

Challenging the Archetypes: Re-visitation of Fairy Tales

Abstract:

This study aims to highlight how the revisited American fairytale movies shun the archetypal symbols, characters and situations of the previous fairy tales. The researcher analyzes the new set of norms that are proposed by the postmodernists, which are positioned to shun the metanarratives and work against totality by waging war against it (Lyotard 71-82). The perspective in doing so is to find out the changes in the original stories which have challenged the collective unconsciousness. Collective Unconscious, according to Jung, are the unconscious feelings present among human beings as species. They are universally present in every man's psyche, and the unconscious of man has some primal images, which are depicted through symbols. These symbols are not limited to any particular culture or history (Four Archetypes 4). Jung calls the contents of the collective unconscious the "archetypes" (4). Postmodernists have challenged the archetypal patterns stated by the philosophers of archetypes, and they have attempted to break these archetypal patterns, or according to the postmodernists, the "metanarratives".

Key Words:

Fairy Tales, Deconstruction, Archetypes

Introduction

In the contemporary period, the revised versions or reactions of previous works are very famous among the writers. The revised versions of the fairy tales, particularly, have attempted to challenge the archetypal patterns present in literature. Carl Jung purports that there are certain symbols, images, characters, and motifs which are called archetypes. They are present universally in every individual's unconscious, which is why it is called collective unconsciousness. Jung divides the psyche into three parts: namely ego, personal unconscious and the collective unconscious. The first one comprises of the conscious level of mind, the second one is based on all the unconscious thoughts, which include suppressed memories, but they can be brought back to the surface. The last one, the collective unconscious, is unique, and he terms it "psychic existence" (4). While he elaborates this phrase by asserting that whatever human beings experience as a species, becomes part of a collective data set that is shared by every individual belonging to the kind, without even having to learn it. The collective set of information is pre-stored in the minds of humans and is automatically passed on to the next generations. However, the individuals are not conscious about receiving these notions and ideas about life that they involuntarily get for being part of the human race. Hence, the psychic contents of this "collective unconscious" do not belong to a single individual; rather, they belong to society. There are many instances of such examples of Collective unconscious thoughts interpreted in many man-made things.

For instance, the creative works of the artists represent the thoughts present in their minds, and it is not astounding when one finds similar patterns in the works of art.

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Some prime examples of the collective unconscious can be traced in fairy tales and myths. The myths are the very first phenomena, which reveal the inner thoughts of a person. An individual is not interested in what is happening outside; rather, he has an urge to encounter anything that happens outside with his inner nature. Sun, as Jung explains, does not only imply that it rises and sets, but a man actually visualizes god or a hero in it; even different seasons of nature have certain symbolic existence among the unconscious of mankind (6). In *Man and his Symbols*, it is asserted that everything takes up the form of symbols; be it natural, man-made or abstract thing, the whole universe takes the form of symbols. A man with his tendency of symbol making unconsciously turns entities into symbols and expresses them in religion as well as in visual art ([Jung and Franz 232](#)). The postmodernists break the conventions and try to distort the collective unconsciousness by transforming the roles and symbols in contemporary movies.

The present research aims to analyze how contemporary fairy tale movies have challenged archetypal literary patterns. The theoretical framework is archetypal criticism which is used to highlight that the contemporary moviemakers are challenging the archetypal literary patterns. The study is qualitative in approach, analyzing the text of media.

Literature Review

Archetypal literary criticism deals with the analysis of recurring patterns, myths and archetypes present in the texts. According to Lukens (27), myths are stories that originate in the beliefs of nations and races and present episodes in which supernatural forces operate. Furthermore, myths are stories that interpret natural phenomena, show people's relationships with each other, display the ways human beings see the forces, which control them. Myths also explain creation, religion, and divinities; they guess at the meaning of life and death or at the cause of good and evil. The term archetype was first used by Samuel Johnson; he gave the importance of the general nature of human beings. A human being derived from passion has an archetype within him. Campbell states about the myths:

Throughout the inhabited world, in all times and under every circumstance, the myths of man have flourished; and they have been the living inspiration of whatever else may have appeared out of the activities of the human body and mind (2).

Such images never appear consciously. Through the unconscious, such Mythic narratives keep on evolving. They are in communion, and they evolve according to the meaning they create for themselves in human life, and their being emerges after the dialogue with their ancestors.

