gold, and to go to heaven when she dies. Such a tale connotes goodness with diligence and beauty, and characters are "rewarded" for their

hard work. In this way, beauty becomes associated not only with goodness but also with "whiteness" and "economic privilege".

Although beauty is often rewarded in Grimms' tales, it is also a source of danger. Beauty is, thus, commodified in a number of such tales. The princess in "King Thrushbeard" (Grimm 52) is the Grimms' representation of a "bad" woman. She, like Cinderella, is beautiful, which apparently gives her potential for "goodness." She is even described as "so proud and haughty that no suitor was good enough for her." (Zipes, *The Complete Fairy Tales,* 177). She even makes fun of her suitors. There are two possible trajectories with regards to women in the tales: one passive, docile and compliant with patriarchal norm and the other nomadic, creative and socially subversive. It is clear that the princess fits into the latter qualities. It might be assumed that the princess is simply arrogant, never considering that she is obviously and unwillingly forced to marry. Her father, the King, gets angry that she will not accept a proposal from a parade of men that she does not know and does not like and marries her off to a beggar. He believes he needs to teach her a lesson to make her "good."

The princess is "bad" because she is proud, because she has standards, and because she probably aspires more than to be a mere wife for a king. She is berated by her beggar husband for not knowing how to cook or clean. Instead of having a sympathetic (or even kind) view of the princess, the Grimms assume a position of misogyny. She is not depicted as a woman forced into

a compromised setting, but rather as a materialistic, egotistical princess. In *Woman Hating*, Andrea Dworkin writes, "[Female characters] have one scenario of passage. They are moved, as if inert, from the house of the father to the house of the prince. First they are objects of malice, then they are objects of romantic adoration. They do nothing to warrant either." (Dworkin, 42) In almost all folk and fairy tales featuring women, marriage is the ultimate goal for both male and female protagonists. The princes actively pursue a bride while the beautiful maidens wait to be chosen. The princess tries to break from this cycle, but is instead humiliated and "broken" by both her father and husband, a notion implying that women need to be tamed like animals or disciplined like children. After the true identity of her husband is exposed, despite ridicule, humiliation, lies and belittling, the princess' "true happiness began." This is a clear indication that often the politics behind these tales need to be unearthed and extensively studied.

The Grimms' version of "Cinderella"(Grimm 21) conveys a depiction of the desperation of the stepsisters to marry and the scenarios that ensue project gory insights. The first stepsister cuts her heel off with a knife in order to fit the slipper, the second stepsister severs her big toe to fit the slipper. The prince is duped both times, only to discover on the way to his castle that the slipper is overflowing with blood. The stepsisters, desperate to gain status through marriage, symbolize the feminist point of view of how women sacrifice their bodies, intellects, and

aspirations in hope of finding a man. One could then determine that the "wicked" stepsisters are perhaps promiscuous in thought or deed, and therefore "bad".

The Grimms' characterization of man is simple. He is aggressive, handsome, wealthy, powerful, and therefore "good." He matters, acts, and succeeds. The man's goodness comes from every trait that women do not possess. "The male as savior is dominant and protects the virtues of the humble female." (Zipes, *Fairy Tale,* 149) It seems that the "worse" she is, the better he is for assuming her as a liability, like the deceptive King Thrushbeard and his victimized bride.

Cinderella's father, a rich man, never tries to regulate the discourse between his new family and his old one. Presumably, Cinderella would have special treatment, she being his very own daughter from the first marriage. Interestingly, Cinderella's father is mentioned only once -- to clarify that he is rich. He never appears to influence his daughter's fate. To the Grimms, he is only rich, therefore powerful, therefore "good".

In "King Thrushbeard"(Grimm 52), the princess' father appears briefly at the beginning of the tale only to force his daughter to marry for the sake of status. When his plan fails, he forces her to marry a beggar and promptly kicks his "proud and haughty" daughter out of her home. The basis for the king's justice is the frivolous use of power to determine and execute what is best for his daughter. He, too, is the "good" father, keeping with the Grimms' Christian notion of family values.[5] Cinderella's father marries an evil woman who supposedly tortures his

only child from his first marriage and does nothing to stop it. The princess' father in "King Thrushbeard"(Grimm 52), also abandons his daughter with a strange man. In the Grimms' world, these men are patriarchs, beyond moral law and codes of decency and women are a commodity whose wealth are based on degrees of silence and beauty.

Even though Cinderella and the princess are on either end of the Grimms' spectrum, they do hold one major trait in common: both women are victimized. In fact, most women in the Grimms tales are victims. Cinderella is a victim of her stepmother. The princess is a victim of her own pride. None of these women use their cunning wit to save themselves. They remain passive. They never think, act, initiate, confront, or question, but are always saved in the nick of time by the handsome prince. Brier Rose and Rapunzel are again victims of a wicked witch and parents' selfish decisions. In folk and fairy tales, women are often projected into two very different spectrum, "good" and "bad". Passive, subservient women like Brier Rose and Rapunzel are "good" because they are repressed, submissive and willing to be dominated by authority. Whereas, the evil stepmothers and witches are branded as "bad" because they are willing to assert themselves, evil as their schemes may be, and they seem to be unwilling to conform to the societal norms that patriarchy demands of a woman, that is, to be humble, docile, selfless and domesticated. "Brier Rose"(Grimm 50) is helpless in the hands of people superior to her. To her father, there is nothing in the world which is more cherishable to him than his daughter. And, as

she is his only legacy into the future, he feels it his patriarchal duty to protect her from the harsh realities of the life that he has already experienced. Though he cannot keep her young forever, he will do everything in his power to prolong the process. While his acts of protection are out of love, his parental barricades may end up harming his child more than helping her. Brier Rose ends up being cursed by an old woman when she is not invited for a feast to celebrate her birth. She is cursed to die on her fifteenth and despite her father's wariness, she pricks her finger with a spindle and sleeps for a hundred years. She is trapped within the confines of the palace and the helpless princess, for no fault of hers, is imprisoned within the brier hedge that engulfs the palace.

> Soon a brier hedge began to grow all around the castle, and it grew higher each year. Eventually, it surrounded and covered the entire castle....The princess became known by the name Beautiful Sleeping Brier Rose, and a tale about her began circulating throughout the country.( Zipes, *The Complete Fairy Tales,* 173)

She is silenced for a hundred years and only when a prince revives her by kissing her, is she able to reassume her place in the palace. And immediately she is ushered off to be married to him because the prince wants her.

"Rapunzel" (Grimm 12) is a victim of the adults in her life. She is traded off to a witch for a rapunzel lettuce by her father even before she is born.

> When his wife had the baby, the sorceress appeared at once. She gave the child the name Rapunzel and took her away...But when she was twelve years old, the sorceress locked her in a tower that was in a forest. It had neither door, nor stairs, only a little window high above. (Zipes, *The Complete Fairy Tales,* 42)

The tower signifies a suppression, an incarceration that stifles the life and soul of a young, naive and beautiful Rapunzel who is not aware of a life otherwise until a prince comes to meet her. She has been obediently serving the sorceress before the prince arrives, lifting her up with her hair whenever she demands.Whenever the sorceress wanted to get in, she would stand below and call out:

> "Rapunzel, Rapunzel,
>
> Let down your hair for me."
>
> Rapunzel's hair was long and radiant, as fine as spun gold. Every time she heard the voice of the sorceress, she unpinned her braids and wound them around a hook on the window. Then she let her hair drop twenty yards, and the sorceress would climb up on it. (Zipes, *The Complete Fairy Tales,*43)

But this also leads to her misfortune because the sorceress catches them and the prince is blinded and forced to wander off while she must bear his twins and look after them on her own.

> In her fury she seized Rapunzel's hair, wrapped it around her left hand several times, grabbed a pair of scissors with her right hand, and snip snip the hair was cut off,and the beautiful braids lay on the ground. Then the cruel sorceress took rapunzel to a desolate land where she had to live in misery and grief. (Zipes, *The Complete Fairy Tales,* 44)

In the Grimm's version of "Snow White"(Grimm 53), the mirror is a magical instrument which is owned by the evil queen that symbolizes the absent king's voice and opinions. The queen, after a few years of marriage, can predict the King's thoughts and actions. She has versions of his feelings in her mind which is represented by her magical mirror: "... The woman has internalized the King's rule: his voice resides now in her own mirror, her own mind" (Bettelheim, 293). The mirror provides a patriarchal voice for the queen and her stepdaughter. It also illustrates the queen's anxieties about Snow White and her jealousy about Snow White's looks. Bettelheim concludes that "the story of Snow White warns of the evil consequences of narcissism for both parent and child" (Bettelheim, 203). The narcissism of the queen is clearly seen in her obsession with the answers of her magic mirror. In the Grimm's version, the father's voice is pivotal in the stepmother- daughter relationship. "His, surely, is the voice of the looking glass, the patriarchal voice of judgment that rules the queen's- and every other woman's- self-evaluation" (Bettelheim, 293). The Grimm brothers changed the tale of Snow White, from the earlier versions they had

printed, in 1819 to make Snow White's stepmother, not her actual mother, but the evil stepmother (Warner 211). The evil stepmother is found to be more believable than an evil mother and more acceptable by children.

The roles accessible to women and men, thus, havebeen clearly expressed in the fairy tales of the Brothers Grimm. The tales indicate that powerful, aggressive women are bad, and that good women are paralyzed. Also, men are dictated as always good, no matter what they do or do not do. The tales also denote that the realistic modes of femininity and masculinity are radically polarized until the ideal woman is portrayed as a mere toy and the ideal man is portrayed as a heroic dragonslayer:

> The root of folk fairy tales are instructions, mandates meant to lead us down the Grimms' idealistically proper way of life. These stories are much more than children's fiction. They give analytical adults the opportunity to discern and dissect the traditional roles of women in history, and the misogyny that assigned women to generations of subservient territory. (Tatar, 45)

The Mizo tale, "Mauruangi" (Margaret L.Pachuau )[6] depicts a similar "Cinderella" story in which Mauruangi is a helpless victim under a wicked stepmother, a jealous stepsister and a neglectful father. Mauruangi receives help from her mother who take the forms of a catfish and a tree to aid her daughter. When she is wooed by a *Raja*,[7] her stepsister Bingtaii intervenes and

takes her place while Mauruangi is left to the task of looking after a serow's child. However, in the end, when the *Raja* realizes he has been deceived, he decides to put the two women to a duel and whoever wins, he shall choose for a wife. In the end, Mauruangi defeats her stepsister and assumes her rightful place as the *Raja*'s wife.

Mizo women, especially in the pre-colonial era, were subjected to a hardworking regime whereby they were obliged to sacrifice themselves to the rigidly established patriarchal system. They had to get up at dawn, fetch water from streams, work hard at the jhums all day, entertain young men at night while spinning yarns.

> Mizo women were recognized for their hard work or dutifulness particularly in their household responsibilities. (Malsawmdawngliana and Rohmingmawii, 42)

Any woman who displayed such qualities were considered the embodiment of a "good" woman while women who indulged in otherwise unruly manners were considered "bad". As Vanlachhuanawma asserts:

> In the case of moral misbehaviour between young men and women, the male partner was said to earn honouring the world of spirit whereas the female partner was doomed to perdition. (Vanlalchhuanawma, 46-47)

In the tale, Mauruangi is projected as a humble, subservient, hospitable, kind, and skilled in spinning, farming and weaving, who is in direct contrast to her step-sister Bingtaii. Bingtaii, by contrast, is portrayed as lazy, manipulative, wicked and shallow. She is a representative of the very epitome of a "bad" woman because, in the eyes of the patriarchal setup, she is worthless in all aspects.

> Mauruangi...would tend to the jhum meticulously every day. Bingtaii, on the other hand, would not tend to her part of the jhum and soon it wore an unkempt look. So even though Mauruangi had the less fertile patch of land, she tended it with care and had a good harvest of corn.(Pachuau, 74)

Parent-children conflict episodes, as with other folk and fairy tales, dominate this tale and here, it is not only the evil stepmother but also the father who is responsible for the trauma that Mauruangi experiences. It is not only Mauruangi, but also her mother, who suffers at the hands of the dominants. She is drowned by her husband and when she turns into a magical fish and tree to feed her daughter, it is her husband who sends an entourage of men to hunt her down and dispose of her. While such actions seem to condemn the two evil characters in the story, their behaviour is indicative of the status of wives and of orphans in Mizo society and as such, serves to highlight the strong masculine aura as well the heavy presence of the "bad" female behind

these men in Mizo society. The cruel treatment meted out to orphans and neglected children in the society is represented through the pathetic condition of Mauruangi.

> With the passage of time she (Mauruangi's stepmother) meted out harsh treatment to her and only favoured her own daughter Bingtaii. She refused to give Mauruangi any good food to eat and gave her only mashed bran. Mauruangi was unable to partake of the same and she went hungry very often.(Pachuau, 70-71)

Mauruangi's story, therefore, though it might seem entirely fictional, is actually reflective of past Mizo society and its social customs and beliefs, especially pertaining to women's social roles.

"Rimenhawihi"(Margaret Pachuau) tells the tragic story of the Mizo version of the Grimms' "Rapunzel" in that Rimenhawii, like her counterpart, has a beautiful, long, shiny hair and while her husband is away on a journey, like Rapunzel, she is locked up in a house made of iron. When a chief from a faraway land happens to find a strand of her hair from a fish's bowel, he firmly orders his men to capture her for his wife, whether she is willing or not.

> The chief commanded, "Ah...now that would be the name I have been seeking. Now, you must all go back there once more and you bring her here to me. I do not care whether she is married or not."(Pachuau, 41)

She is a representation of the voiceless, submissive wife who has no power to undermine men's decisions, even at the cost of her own welfare. She is dragged away from her home, and carried off to foreign lands and is completely uprooted from the safe confines of her home which though detaining, is still a comfort because it is familiar.

Another similar tale, "Tualvungi and Zawlpala"(Zama)[7] is also indicative of a subjugated, passive, submissive wife who is sold off to a stranger from another land by her very own husband. Tualvungi is a beautiful maiden who is the pride of her husband Zawlpala. Despite his seemingly profound love for her, Zawlpala never acknowledges nor consults his wife even in matters that affects her own fate. His honour means more to him and when Phuntiha, a wily chief from a far off land seeks her hands in marriage, he plays the court on his own completely leaving his wife out of the resolution.