Frye calls literary criticism a systematic study dealing with arts. He implies that the base of criticism is how literature affects its readers. He further adds that the study of literature must be centripetal, and the learning process must be concerned only with the "structural analysis of a literary work" (505). Work of art is always complex while clearing the blur created by these complexities; philosophy and history must be looked into, but the centre of attention must be literature itself. He finds it missing from criticism. He says that there must be a coordinating principle on which the work of criticism is based, such a basic idea on which the complete structural analysis must be founded. After defining a base for criticism, he further adds that poets add images on their own choices, but poets use many similar images, which indicates that there is one similar point on which the thoughts of all the poets converge. Even the genres coming from two disparate origins have strikingly similar features, which suggests that there are archetypes of these genres as well as images. Criticism can be systematic because of the unifying nature of literature, which is due to the archetypes; they not only create unification in literature but also provide a base for systematic criticism. A search of archetypes provides an anthropological study, which highlights the ways earlier in times which provided literature information through rituals, myths and folktales. These patterns recur continuously and converge in literature ([Frye, *The Archetypes of Literature* 501-514](#)).

The primordial image or archetype is a figure, whether it be a daemon, man, or process that repeats itself in the course of history, wherever creative fantasy is fully manifested. Essentially, therefore, it is a mythological

figure. If we subject these images to a closer investigation, we discover them to be the formulated resultants of countless typical experiences of our ancestors. They are, as it were, “the psychic residua of numberless experiences of the same type” (Jung and Kerényi, *Essays on a Science of Mythology* 98).

The concept of the unconscious is unmistakably attached with Freud, who calls the repressed feelings, sorrows and all the desires the unconscious of human beings, but Jung deviated from the theory of Freud. He considered Freud’s theory of unconscious rather limited and divided the unconscious into the personal and collective unconscious. The personal unconscious is what he took from the theory of Freud, but in the collective unconscious, after examining dreams and fantasies of certain human beings, he asserted that there are certain very old and inane symbols present in the dreams due to their presence in their unconscious. These symbols were present in the cultures from times unknown to them, which he calls the “representations Collectives” (5). He purports the idea that there are collectively certain images, symbols, in the unconscious of our mind, which almost all human beings share. They are surfaced in our thoughts repeatedly. These ideas in the collective unconscious of human beings are what he calls “Archetypes” (4). They are shared collectively by the human species. It is a part of human’s consciousness which they are born with. He traces the term archetype back in early history by stating that the term appeared since the time of Philo Judaeus as related to the image of God. He also quotes Irenaeus, according to whom the creator of the world copied the things from archetypes. He further claims that in the Corpus Hermeticum, God is given the name of archetypal light. The term he says also comes repeatedly in Dionysius the Areopagite,” (4) as for instance in *De caelestihierarchia*”, “immaterial Archetypes,” and then in “*De divinisnominibus*” “Archetypal stone.” He claims that the term does not appear in St Augustine, but the idea is present there also. It is also traced in the ethos of Plato ([Jung, *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious* 4](#)).

Campbell also calls archetypes “elementary ideas”, although he preferred the term archetypes itself, saying them archetypes because they represent the unconscious (Campbell and Moyers 135). Archetypes have been present from time immemorial. Our ancestors have talked about different images, which we still consider even if we were not told about them. These stories helped connect to the world and satisfy the physical as well as the spiritual need of human beings; these were expressions of Archetypes. The stories or myths carried out today were similarly present in the past. These tendencies are inherited by human beings from their ancestors and present in their own psyche. Archetypes are basically invisible; they can be observed by the symbols they generate in the mind of individuals through different forms of imagery.

The symbols are again an important term to understand the concept of archetypal images. Symbols are essentially having no fixed meaning attached to them; instead, they only refer to images on a larger scale. These images of reality are not completely understood through symbols because if a symbol is completely understood and it is universally agreed upon, then it loses its position as a symbol and becomes a sign, a symbol is hidden with plenty of meanings to be explored, it is not fixed. The number of archetypes can rise to innumerable numbers, but there are some innate archetypes that appear very often in the dreams or visions of people, which is why Jung explains them more elaborately. Archetypes are called collective unconscious because they do not represent any single culture or civilization. They are represented simultaneously by people of entirely different locations and cultures. The similarity of the archetypes, despite the fact that people did not have any contact with each other, proves that they are inherited similarly by all human beings irrespective of any culture, region or religion ([Jung, *The Archetypes and Collective Unconscious* 7](#)).