> Distressed greatly, she turned to her husband and pleaded with him thus:
>
> I can see them yonder
>
> Herding in countless mithans
>
> And carrying great numbers of puans
>
> Tell them Tualvungi is with child
>
> O my love Zawlpala
>
> But her desperation was matched by Zawlpala's loss for words at the turn of

> events and he was unable to offer her any consolation. So the now hated Phuntiha arrived and proceeded to fulfill his obligations with great gusto.(Zama)

He finally has to oblige when Phuntiha could meet the dowry demands that Zawlpala thinks would be impossible to achieve and therefore, has put forth in jest. Tualvungi has to part with her true love and remain estranged for the remainder of her life. And in the end, ironically, this submissive, selfless female still sacrifices her life for the very person whose pride stands before his love for her. When she learns that Zawlpala has died, she requests an old woman to kill her and is eventually depicted as being in the grave with him.

Thus, both the Grimms' and Mizo tales contain explicit and implicit messages about dominant power structures in society, especially those concerning gender. They reflect seemingly appropriate gendered values and attitudes and contain symbolic imagery that legitimates existing race, class and gender systems. Young women characters are more often described as "beautiful" than are older women, while male characters of any age could be described as handsome. Furthermore, beauty is often associated with being white, economically privileged and virtuous. Feminine beauty is necessitated in tales by not only making "beauties" prominent in the stories but also in demonstrating how beauty gets its reward. The fact that women's beauty is particularly salient in the tales, denotes glorification of feminine beauty and represent a means by which gender inequality is reproduced. Both the Grimms' and Mizo tales

also suggest that both helpless children and women are consistently manipulated by the dominating social structure in the tales. Also, the economically disadvantaged, among others, are subject to structural violence. The persecuted heroes and heroines usually belong to the lower strata and they are orphans, servants, lowly labourers and traders, helpless women and children or else are passive princes and princesses. This structural violence usually has the effect of denying people important rights, such as economic well-being; social, political and sexual equality; a sense of personal fulfilment and self worth and only by retaliation, are they given the sense of significance in the society.

## NOTES

[1]The Grimms' tales reflect pre-modern era in Germany which espouse social hierarchy that climbs from servants and common folks at the bottom to kings and their royal families at the top. They also reflect the eighteenth and nineteenth century German predicament where there was class struggle and competition for power among the aristocrats and against the bourgeoisie and aristocracy, and also among the peasants

[2]In pre-colonial Mizo society, that is, before the nineteenth century, social stratification of the Mizos was organized in which the Chief (*Lal*) was at the top of the chain. Then came the Chief's council followed by the priests. The traditional Mizo social organization centered around the village ruled by a chief and in each village, there was a wide gap between the privileged and non-privileged. Widows, orphans and those deemed to be at the lowest because they belonged to a lower clan by birth, did not enjoy status and were often discriminated.

[3]The insertion within the inclusion marks indicates the collector and the serialized number assigned for the tale in the collection of Grimms' fairy tales, Zipes, Jack. *The Complete Fairy Tales of the Brothers Grimm*. New York: bantam Books, 1987. Print and henceforth, this manner shall be employed to indicate the source of a tale.

[4] The insertion within the inclusion marks indicates the collector and translator of the tale in the collection, Pachuau, Margaret. *Folklore from Mizoram*. Kolkata: Writers' Workshop, 2008. Print and henceforth, this manner shall be employed to indicate the source of a tale.

[5] The Grimms were resolute on delivering Christian ethics into the tales they collected. As such, they revised and filtered numerous tales that they documented from the oral because they felt that the production and reception of their tales was closely bound to the needs of the commodity market wherein Christian values were being promoted. This corroborates the enormity of Christian themes and values into the plot of the tales.

[6] The insertion within the inclusion marks indicates the collector and translator of the tale in the collection, Pachuau, Margaret L. *Folklore from Mizoram*. Kolkata: Writers' Workshop, 2013. Print. and henceforth, this manner shall be employed to indicate the source of a tale.

[7] *Raja,* a king from the neighbouring kingdom. They belong to the main Indian culture, to an entirely different ethnic group and have no similarity with the Mizos in terms of culture or race.

[8] The insertion within the inclusion marks indicates the translator of the tale , Zama, Margaret Ch. "Tualvungi and Zawlpala." *MizowritinginEnglish*. 9 Feb 2009 Web 12 April 2013.

# CHAPTER 5:

# CONCLUSION

An inclusive study of both the Grimms and Mizo tales generate results to reveal that beneath the apparent layer of innocence where there is interplay of fantasy and fun, dark shadows loom in the forms of violence, fear and distortion of the self through shapeshifting. These tales also reflect characters that have been mistreated by a system that dominates them, especially in the case of children and women. They denote, also, the means through which these subordinate groups can use to present themselves. While strong differences may exist between members of these groups, and amongst themselves they engage in continuous debates, it is sometimes advantageous for them to unite themselves and to bring forward their group identity in a simplified way to achieve certain goals as seen in the case of the subordinates asserting themselves in the tales. The subjugated children and women seek out assertion through various means, sometimes by running away from their master or at other times, by fighting back often with the aid of magic. This stands in accordance with what Franz Fanon has opined for the colonized other:

> The violence which has ruled over the ordering of the colonial world, which has ceaselessly drummed the rhythm for the destruction of native social forms and broken up without reserve the systems of reference of the economy, the customs of dress and external life, that same violence will be claimed and taken over by the native at the moment when, deciding to embody history in his own person, he surges into the forbidden quarters. (Fanon, 39)

Violence, as detected in the tales, denotes inherent human nature which often poses as a threat to vulnerable victims and therefore, hinders their self-realization. Freud denotes that violence is often a hindrance in a culture:

> The tendency to aggression is an innate, independent, instinctual disposition in man... it constitutes the powerful obstacle to culture.(Freud, 45)

The use of fear and violence in folk and fairy tales is a contentious issue which illuminates disparities of societal difference between those firmly entrenched in beliefs of righteousness and others who believe that no harm has been done by frightening children with folklore. Some people believe that children need to be shielded from all displays of violence, especially violence that are found in the tales, because children might emulate these aspects and bring harm to themselves or to others. Studies which try to prove that a display of violence in print and visual culture often lead to fear and violence in the youth are frequently inconclusive at best, and these studies are often funded by those whose ideologies detest any mention of potentially sinful activities. Conversely, there is some supportive evidence from educators and sociologists which depict fear and violence in folk and fairy tales contributing to a safer society.

The consistent conflict between the “good” and “evil” characters in the tales indicate that the central concern of all the tales selected for study is the conflict between two competing impulses that exist within all human beings: the instinct to live by rules, act peacefully, follow

moral commands, and value the good of the group against the instinct to gratify one's immediate desires, act violently to obtain supremacy over others, and enforce one's will. This conflict might be expressed in a number of ways: civilization against savagery, order against chaos, reason against impulse, law against anarchy, or the broader heading of good against evil. This conflict often results in violence and in turn, induces fear in the victims.

Essentially, what takes place in the realm of folk and fairy tales cannot be viewed simply as the protagonist's fortunate escape from tyrannical power. Instead, the personal utopia that has been reached in the conclusion to the traditional folk and fairy tale is denoted as at the end when the protagonist has achieved or become aligned with a dominant power. Thus, power becomes a crucial issue in all these tales. Moreover, it must be noted that, read in this light, the motives of the conventional folk and fairy tale hero and heroine and those of the conventional villain become one and the same. Each is struggling to achieve or to maintain a dominant position. In such an analysis of folk and fairy tale, and in keeping with the methodology of Foucault, what becomes important is not who succeeds, but how and to what extent this success takes place. Key to this methodoIogy is Foucault's emphasis on the relationship between power and knowledge. For Foucault, power and knowledge are built upon one another, that is, power is created and sustained through knowledge and likewise, created and sustained through power. Simply put, knowledge (or truth) is a construct; it is not something that is discovered; it is produced. More

importantly, it is a tactic of domination. The will to power must also contain within it the will to truth in that "we are subjected to the production of truth through power and we cannot exercise power except through the production of truth" (Foucault, 93) As such, assuming power through knowledge is pivotal. In the case of folk and fairy tales, the truth would encompass moral values as signs of "good" and brutality and wickedness as "evil."

Thus, the studies on the hidden meanings behind the outer layer of pure joy and innocence in the Grimms' and Mizo folk and fairy tales suggest that these tales are worth much more than mere bedtime stories of fun. These tales, in actuality, equates fancy and imagination with a world which is consistent and rational and there exists a projection of the real world. It is in these tales that one discovers the potency of the words, and the wonder of things, such as mere stone and wood, and iron, tree and grass, house and fire and even bread and wine. These tales also allow one to review one's own world from the "perspective" of a different world and in this sense, certain unquestioned assumptions might be recovered and changed by an outside perspective. Also, apart from offering escapist pleasure to the reader and listener, the Grimms' and Mizo folk and fairy tales provide moral or emotional consolation, through their happy endings.

With roots in the oral tradition, folk and fairy tales have been constantly evolving from across the years. They are impressions of reality and therefore, they provide a vehicle for sharing caution, fears, and values, while also entertaining with fantasy. Jack Zipes opines:

> In essence, the meaning of the fairy tales can only be fully grasped if the magic spell is broken and if the politics and utopian impulse of the narratives are related to the socio-historical forces which distinguished them. (Zipes, *The Great Fairy*,17)

Over the centuries, folk and fairy tales continue to carry their basic storyline as they evolve while also incorporating specific cultural elements. Bruno Bettelheim wrote that their meaning and role in society "carry important messages to the conscious, the preconscious, and the unconscious mind, on whatever level each is functioning at the time" (Bettelheim, 6) as well as conveying universal human problems. Historians and enthusiasts of folk tales, such as Marina Warner, Bruno Bettelheim, and Jack Zipes, agree that the exact origins of folk tales remain cloudy and uncertain because we cannot pinpoint exactly how a tale began and who was the originator of the tale.[1] Over time, folk tales have been created organically and they moved haphazardly across borders, societies, and generations. Zipes comments:

> In fact, the literary fairy tale has evolved from the stories of oral tradition, piece by piece in a process of incremental adaptation, generation by generation in the

> different cultures of the people who cross-fertilized the oral tales and disseminated them. (Zipes, *The Great Fairy*, xi)

Folk and fairy tale project fantastic other worlds, but they also pay close attention to real moral "laws" of character and virtue. By portraying wonderful and frightening worlds in which ugly beasts are transformed into princes and evil persons are turned to stones and good persons back to flesh, the Grimms fairy tales as well as the Mizo tales, remind readers and listeners of moral truths. The notion that folk and fairy tales stimulate and instruct the moral imagination of the young is, of course, not new. The Victorians certainly held to that notion when they brought the fairy tale into the nursery. Bruno Bettelheim gives this an important impetus when he states:

> It hardly requires emphasis at this moment in our history that children need a moral education... that teaches not through abstract ethical concepts but through that which seems tangibly right and therefore meaningful.... The child finds this kind of meaning through fairy tales. (Bettelheim, 1)

Marina Warner spoke a simple but profound truth when she said that "a story is a way to say something that can't be said any other way.... You tell a story because a statement would be inadequate."(Warner, 3) The great fairy tales of the Grimms and the Mizo tales, as have been discussed in the earlier chapters, capture the meaning of morality through vivid depictions of struggles between good and evil where characters must make difficult choices between right and

wrong, or heroes and villains contest the very fate of imaginary worlds. The great tales provide didacticism and supply the imagination with important symbolic information about the shape of our world and appropriate responses to its inhabitants.

The Grimms depict character and virtue clearly as is found in Mizo tales as well. In these stories, virtue glimmers, and wickedness and deception are unmasked of their pretensions while goodness and truth prevail. These stories make one face the unvarnished truth about man while compelling one to consider what kind of people one would want to be.[2]The tales chosen for study have transported the reader into other worlds that are replete with wonder, surprise, and danger. They challenge the readers to make sense out of those other worlds, to navigate their way through them, and to imagine themselves in the place of the heroes and heroines who populate those worlds. The safety and assurance of these imaginative adventures is that risks can be taken without having to endure all of the consequences of failure. The joy is in discovering how these risky adventures might eventuate in satisfactory and happy outcomes. Yet the concept of self is also transformed. The images and metaphors in these stories stay with the readers even after they have returned to the "real" world.

The tales chosen for study resonate with the deepest qualities of being a true human, of freedom, and of the moral imagination. The “fairy tale philosopher”, wrote Chesterton, is "glad that the leaf is green precisely because it could have been scarlet.... He is pleased that snow is

white on the strictly reasonable ground that it might have been black. Every colour has in it a bold quality as of choice; the red of garden roses is not only decisive but dramatic, like spilt blood. He feels that something has been done,"(Chesterton, 16) There is a sense of willingness in all of it as if someone decided that things ought to be this way instead of another way and that these things are repeated either in order to improve them or simply because they are a source of delight in their repetition. The fairy-tale philosopher respects the deeper mystery of freedom in its transcendent source.

These tales also convey to readers and listeners that there is a difference between what is logically possible and what is morally felicitous, between what is rationally possible and what is morally permissible. They have norms of behavior that obtain in patterns of relation between agent, act, other, and world. While they are not a substitute for life experience, they have the great capacity to shape man's moral constitution without the shortcomings of either rigidly dogmatic schooling or values-clarification education.

> Folk tales were autonomous reflectors of actual and possible normative behavior which could strengthen social bonds or create more viable ones.(Zipes, *Breaking,* 6)

Another important aspect that have been indicated in the Grimms' and Mizo folk and fairy tales is the apt illustration of transformations or metamorphosis. By portraying wonderful

and frightening worlds in which ugly beasts are transformed into princes and evil persons are turned to stones and good persons back to flesh, these folk and fairy tales alter one's perception of normativity and permanence, of love against odds and in contrast, of profound evil inherent in man. They denote that love freely given is better than obedience that is coerced. Courage that rescues the innocent is noble whereas, cowardice that betrays others for self-gain or self-preservation is worthy only of disdain. They describe plainly that virtue and vice are opposites and not just a matter of degree. They show that the virtues fit into character and complete man's world in the same way that goodness naturally fills all things. On the other hand, the cruelty and vice detected in the tales are gruesome to the extreme; they project evil at its height and through them, denote how man is capable of such indecent behavior. Countless number of abuses and torture, physically and verbally, as well as subjugation and persecution are apparent issues found in the Grimms' tales as well as Mizo tale. As Maria Tatar opines:

> Children are sacrificed for the well-being of a friend; older brothers are condemned to death at the birth of a daughter; a child is fed to the father by the mother; a daughter's hands are cut of by the father. (Tatar, 94).