Hillman states that the rich images that affirm and that are repeatedly brought to the surface level of mind are basically archetypal. The archetypal images are the duplicates of the original archetypes. He says that human experiences are structured patterns of archetypes (10). Archetypes are exhibited in myths. According to Scarborough, “The archetypes are never directly seen but are inferred from their manifestations—namely, the universal and typical symbols found in myth and other forms of literature” (25).

According to Jung, the myth of a hero belongs from time immemorial. It is predominantly a Christ-type figure who redeems everyone out of sin; the hero figure itself is an archetype (*Four Archetypes* 72). The hero

is always described as a powerful person who fights the evils in the shape of dragons or witches and, in the end, liberates his people from the sufferings (80). This myth of hero has been present in every age and in every religion. It has always appeared in our dreams, too; it has great psychological importance. There are little variations in the hero myth found in different cultures or times, but they do have a similar structure everywhere. There are similar patterns in cultures, which have no primordial contact with each other. The heroic myth comprising the whole pattern of the hero's journey symbolizes the attainment of completion not only by the hero but also by society. The weakness present in a hero is fulfilled by the accompaniment of a "tutelary figure" (110); these figures represent wholeness in the psyche. It helps in the development of the "individual's ego consciousness" (112). Jung also includes the hero cycle suggested by Radin to prove his point that there are different stages in a heroic cycle, comprising of four cycles further. The first stage is that of a trickster, which is assumed by the hero. This is the premature stage when the hero is prone to physical desires rather than spiritual needs. The second stage is that of a hare in which a hero has not attained maturity but is known as the initiator of the human culture of transformation. The third stage is called the red horn. It is recognized as one who is attaining superpowers and who passes certain races. The last of them is the twins. It represents two sides of the nature of man, separated, one is flesh, and the other is a stump; one represents timidity and the other rebellious nature. The description of the hero illustrates the mythic hero and the dreams of a man in an elaborate manner.

Jung also discusses the concept of the shadow, which he states are the repressed desires, feelings and the unfavorable side of the personality. The shadow is connected with the ego of a man; they are in continuous conflict. This conflict is represented by a contest with an archetypal hero and the evil powers, portrayed as dragons or monsters (3). Jung states that myths and fairy tales are a good way of manifesting archetypes; they are related to "representation collectives" (5). These factor archetypes shared collectively by all human race. Some archetypes are experienced individually in dreams and visions only.

Guerin et al. assert that myths hold a distinct position in every legend folklore, but the symbols, and motifs which are the same in every culture, to be more specific they are universal. They repeatedly occur in different cultures and carry similar meanings, too (151). Another scholar, while emphasizing on the idea that the symbols are universal, asserts that "the sky father and earth mother, light, blood, up-down, and others recur again and again in cultures so remote from one another in space and time that there is no likelihood of any historical influence and causal connection among them", yet they are present in many cultures (Wheelwright 111).

Guerin et al. mentioned different archetypal images, such as water, sun, colors, and wholeness, illustrated by a mandala, serpent, numbers woman, wise old man, tree, garden and dessert. These images are commonly depicted in literature. He further elaborates on some archetypal motifs, which include creation, immortality and hero archetype (153).

Archetypal criticism is also known as 'Myth Criticism'. One of the major Philosophers of Archetypes was the Scottish anthropologist, Frazer who, in his work, *The Golden Bough* ([Frazer 1890-1915](#)), presented a comprehensive insight on basic culture and religion by highlighting myths from ancient times and integrated myth into literature (n.p).

Frye, another prominent philosopher of archetypes, who theorized the archetypal criticism into literature by focusing on the recurring pattern and images present in literature, states that Archetypes are symbols, represented as images that repeatedly appear in the works of literature. These images symbolize the experiences of everyone generally. These images are found in a pattern in literature. Frye states that these patterns may appear in four mythoi, specified as a genre. Each mythos has six phases, and it shares three phases with the preceding one and three with the succeeding one. These mythoi are categorized as the mythos of spring, summer, winter, and fall, symbolized by comedy, romance, irony, and tragedy, respectively (*Anatomy of Criticism* 341).