The above statement denotes the severity of the abuses meted out to the victims. The use of fear and violence in folk and fairy tales is a contentious issue which illuminates disparities of societal difference between those who are firmly entrenched in beliefs of righteousness and others who

believe no harm is done by frightening children with violence. Some critics believe that children need to be shielded from all displays of violence, especially violence found in folk and fairy tales, because children might reproduce them and exert damage within the society. Conversely, others are also of the opinion that such portrayal is necessary in our increasingly violent and fearful culture. Exposing children to violence in the tales allows for healthy discourse and provides a means to discuss fears and insecurities in the real world. According to Gillian Cross, make-believe characters and fantasy contribute in a positive way to the dialogue—in ways in which a violent television show or movie could not. She says:

> I think [violence is] crucial to the nature of children's fiction. Death and danger and injury are hard, definite, dramatic things. Either they have happened, or they haven't. They change you. Real life is like that, too. (Cross, 45)

What truly defines folk and fairy tales are the natural ways in which a metamorphosis occurs in the fantasy world. Marina Warner describes this metamorphosis as as shape-shifting which “creates a huge theatre of possibility in the stories: anything can happen.”(Warner, 45) Shape-shifting is one of fairy tale's dominant and characteristic wonders: hands are cut off, found and reattached, children are cooked and eaten, but they are later restored to life, a frog turns into a handsome prince, humans turn into flowers and ponds, tigers turn into humans and swan maidens becomes normal beings without their wings. Their true selves are often hidden or

disrupted by the beastly figure on the surface and it is usually by facing violent trials and tribulations, within a society that imposes its own idea of beauty and repulsiveness, that they find their true selves. These folk and fairy tale enchantment would not hold its hard edge without a little fear and violence thrown into the storyline and it is the magical qualities of overcoming the seemingly impossible that really draw children in. Without these elements, the fairy tale becomes just another sanitized story and it starts to lose some of its magical qualities. Jack Zipes critiques the critics of folk and fairy tales fervent in the 'exposing children to fear and violence' debate by claiming that the opponents of fairy tale violence are missing the point. In *Don't Bet on the Prince: Contemporary Feminist Fairy Tales in North America and England* he says:

> Instead of examining social relations and psychological behaviour first—the very stuff which constitutes the subject matter of the tales—both the proponents and opponents of fairy tales have based and continue to base their criticism on the harsh scenes and sexual connotations of the tales, supposedly suitable or unsuitable for children. [...] The code words of the debate change, but there is, in fact, a 'real problem' which remains: the moral attack against fairy tales (censorship) and the rational defence of the tales (liberal civil rights) emanate from a mutual repression of what is actually happening in society. (Zipes, *Don't Bet,* 1)

Childhood is a very frightening and intimidating period for a multitude of reasons, but trying to attribute all of this fear to folk tales is unfair and ill-informed. Stepping back and looking at the social context of why folk tales were created illuminates great concern for the well being of children. However, it is important to note that the environment in which the folk and fairy tales are told contribute highly to how they are perceived by children.

One could posit society is to be charged for the fear and violence found in folk and fairy tales and moreover, frightened children grow up to share the thrill of fear with others because it is a learned activity. Terry Heller opines:

> We know from childhood experience that tales of terror can really frighten us, though we may not understand why we ever listened to such stories or how we survived them. (Teller, 206)

Some critics claim that it is not the folk and fairy tale that is terrifying, but the stigma surrounding such tales. After all, as Maser opines, "we humans are born without fear. We are taught fear, first and foremost by our parents when they themselves face fear with a constant knot of fear in their hearts, minds, and bellies." (Maser, 25)

Most fairy tales begin with a somewhat believable setting, move through episodes of fear and violence to prove a point, then end with "and they lived happily ever after." This

demonstrates that these legends of the literary tradition are balanced and wholesome, despite criticism from all angles. The folk and fairy tales, as depicted in the Grimms' *Children and Household Tales* and Mizo Tales, can be viewed as allegories or dramatic representations of complex psychological processes—usually those of transformation and growth. They are marvellous vehicles for gaining insights and learning about oneself and basic human tendencies. As allegories, these tales carry valuable statements in symbolic form about human nature. Stories can be analyzed in a practical way as a means of developing useful tools that may aid us in reflecting upon things that we observe and do in our daily lives. The folk and fairy tales that have been studied in this thesis illustrate their allegorical value in understanding human mental processes and to offer solutions to human issues, ultimately leading to transformation and more fulfilling lives. They have also been found to indicate the potential destructiveness of behaving unconsciously, ego-centeredly, or trying to gain power over others, in contrast to being guided by the eros motive of mutual respect. Stories frequently provide clues as to the basic struggles of human beings. They symbolize the yearnings, the dreams and the wishes of these two societies. As such, they serve to unite the people in the community and help bridge a gap in their understanding of social problems by depicting narratives familiar to the experiences of the listeners and readers. Consequently, folk and fairy tales can help one to gain insights into some of basic human tendencies. The tales could also be analyzed as a means to develop useful tools that may aid one in reflecting upon things that can be observed and accomplished. Marie-Louise

von Franz rightly claims that folk and fairy tales “mirror the basic structure of the psyche” (Franz, 2). The various tales taken into consideration can be viewed as dramatic and dynamic interactions among combinations of those personality parts or components. To be attracted to or repelled by a folk or fairy tale indicates that the story contains something that resonates with an unconscious process in the reader or listener, for one cannot be attracted or repelled unless one recognizes something that is personally meaningful.Recognition indicates the possibility of a healing awareness through a discovery of processes that have been imaged in the stories

When the Grimms’ tales and Mizo tales are placed together in comparision, the incidents, plots, and characters of the tales are almost identical. Everywhere one finds the legends of the ill-treated, but ultimately successful protagonists; of the triumphant youngest son; of the false bride substituted for the true; of the giant's wife or daughter who elopes with the adventurer, and of the stepmother's pursuit; everywhere there is the story about the wife who is forced by some mysterious cause, to leave her husband, or of the husband driven from his wife, a story which sometimes ends in the reunion of the pair. The coincidences of this kind are very numerous, and they therefore can be grouped together in a kaleidoscopic variety of arrangements.

It is also remarkable that the incidents of the Grimms’ tales and Mizo tales are of both a monstrous, irrational, and unnatural character, answering to nothing in one’s experience as well as familiar, ordinary incidents and characters. All animate and inanimate nature is on an

intellectual level with man. Not only do beasts, birds, and fishes talk, but they actually intermarry, or propose to inter marry, with human beings. Queens are accused of giving births to puppies and the charge is believed. Men and women are changed into beasts. Inanimate objects, drops of blood, drops of spittle, trees, rocks, are capable of speech. Cannibals are as common in the role of the villain as solicitors and baronets are in modern novels. Everything yields to the spell of magical rhymes or incantations.

In relating their collected fairy tales, the Grimm brothers sought the purity of straightforward narration. They kept close to the original story, adding nothing of circumstance or trait. They said: "Our first care was faithfulness to the truth. We strove to penetrate into the wild forests of our ancestors, listening to their noble language, watching their pure customs, recognizing their ancient freedom and hearty faith." (Grimm, xv) Their aim was to preserve ancient wisdom which, during their lifetime, was still alive among some of the old people. The scientific age had come in full swing and many people had little or no understanding of those "old, superstitious and untrue tales." The Grimm brothers thought differently, and when they listened to oral narrators, who told their stories with great exactness and no variations in repetitions, they penetrated into the imaginative dream world of a child and experienced the healthy, original strength that was inborn in these stories. They realized the educational value of the stories, and learned to read between the lines. And to this day, the Grimms fairy tales are

accepted as a means of entertainment as much as Mizo tales are celebrated within the Mizo society as leaving a substantial by-product which has a moral significance.

It is a well-known fact that folk and fairy tales have their origin in the period of humanity's own childhood, in far-distant times when people lived in a naive dreamlike state of the soul, before the unfolding of intellectual capacities. They are imaginative pictures of successive stages of human development and probably were perceived independently in different countries. It is a quite frequent occurrence in the history of inventions that the same idea springs up in different localities simultaneously. Play in the child's own created world is a sort of dream, and the dreaming is a manifestation of artistic union with the world about him. However, the child in time must part from this comforting enclave gradually to awaken to his own self-hood. This process of awakening, this gradual conquest of his own personality, is painted in the most vivid colours in folk and fairy tales and this is the reason why folk and fairy tales are liked by children and make such a deep and lasting impression. As folk and fairy tales are imaginative analogies of the inner development of humanity as a whole as well as that of the individual child, they are the best spiritual nourishment which a child can possibly receive during the period of transition or awakening. In many of the Grimms' fairy tales, one finds a prince and a princess in the center of events. In a great variety of ways the bewitched prince or the enchanted princess is

finally set free. The ultimate marriage pictures the conscious union of the two, the prince—the human ego, and the princess— the soul, after many struggles and trials.

The essential plot of a fairy tale is cautionary, designed to hone in on the innermost fears of the small and powerless, submerging the listener in danger but pointing to a way out that does not involve superiority of size or brute strength. It is part warning, part reassurance. Bruno Bettelheim suggests the dark complexities of traditional fairy tales are vital to our social, psychological and sexual development. Fairy tales are a densely coded guidebook to aid in growing up.

> In order to master the psychological problems of growing up – overcoming narcissistic disappointments, oedipal dilemmas, sibling rivalries; becoming able to relinquish childhood dependencies; gaining a feeling of selfhood and self-worth, and a sense of moral obligation - a child needs to understand what is going on in his conscious self so that he can also cope with that which goes on in his unconscious.(Bettelheim, 98)

Understanding comes from learning how to daydream, positioning the self in a series of fantasy situations that allow the exploration of possibilities beyond the limits of physical experience.

> It is here that fairy tales have unequaled value, because they offer new dimensions to the child's imagination which would be impossible for him to discover as truly on his own. Even more important, the form and structure of fairy tales suggest images to the child by which he can structure his daydreams and with them give better direction to his life.(Bettelheim, 101)

However, for rounded development to occur, anxiety must be addressed in fantasies, alongside pleasure.

> Many parents believe that only conscious reality or pleasant and wish-fulfilling images should be presented to the child – that he should be exposed only to the sunny side of things. But such one-sided fare nourishes the mind only in a one-sided way, and real life is not all sunny.(Bettelheim, 112)

Bettelheim believes that traditional fairy tales are constructed to communicate the non-sunny side of life. They effectively convey the message:

> that a struggle against severe difficulties in life is unavoidable, is an intrinsic part of human existence – but that if one doesn't shy away, but steadfastly meets unexpected and often unjust hardships, one masters all obstacles and emerges

> victorious…The fairy tale… confronts the child squarely with the basic human predicament.(Bettelheim, 134)

For a child, the basic human predicament is terrifying. Children fear death, of a parent, of a sibling, especially a newborn infant. They fear abandonment. They fear the giant adults who tower above them. They fear the dark. They fear the things that lurk in the forest and deep in the muddy lake. They fear the slavering jaws of the big bad wolf, snakebite, the prick of a needle or a thorn. They fear the anger of an elderly female neighbour. They fear sickness, the kind that comes from nowhere and leads to loss, of strength, of sight, of limbs. They fear hunger. They fear growing up lonely. Fairy tales deal with all these fears, spinning them into a safe, fictional framework. Understanding comes from fear. Wisdom is found in dark places. Courage comes only from confronting the ogres, the trolls, the wolves, the goblins and maleficent witches who populate the folk and fairy world. Transgression is punished, but leads to redemption. Good struggles against Evil, but always wins in the end. Victory comes through intelligence, not brute strength. Those who side with Good live happily ever after, but those who cleave to Evil are burned, pierced, broken, transformed and condemned, never to be seen again. All these elements that harbour violence and fear help to steer readers and listeners towards moral adequacy that conforms to societal norms.

Children over the aeons have made no objections towards the macabre details: the cannibalism, the bloodshed, the amputations, the kidnappings, the murders, or the red-hot iron torture devices. The more monstrous the threat, the more grotesque the punishment, the easier the lesson was to understand and remember. The Mizo and Grimm's folk and fairy talesare the original atrocity exhibition. Just as many these folk and fairy tales hinge upon a revelation of the truth about those who have been somehow disguised, so too, these tales cut to the essence of the human psyche. In like manner, folk and fairy tales might prove, like dreams, windows into the unconscious.

The Grimms' and Mizo tales, when studied together, reveal numerous common strands of themes and predicaments. Archetypes can be detected through a study of all these which are universal, archaic patterns and images that derive from the collective unconscious and are the psychic counterpart of instinctThey are autonomous and hidden forms which are transformed once they enter consciousness. and are given particular expression by individuals and their cultures. Being unconscious, the existence of archetypes can only be deduced indirectly by examining behavior, images, art, myths, religions, or dreams. They are inherited potentials which are actualized when they enter consciousness as images or manifest in behavior on interaction with the outside world. Some Jungians argue that one reason fairy tales appeal to children is that they are in a stage of their development only slightly removed from deeper layers of the

collective unconscious. Jungian therapists study fairy tales to help analyze the dreams of their patients. Jung's disciples have gone on to interpret fairy tales as lives in miniature, suggesting, for example, that each character within a tale may represent an aspect of personality.

The "collective unconscious" that lies at the core of his work, and which Jung believed is shared by all human beings, is revealed through archetypes, forms and symbols which are found in ample evidence in fairy tales. The "collective unconscious" is proposed to be a part of the unconscious mind, expressed in humanity and all life forms with nervous systems, and it describes how the structure of the psyche autonomously organizes experience. Jung distinguished the collective unconscious from the personal unconscious, in that the personal unconscious is a personal reservoir of experience unique to each individual, while the collective unconscious collects and organizes those personal experiences in a similar way with each member of a particular species. He defines the collective unconscious as:

> My thesis then, is as follows: in addition to our immediate consciousness, which is of a thoroughly personal nature and which we believe to be the only empirical psyche (even if we tack on the personal unconscious as an appendix), there exists a second psychic system of a collective, universal, and impersonal nature which is identical in all individuals. This collective unconscious does not develop individually but is inherited. It consists of pre-existent forms, the archetypes,

> which can only become conscious secondarily and which give definite form to certain psychic contents.(Jung, 43)

Thus, fairy tales are an important tool for children who are learning to navigate reality and are attempting to survive in a world that is ruled by adults. The family conflicts and moral education of the protagonists (conveniently often children themselves) could provide models of coping. Fairy tales are loved by the child because despite all the angry, anxious thoughts in readers' minds to which the fairy tale gives body and specific context, these stories always result in a happy outcome, which the child cannot imagine on his own. The morality of fairy tales is very complicated, with protagonists known to lie, cheat, steal and torture villains. But there remains something empowering and psychologically insightful in these stories that demonstrate the "triumph of small and weak over tall and powerful".