In *Man and his Symbols*, it is stated that man has a tendency of creating symbols. Everything in nature is constructed in the shape of symbols, and man expresses himself through these symbols in religion and visual representations. This is why it is always observed that there is a relationship between religion and art. The philosopher states three symbols, of stone, animal and the circle, which has a strong psychological impact as highlighted in arts. These symbols are found in ancient arts and continue till modern literature. Stones, for instance, are thought to be the place of living for gods and spirits; a religious incident related to stones is present in the Old Testament where Jacob is said to be dreaming about a stone, which he sees as the abode of god. Stones are also carved as evident in ancient history as man and animals. The symbol of animal is also significant; animals are seen in the primitive religious symbols and artefacts. The animal is shown as a part of human's basic nature. Many myths are related to the animal as a sacrifice for the sake of fertility and creation. Many religions, like Egyptian, Hindu and Greek Mythology, are full of animal symbols, including the religion of Christianity. The third symbol, which is that of a circle, embodies great importance in archetypal criticism. It is known as the self, enwrapping the wholeness of the psyche. It is depicted in different religions as well as in modern times, even in the plans of cities (Jung and Franz 230- 239).

Jung elaborates that when the archetypes present in the unconscious of the human beings are manifested through myths and symbols, they become collective and common to everyone. However, he is of the view that the number of archetypes is infinite, but he mentions four basic archetypes; Mother, rebirth, spirit, and trickster, in his book *Four Archetypes*, which have their origin in mythologies folktales, and religious writings. These archetypes have similar representation and patterns regardless of the fact that they belong to different cultures and times (*Four Archetypes* 7-179). He also mentions certain other archetypes which are related to human experience, such as birth, death, sin, darkness, power, women, men, sex, water, and pain (306).

Some of the major archetypes mentioned by Jung are the "self" (101), the shadow (118), the anima or animus (*Man and His symbols* 177; *The phenomenology of the Self* 11) and the persona (287). While talking about self, he states that it embodies the human as a whole by bringing in the conscious along with the unconscious. It is often depicted through a circle, square or mandala. The self he asserts is created by a process, he calls, individuation. Whereas the shadow consists of all the desires of sex and life in human beings, it is mostly composed of the unconscious mind, which are the repressed desires of individuals, embodying the dark side of the human psyche. The anima and animus, also known together as the *syzygy* (*The Phenomenology of the Self* 11), or the divine couple, are otherwise the female side in the psyche of a man and male side in the psyche of a female, respectively. It is the true side of a personality. The persona or the mask is what Jung refers to as the pretentious part of our personality, which human beings impose in public.

As the archetypes are recurring patterns of situations, characters, and symbols, existing universally, therefore it makes it pertinent to classify them in these categories. The archetypes comprising of events are the quests, initiation, task, nature in conflict with the materialistic world, and the battle between good and evil. The symbolic archetype comprises symbols showing light versus darkness, water versus desert, good versus evil, haven versus wilderness, supernatural intervention, and fire versus ice. The character archetypes consist of anima, with subcategories of Unfaithful Wife, Temptress, and The earth mother. Some other character archetypes include Star-Crossed Lovers, Damsel In Distress, The Scapegoat, The Devil Figure, The Creature of Nightmares, Friendly Beast, The Hero, Mentor, Young man from the Provinces, The Initiates, Hunting Group of Companions, Loyal Retainers, The Outcast, The herald and the retainer.

The color symbols are also being elaborated on by Jung; there are different colors implying different meanings such as yellow means enlightenment and wisdom; blue means spiritual purity, and tranquil, red means passion disorder and sacrifice, black means darkness, chaos, evil and melancholy, whereas the white color symbolizes purity, innocence, and light. (*The Collective Unconscious* n.p.).

Archetypes in Literature

Archetypes are observed through myths, and literature is the manifestation of these myths by an individual.

Archetypes are not only ideas passed through generations; they are tendencies of human beings to act in a specific way. They connect the human species together. Man, when discontent with the disharmony of his inner being, seeks external resources to satisfy himself. It is during this time that he turns to literature and feels relieved when he sees his unconscious thoughts manifested into literature ([Marudanayagam 49](#)). Whenever the collective unconscious is brought onto the surface, it becomes an important living event for the person (Jung, *Psychology* 184). Archetypes have a healing effect, and they create balance in human impulses when they are manifested in literature. Archetypes are manifested through characters, situations, genres, and symbols ([Ramaswamy 9](#)).