Power politics dominate the entire setup of folk and fairy tales that have been selected for study in this thesis, with specific social structure, leaning towards patriarchy in which women are clearly the less powerful. Lacking a model of maternal agency, and having a weak or absent father, characters in the tales find in perfect romantic love the only feminine role available from which to act, albeit passively, and the sole source of feminine accomplishment. Offering only blissful fantasies of feminine helplessness, the best-known fairy tales stir readers to anticipate and even welcome miracu- lous masculine rescue. The evil characters on the other hand, can find

agency only through fraud and manipulation. Meanwhile, the fairy-tale fathers' established authority, acquired from maleness alone, assures paternal figures control and status without their having to resort to deception. Yet witch and step- mother lie, not to take over the seat of power but to move closer to the male figures, be they kings or simply fathers. These fairy-tale women defraud and betray children's trust in their quest to appeal to men. "Fairy tales, therefore, have an important role to play in shaping the self- image and belief system of children. (Zipes ,*Breaking*, 84) He frames six key features in how the fairy tale, originally written for adults, was institutionalized for children. Firstly, the social function of the fairy tale must be didactic and teach a lesson that corroborates the code of civility as it was being developed at that time; secondly, it must be short so that children can remember and memorize it and so that both adults and children can repeat it orally; thirdly, it must pass the censorship of adults so that it can be easily circulated; fourthly, it must address social issues such as obligation, sex roles, class differences, power, and decorum so that it will appeal to adults, especially those who publish and publicize the tales; fifthly, it must be suitable to be used with children in a schooling situation; and finally, it must reinforce a notion of power within the children of the upper classes and suggest ways for them to maintain power. As such, Zipes' framework indicates that there are disputes at play in folk and fairy tales and these have been reflected in the study of the selected tales.

The adult's dream of childhood can be traced in the history of the fairy tale. For the most part, it is assumed that folk and fairy tales are stories for children and that perhaps they are considered to be engage in as adults only as a form of nostalgia. It is understood that the fairy tale is world of fantasy left behind with the maturity that comes with adulthood. Yet every cultural artifact has its cultural heritage, and fairy tales are no exception. Zipes traces the history of the fairy tale from their origin in oral folk tales. He claims, "Fairy tales were first told by gifted storytellers and were based on rituals intended to endow meaning to the daily lives of members of a tribe" (Zipes, *Fairy Tale as Myth*, 10). Such tales assisted the community communal activities such as harvesting, marriages, festivals and other essential events. In the transition from the oral tradition to the literary tradition of folk tales, fairy tales as one knows them today were born. What can now be considered to be fairy tales evolved from one type of folk tale tradition known as the *Zaubermarchen* or the "magic tales" (Zipes, *Fairy Tale as Myth,* 11). These tales in particular were co-opted by French writers of the late sixteenth century and transformed into literary tales that "addressed the concerns, tastes, and functions of court society" (Zipes, *Fairy Tale as Myth*, 11).

Not intended originally for young readers, fairy tales by the beginning of the twentieth century were considered children's fare. As the audience for fairy tales shifted, so did the lessons within them. For instance, the revisions made by the Brothers Grimm after 1819 reveal the

brothers', particularly Wilhelm's, desire to make *Children's and Household Tales* more suitable for a younger audience. In their introduction to the 1819 edition the brothers discuss "the manner in which they made the stories more pure, truthful and just." In the process, they "eliminated those passages which they thought would be harmful for children's eyes" (Zipes, *Fairy Tales,* 48). This included censoring any material that was sexual, while lurid portrayals of child abuse, starvation, and exposure, like fastidious descriptions of cruel punishments, on the whole escaped censorship.

An examination of Mizo and Grimms' folk and fairy tales concludes that any violence or fear found in a majority of tales is quickly countered by forces of good. Terry Windling suggests:

> In fairy tales evil is as omnipresent as virtue. In practically every fairy tale good and evil are given body in the form of some figures and their actions, as good and evil are omnipresent in life and the propensities for both are present in every man. It is this duality which poses the moral problem, and requires the struggle to solve it. (Windling, 8-9)

By presenting good and bad in a balanced way, children will more likely achieve independent judgment. The characters form a dynamic substratum common which is to all humanity, upon the foundation of which each individual builds his or her own experience of life, colouring them with his or her unique culture, personality and life events. Thus, while characters

themselves may be conceived as a relative few innate nebulous forms, from these may arise innumerable images, symbols and patterns of behavior. While the emerging images and forms are apprehended consciously, the archetypes which inform them are elementary structures which are unconscious and impossible to apprehend. Both stepmother and witch are closely related and are often the same person in the fairy tales. As she is old and ugly she is jealous of the heroine and thus, hates her. Age in these folk and fairy tales often is equated with ugliness and evil. Witches are strong women who dare to cross and step outside proscribed boundaries. They threaten social order, emasculate men, and destroy love and beauty. Their punishment and death at the end of each story serve as a warning to a tale's audience which comprises mostly children. Women have been projected as those who are more closely associated with materiality and those who have more control over the natural elements. They are also hoarders of wealth and material riches. If a man's domain is the spirit and higher reasoning, the woman's domain becomes the body and sensuality. Witches are able to manipulate the elements and cause crop failure, disease, and pestilence because their feminine nature allows them to dominate this sphere. Witches sometimes possess (and occasionally hoard) material wealth in the stories. This gives them power over their victims, which they leverage to make unreasonable demands of those who have little or no resources. They draw their power and gain their resources from nature. If they claim an inside space, then they use the city or the castle, or the tower to hoard their resources or to imprison their victims.

Beauty earns the heroine love and usually allows her to move into a higher social and economic sphere. It does not matter if she is rich or poor, if she is beautiful, then she can marry a prince and become royalty and produce an heir. Beauty is often associated with productiveness as well as goodness. Age is equated with evil, ugliness, and uselessness. The “old crone” can no longer produce (children or valuable labor). She possesses no beauty and is, therefore, regarded as worthless. She is a burden to society because she has nothing to offer, and is demonized because of her uselessness. Her anger and jealousy stem from her knowledge that she is no longer a producer and takes it out on the woman who replaces her in the chain of production. Ugliness is equated with laziness and the poor are taught to despise themselves for their poverty. Engaging and familiar as "happily ever after" narratives for children and adults alike, fairy tales exert a noticeable influence on cultural ideals of goodness, images of evil, models of manhood and woman- hood, and fantasies about "true love. in providing visual images to children that give them cultural information about themselves, others, and the relative status of group membership. In other words, self-image in children is shaped in some degree by exposure to images which are found in folk and fairy tales that have been documented in writng. Moreover, it is clear that children, if they are to develop a positive self-image, need to "see" themselves or their images in texts. Folk and fairy tales, therefore, can serve to reinforce or counter negative notions of self-image. . The volumes of the Brothers Grimm following on several other scientific collections, and the notes of the Grimms, showed that popular tales deserved scholarly study. The collection

of the Grimms has been succeeded by researches made across the globe. There are tales from the Norse, French, Breton, Gaelic, Welsh, Spanish, Scotch, Romaic, Finnish, Italian in fact, the topic of Household Tales is now considered an immense worth in a number of theoretical fields.

Thus, the presence of shadows, of evil and foreboding darkness have been depicted in the form of violence exerted upon characters. The muted, passive and subjugated protagonists are unjustly assaulted, starved and abandoned. These render the victims to reduce to a state of helplessness, degeneration. They are also removed from their comfort zone and placed into a space of the unknown, inducing them to cower in fright and in despair. Thus, fear is often generated by these very causes because the feeling of revulsion sets in when these dark aspects are seen, heard, or otherwise experienced. These are the very aspects that have been unearthed in each of the chapters that have been studied. By exposing and analyzing these shadows that have been remaining beneath the apparent innocent layer, the core reality of the tales have been observed. In doing so, this study establishes that the shadows are essential pointers to moral values and teachings. Through a depiction of violence in various forms and varying degrees, the tales spur the readers' imagination, help children in particular to develop their intellect and to clarify their emotions. They help to regulate anxieties and aspirations, help to recognize difficulties and in turn, provide solutions to the problems that might approach children and adults alike. They provide avenues to understanding complex personalities, in exercising the various

mechanisms of resistance and espousal necessary for facing life. This is so because man is inevitably exposed to society and undeniably must learn to cope with its conditions. Folk and fairy tales, in that context, endow possibilities.

Through a broad analysis of the darker realm of folk and fairy tales in this thesis, it can be asserted that violence, in all its forms, is often responsible for the presence of dark beasts and mysterious maidens in the world of folk and fairy tales. The reason can be ascertained by considering characters who perform metamorphosis. These characters seek protection by transforming their appearances to defend themselves from persecutors while at other times, some other characters who are evil also assume disguises to revert to the role of a monster or a beast. Some transformed characters may also be initially seen as fearsome or otherwise, mysterious, but eventually prove that their exterior appearances have only been concealing the inherent good inside them. By facing violent trials and tribulations, within a society that imposes its own idea of beauty and repulsiveness, they are compelled to seek out their true selves by undergoing violent trials. However, on many occasions in the tale, there are instances of characters who possess only deep vile thoughts and are obsessed with the idea of meeting their solitary gain. These characters use magic to alter themselves so that their self-seeking quest would be rewarded. In folk and fairy tales, when a form is taken on involuntarily, the thematic effect is one of confinement and restraint; the person is bound to the new form. Voluntary forms, on the other

hand, are means of escape and liberation; even when the form is not undertaken to effect a literal escape, the abilities specific to the form, or the disguise afforded by it, allow the character to act in a manner previously impossible. In the tales that have been studied, shape-shifting has been seen to take place mostly as a transformation of a human being into an animal or vive versa and at other times, into plants and inanimate objects.

Another significant aspect that has been detected in the tales is the negotiation of power in the sphere of folk and fairy tales. The tales become sites of power struggle where orphans and children in general are abused because they are helpless, where women are rendered passive because they are the weaker sex and where the lower members in the social strata are dictated by those higher in the hierarchy. The Grimms' and Mizo tales echo communities that divide themselves into hierarchies, between royalty and subjects and even within the micro level of family as well. Very often in the tales, one witnesses power exertion moving from subordinates to leaders which ultimately leads to differing outcomes in the end, often in favour of the subordinates. There are times too, however, when the subordinates are disempowered and meet distressing fates in the end. Thus, the tales denote that power circulates throughout the stories.

On the whole, these tales seemingly progress in peaceful fantasy on the exterior, in an exotic land of wonder where innocent children and magical beings converge. Hence, they appear seemingly devoid of evil. But there are dark and evil forces that lurk beneath and a closer

inspection of these seemingly innocent tales reveals various facets of violence and fear that engender the answers to these very questions as have been denoted in the preceding chapters

## NOTES

[1] Since the origin of folktales cannot be ascertained, these critics have simply asserted that they have been in existence for thousands of years in the oral form and became "literary fairy tales" only in the seventeenth century. They also claim that the folk tale was (and still is) an oral narrative form cultivated by non-literate and literate people to express the manner in which they perceived and perceive nature and their social order.

[2] The tales of the Brothers Grimm and those of the Mizos represent the aspirations, needs, dreams and wishes of common people in a tribe, community or society, and in this case, both German society and pre-colonial Mizo society. The tales reflect the rise of bourgeoisie aspiration in Germany during the seventeenth century and the social norms of Mizo society before 1900. The tales, thus, affirm the dominant social values and norms and reveal the necessity to change them.

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# *APPENDICES*

| | |
|---|---|
| **NAME OF CANDIDATE** | **: Jamie Zodinsangi Hrahsel** |
| **DEGREE** | **: Ph.D** |
| **DEPARTMENT** | **: English** |
| **TITLE OF THESIS** | **: Shadows in the Light: Rereading the Cultural Dynamics of Selected Folk and Fairy Tales.** |
| **DATE OF PAYMENT OF ADMISSION** | **: Dt. 16. 02. 2010** |
| **(Commencement of First Sem)** | |
| **REGISTRATION NO. & DATE** | **: MZU/Ph.D/389 of 13.05.2011** |
| **DATE OF Ph.D VIVA VOCE EXAMINATION** | **: Dt. 05.08.2016** |
| **DUE DATE OF SUBMISSION** | **: Dt. 10/08/2016** |
| **EXTENSION (IF ANY)** | **: N.A.** |

**Head**

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**Name**: Jamie Zodinsangi Hrahsel

**Father's name:** Rongura Hrahsel

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**Phone No.:** 09862841937/ 0389- 2325668

**Designation:** Asst. Professor, Dept. of English, Pachhunga University College.

**Educational Qualifications:**

| **Class** | **Board/University** | **Year of Passing** | **Division/Grade** | **Percentage** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| HSLC | MBSE | 2000 | Distinction | 78.7% |
| HSSLC | AISSCE | 2003 | I | 72.6% |
| B.A. | Mizoram University | 2006 | II | 59.75% |
| M.A. | --do-- | 2008 | I | 61.06% |
| M.Phil. | --do-- | 2010 | O | 10 pt. scale grading system, 'O' corresponds to 7 - 10 pts. |
| NET | UGC | 2009 | Secured JRF (Junior Research Fellowship) | |

**Ph.D Regn. No and Date**: MZU/Ph.D/389 of 15.5.2011

**Other relevant information**:

List of Publications:

| Sl. No. | Year | Title of Chapter/ Research paper | Name of book/ journal | Publication details (Place/ Publishers) with ISBN/ISSN |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | 2014 | "Globalization and the Mizo Imagination: Reflections on Vanneitluanga's 'A Frog's Frock'", *Globalization and Ethnic Identity*, | *Globalization and Ethnic Identity, pg.* 203-9 | Place: Guwahati Pub: Scientific Book Centre. ISBN: 978-81-287-0004-0 |
| | 2014 | Unveiling the Moral Elements through Darkness in Select Folk and Fairy Tales | Contemporary Discourse: A Peer-Reviewed International Journal, Vol 5, Issue pg. 562-68 | ISSN 0976-3686 |
| | 2016 | Folktales and Culture: Representations of Orphans In Select Mizo Folktales | Emergent Identities in Literature, pg.23-29 | Place: Noida Publication: Headword Publishing Company ISBN: 978-9-38-565645-3 |