Archetypes are always visible in literature. According to Bodkin, the analysis of literature has outstanding effects in the field of psychology as concerned with archetypes, myths, and the collective unconscious. She is of the view that it is not wrong to have an intuitive analysis of literature as a systematic approach to the analysis (n.p).

Von Franz, in her book *The Interpretation of Fairy Tales*, elaborates that fairy tales are the simplest expression of psychic processes. She further defines archetypal images as a web of different associations because these motifs are connected in a thread of stories. These archetypes do present one particular image, but they also run like a thread through all aspects and create a complete process. Franz also explains archetype as “a specific psychic impulse, producing its effect like a single ray of radiation, and at the same time a whole magnetic field expanding in all directions”(1). She further says that that the study of fairy tales is very important in our lives because they “depict the general human basis” (27). It is the easiest way to understand different people because these are the general impressions shared by everyone and fairy tales are beyond cultural differences. Thus, myths can be used to understand fairy tales; they create a bridge between the people and fairy tales (2-3).

Von Franz further states that “fairy tales are the simplest and purest manifestation of collective unconscious psychic process” (1). Archetypes are represented through fairy tales in the most precise and accurate form. These archetypal images clearly reveal what is present in the psyche of humanity as a species, because they represent the basic layout of the human psyche without any specific “conscious cultural material”(4), making it easier to recognize the basic psyche of human beings. Archetypes are unknown psychic features, and they are revealed by one’s personal psychological experiences and through a comparative study. Such an investigation brings together the whole system of archetypal images on the surface. Fairytale is one of the best ways to understand these archetypal images because they embody all the motifs, which are linked through the story. She further elaborates that it was the search for religion, which compelled Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm to collect fairy tale stories. Earlier fairy tales and the unconscious suffered to remain in the lives of people, but they never admitted their existence. Fairy tales have suffered a lot by being distorted according to the wishes of editors and translators. It was during the time of the Grimm brothers that huge interest in fairy tales emerged, which Von Franz calls perhaps a quest for the “unconscious emotional interest” (*The Interpretation of Fairy Tales*5). Fairy tales were revised in almost every part of Europe; Perrault’s version was also revised.

In *Archetypes and Motifs*, the writers try to illustrate as many as possible archetypes present in folklore and literature. They describe the hero cycle, which is divided into three stages, that birth, initiation, and death. The story of the hero always starts with an unusual birth, being born to gods or a virgin mother. This hero is usually abandoned or someone who tries to kill him. Later, when the hero reaches adolescence, he is destined to experience an unusual situation through which he reaches greatness. Consequently, he embarks on a quest by slaying monsters and reaching the state that he values. His death is also unusual and heroic, like his birth. The hero’s quest is considered very important by scholars. It is considered as an encounter with the self, where the conscious meets the unconscious. It is a very important phenomenon in the theory of archetypes. There is also an element to be found in the hero cycle, which is of temptation by any evil force. In the hero’s tale of

going into an underworld and carrying out a journey is a common motif represented in the folk tales; in the end, the hero returns to his people and restores his kingdom ([Garry and El-Shamy 3-16](#)).

Heroes have an important position in literature. They are role models for others. They have important lessons to teach to the audience or readers. The heroes take a quest to accomplish something in the end ([Frye, *Literature and Myth* 213](#)). According to Campbell, a hero is:

...a male or female who ventures forth from the world of common day into a region of supernatural wonder: fabulous forces are there encountered, and a decisive victory is won: the hero comes back from this mysterious adventure with the power to bestow boons on his fellow man (*The Hero With A Thousand Faces* 263).

The motif of mythic animals also holds a prominent position in fairy tales. “The dragon (B11–B11.12.7) is a nearly universal motif, a reptilian or snakelike hybrid or compound animal, covered with the scales of a fish and sometimes endowed with claws and wings and the head of an eagle, falcon, or hawk” (67). The dragons are usually observed to be fought by the hero. They are always seen as an evil force in folk tales ([Garry and El-Shamy](#)).

Another form of the motif is manifested in bewitching. It is usually a woman who, through her magic, turns the cycle of everything opposite and according to her own wish. This act of bewitching is found in many folktales. For instance, in *Sleeping Beauty*, there is a witch who, when excluded from the celebrations of the princess’ birth, feels raged and curses the princess to die after being pricked by a spinning wheel. The same witch, Maleficent, is depicted in *Sleeping Beauty*, a movie released in 1959 by Walt Disney, where she is shown as a strong, powerful who, through the enchantment, makes the princess fall into demise ([Garry and El-Shamy 167](#)).

Mitchell asserts that fairy tales and myths present allegorical representations of the human psychological process, specifically of transformation and growth. He further elaborates his point that fairy tales and myths are universal patterns present in the dream of every human. The content of these dreams come from various sources, including religious symbols, artefacts and other human-made things. These patterns represented in fairy tales, myths and fantasy stories pave the way to understand the psyche of human beings. This is why when someone is attracted or repelled by a fairy tale, it implies that there is some unconscious thought which is making an individual behave so because one cannot react to anything unless he/ she has some recognition of it. Fairy tales work as aides for humans. They highlight what is the basic nature of every individual and illustrate the change of an unconscious element into a passionate conscious feeling and effectiveness (264-279).

Jung, in his book *Aion* states that it is important to tell fairy tales and stories of other legends to children because the symbols present in them help bring on the conscious level and interpret the unconscious feelings (169). According to Frye reading about mythology helps to understand literature because literature itself emerges out of myths, legends, and folktales and is transmitted in classical literature too (*Design for Learning* 44). Greenway is of the view that in fantasy, many memories are showcased, which pass through the imagination of the storyteller. These memories are shared by all human beings on which the storyteller creates his stories of fantasy (20-21).

Frye defines archetypes as recurrent patterns and motifs. He asserts that archetypes appear from myths and are found in the literature. Literature is presented in a continuous form or oral and written tales in which myths are embodied as frameworks. He is of the view that themes are repeatedly used by the writers in literature because they portray things into narratives that are present in society and which are arrested in tales (qtd. in *Secular* 7). An archetype in literature is thus considered such an element which, due to its position, universally brings about certain specific implications, which are represented in literature. These implications are not brought on surface deliberately by the writer, but it becomes archetypal only when certain traditional qualities rather than personal ones become dominant and observable in work. In fact, work, he asserts, is said to be best only when it unites the universal with the individual elements ([Lane, 226- 232](#)).

Baer, in another study, explores the presence of intertextual elements in stories narrating the tales of the holocaust. It is stated that Yolen, a Jewish American writer uses fairy tales to connect the collective symbols of humanity with the oppression going on in different situations. It also depicts the contrast between evil versus good and also displays that in the end, the victory belongs to goodness. It is through intertextuality that writers like Yolen bring forth the attention towards the value in the story and utilize it for propagating different facts about humanity (145-152).

The final model for the Cinderella archetype exists in the tale of the same name by Charles Perrault. Perrault's *Cinderella* is perhaps the most widely known version, at least in France, Britain, and America, where it most soundly shaped the archetype (Loeb 183).

The researcher has divided the archetypes into groups and analyzed how the archetypes are challenged by contemporary movie makers.

The archetypes are categorized into three categories as mentioned by Jung:

- a) Archetypal events
- b) Archetypal characters and
- c) Archetypes Symbols

The researcher has adopted Archetypal/mythological criticism as the framework for the project. Archetypal approach to literature assumes that there is a collection of symbols, images, characters, and motifs (i.e., archetypes) that evokes a similar response in all people. This theory helps the researcher in interpreting the movies by focusing on archetypes in the narrative, symbols, images, and character types in these movies.

It is the reservoir of our experiences as a species. It is a type of knowledge that is inherently present in us, yet we can never be directly conscious of it. It influences all of our experiences and behaviors, most especially the emotional ones, but we only know about it indirectly by looking at those influences. Creative experiences shared by artists and musicians all over the world and at all times, or the spiritual experiences of mystics of all religions, or the parallels in dreams, fantasies, mythologies, fairy tales, and literature are good examples of it. The contents of the collective unconscious are called an archetype. The term archetype is defined as "atypical or recurring image, character, narrative design, theme, or another literary phenomenon that has been in literature from the beginning and regularly reappears" ([Hutcheon 508](#)).

According to Jung, all humans share what he called a "collective unconscious" (44). This "unconscious" is a collection of memories and images comprising a racial past of pre-human experiences. Archetypal images, then, stimulate or trigger these memories in all of us; that is why they are so powerful and universal. It is the experience engraved in the minds, which is repeated by many generations. Archetypes interpenetrate and interfuse with one another. They are experienced through myths, dreams, visions, rituals, neurotic and psychotic symptoms, and works of art. There are presumed to be numerous archetypes in the collective unconscious. Some of the ones that have been identified: birth, rebirth, death, power, magic, unity, the hero, the child, God, the demon, the wise old man, the earth mother, and the animal (44).

Challenging Archetypes of Patterns, Characters and Motifs

It is observed in the present study that the archetypal images as present in the collective unconscious are challenged by the contemporary American movie directors. The archetypal characters, situations and motifs present in literature are gradually being replaced, and primordial images are deconstructed. As the postmodernists focus on decentralization of power, the researcher attempts to observe how the centralized concept of particular archetypes present in fairy tales are decentralized or challenged in Contemporary American Fairy tale movies.

Frozen, Maleficent, Snow White and the Huntsman and Mirror, Mirror, are movies based on fairy tales and archetypes of fairy tales, e.g. fairies, stepmother/daughter relationship, trust betrayal, princesses, and witches are present in them, which make the researcher choose the theory of archetype as a framework.

When contemporary movies re-vision the older tales, their motive is to reject the totality. They challenge the archetypes of character, situation, and symbols too. The archetypal hero, his journey and all the features related to his life as suggested by Jung (*Man and his Symbols* 232) are replaced with that of the villain, who is not a hero or a villain but both. The archetypal situations, such as the kiss of the prince, as an evident trace of true love, is transformed and replaced by a kiss developed by true motherly love (Maleficent). Thus, it is the kiss of Maleficent, which wakes Aurora up from the spell of her own magic. Since time unknown, in the story of *The Sleeping Beauty*, it is always a Prince, who comes, kisses the sleeping princess, breaks the magical spell and turns into a saviour, an archetypal image of the hero of Jesus Christ, but here it is changed or altered entirely by making that final kiss not by an archetypal hero but by a witch.

In the same manner, in the movie of *The Snow White and The Huntsman*, Huntsman previously held no voice. He was an invisible character who was assigned to kill Snow White and bring her body parts to the queen so that she can devour them. It is not thought in any previous version of *Snow White* that Huntsman is the actual hero of the tale because he is the one to whom the princess owes her life. If it had not been for him, she would have never been able to live a day longer. The Huntsman gave up killing her, and hence he captured the attention of contemporary moviemakers, who credited him with the title of the movie right beside the name of Snow White herself.

It also questions the patterns or archetypes of literature where such minor characters are not given importance, especially in the titles of the tales or movies. Frye when assigns different patterns to different characters. He highlights the recurrent patterns of characters in literature, ignoring the minor characters.

Another evident trace of archetypes is when the princess marries a lowly man, and also reveals that Snow White's character is associated with the symbol of bravery, and the princess marrying a lowly man also indicates a change in the pattern where the archetypes of literature are challenged. The element of Re-vision also explicitly notifies the new look in the story, characters as well as symbols of the tale. It is revealed that Snow White is not only beautiful but brave too, and the hero is not a Prince but a drunkard widower. Bravery and leadership are two qualities previously assigned to heroes of the tale, but now they are assigned to Snow White.

Another such instance is observed when Kristoff does not fall into the category of an archetypal hero. He is not having an unusual birth. He does not have any unusual experience, which helps him mature, although he does accompany Anna on her journey, which is quite unusual for him when he finds about Elsa's magical powers. There is no inner and outer conflict, which he encounters, and in the end, there is no question of restoring his kingdom because he does not have any kingdom, although he does help Anna restore her kingdom.

It is in the re-visitation of the fairy tales that the archetypal patterns are changed and transformed. According to Frye, the patterns and motifs that appear intermittently in literature are defined as the archetypes present in literature. These subjects are found in literature because they embody what is present around in the society (qtd. in *Secular* 7).

Another fairy tale movie *Frozen* is not only a story that is transformed, but the archetypes are also changed. A feminist perspective is observed because the female characters are more in focus, they are strong, and they carry most of the action going on in the movie. The male characters only work as aids to help the action move forward; the main work is done by Elsa and Anna.

Challenge of Collective Unconscious in the Contemporary movies

The research also sought to trace out the archetypes present in literature and analyze the change practiced in the portrayal of archetypes. It is observed that the contemporary movie directors bring changes in the archetypes and challenge the long borne theory of the Collective unconscious. One of the prominent Psychologists, Sigmund Freud, is associated with the concept of collective unconsciousness. He calls all the

suppressed feelings and desires as the *unconscious* present in the human beings, but Carl Jung student of Freud, brought some alterations in theory; he was of the view that Freud's theory is limited and that the unconscious must be split into the personal and collective unconscious. The theory of the personal unconscious is what was propagated by Freud, and the collective unconscious is the addition that Jung proposed. He was of the view that all human beings have some similar symbols present in their dreams because these ideas are present in their unconscious and as they are shared by all the human beings similarly. They repeatedly appear on the surface (5). He calls them "Archetypes" (4). These are the ideas which human beings are born with (Jung, *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious* 4).

Another prominent Philosopher of Archetypes called Northrop Frye, highlighted the theory of archetypal criticism and integrated it into literature. He propagated on the recurrent patterns and images present in literature. He is of the view that archetypes are those symbols that are portrayed as images repeatedly appearing in the literature (*Anatomy of Criticism* 341).

These archetypes are manifested in literature unconsciously, and they bring relief to man when they appear in the literature ([Marudanayagam 49](#)). Particularly, fairy tales are the embodiment of such images and symbols because they express the simplest psychological process of human beings. Fairy tales help understand different human beings because they share such impressions, which are present in every culture ([Von Franz *The Interpretation of Fairy Tales* 2-3](#)). Archetypes are portrayed in fairy tales which further help study the psyche of human beings as species.

The movies under analysis are the fairy tales remade; they do disturb the theory of archetypes in a partial manner while endorsing the postmodernist aspect of rejecting the previous authorities.

In another situation, which is explained in the theory of archetypes as an effort to fight back the evil powers of a man, this struggle is symbolized through a dragon or monster fighting the hero. This symbolically portrays how the hero's ego overcomes his unconscious mind. In *Maleficent*, this collective unconscious is challenged because the dragon is not an evil power; rather it fights the evil powers while helping the protagonist. It acts as a magical helper to the protagonist, who was considered an antagonist earlier.

Frozen is one of the most different contemporary American fairy tale movies in the race of fairy tale revisions. Snow Queen, who was previously the antagonist of the fairy tale *Snow Queen* is now represented as the archetypal hero of the tale. She has all the qualities of a hero. She has an unusual birth; she has some extraordinary features. She gets into a difficult situation, then she isolates herself and finally gets help from trolls. All these features fall under the definition of archetypes, but her character is a challenge to the archetypal patterns of literature because she was earlier the antagonist of the tale; her role is reversed and revised, turning her into a heroine.

Another challenge to the archetypal theory of Jung is the presence of the character of Kristoff. He is the hero and the prospective lover of princess, but he does not belong to the royal family; he is not a prince. Instead, he is an Iceman, unlike the Jungian Archetypal hero. An archetypal hero is said to have an unusual birth who later in life faces some conflict and reaches a supreme place after coming out as a winner from the conflict. After a scuffle with the evil powers, he restores his kingdom ([Garry and El-Shamy 3-16](#)). In *Frozen*, Kristoff is nothing like an archetypal hero because he does not have an unusual birth, he does not grow after an extraordinary encounter, and he does not own a kingdom because he is just an Iceman. Anna is also another character who challenges the archetypal patterning of heroines in fairy tales. She is an active princess who is adventurous; she is not a passive character who waits to be loved and who is rescued when in trouble; it is a recurrent archetypal pattern.

Conclusion

Thus, it is observed after an analysis of the fairy tale movies that in a strong desire of rejecting the older tales, the movie directors have attempted to reject the metanarrative of archetypes present in literature. Although

the theory of Collective Unconscious is not rejected completely, it seems a gradual change towards the alterations of long-believed theory of the collective unconscious. Hence, this study will further elaborate a strong need for research in observing such traces of challenges in archetypes of literature. It also opens an insight among the creators of literature to be bold enough to realize their dreams and desires.

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