

Commentary to bettelheim's chapter on cinderella essay



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Prof. Keith Walters Commentary to Bettelheim's chapter on "Cinderella" Let me start off with saying that Bettelheim completely ruined my fantasy on fairy-tales. His contorted mind really made it hard to remember all the beautiful tales from childhood. Of course he is entitled to his own opinions and I won't argue with that but I certainly don't agree with a bunch of points he is trying to make. For instance: "

.. if the child could only believe that it is the infirmities of his age which account for his lowly position, he would not have to suffer so wretchedly from sibling rivalry, because he could trust the future to right matters. When he thinks that his degradation is deserved, he feels his plight is utterly hopeless.

Djuna Barnes's perceptive statement about fairy tales- that the child knows something about them which he cannot tell (such as that he likes the idea of Little Red Riding Hood and the wolf being in bed together)- could be extended by dividing fairy tales into two groups: one group the child responds only unconsciously to the inherent truth of the story and thus cannot tell about it; and another large number of tales where the child preconsciously or even consciously knows what the 'truth' of the story consists of and thus could tell about it, but does not want to let on that he knows. (The Uses of Enchantment, Bruno Bettelheim, chapter 29: Cinderella, pg. 239.) I feel like Bettelheim is seriously either over exaggerating here or if that is the way he feels then I really have not met any child who feels he or she has to suffer so 'wretchedly'.

That is a harsh word. Of course, I see that Cinderella shows sibling rivalry and I am sure that children see that but lets also not forget that Cinderella's siblings are not her blood siblings. Blood siblings have rivalry but it would not be considered so bad to the point where the child thinks he deserves to be treated so low. I also feel that children don't feel the jealousy until an older age of maybe seven to ten years old. That is what I never got while reading Bettelheim's chapter; what age category is he referring to? When I think of Cinderella and try to remember when it was read to me, I believe that I was about three to five years old.

I do not think I ever felt like what Bettelheim is referring to. Sure I only have older blood siblings but I do have a nephew that is only three years younger than me and when little we were growing up together and I never felt like there was more attention to him. If anything I felt like an equal to my nephew, the jealousy arose in me when I was about ten years old and my sister was pregnant with my second nephew and that is only when I felt neglected and not cared for but children to whom ' Cinderella' is read to should not feel neglected. Speaking about children that are adopted into families, from what I saw around me and from the friends that I have had in the past that were adopted; none really experienced what Bettelheim is saying.

I personally believe that in ' Cinderella' her step-sisters didn't have to love her; they could have but they didn't have to because they are not blood related in any way. If there is blood involved, I feel like you are obligated to love that sibling just because and there really isn't a real true way of hating them. Adopted children tend to not get along with their step-siblings only
<https://assignbuster.com/commentary-to-bettelheims-chapter-on-cinderella-essay/>

because they don't need to. From the stories that I have heard, adopted children tend to not like their step-parents more than the step-siblings and then there are families where the opposite happens and the child seems to love the parents who took him in over the siblings because they were there first. That is sibling rivalry and if that is what Bettelheim is talking about then I would agree with him. When Bettelheim mentions what Djuna Barnes says, that just does it for me and makes me think what other nonsense would Bettelheim come up with.

I'm sorry but children do not have such corrupted brains when they have fairy tales read to them. Why would Barnes think that a child would subconsciously like the idea of Little Red Riding Hood being in bed with the wolf? I have no idea but what I do know that fairy tales have nothing sexual to them and they aren't out there to teach children either. They are there to entertain our little ones. Fairy tales are not fables nor are they didactic; therefore they are not there to teach anything nor corrupt the child's brain because a child simply cannot get all of Bettelheim's nonsense by himself. I do agree that 'Cinderella' is a simple fairy tale and that it shows that at the end love can overpower or overcome all.

This also doesn't mean that I necessarily believe that love can overcome all but I do agree that the story is simple is about the sibling rivalry (just not to the extent that a child should feel like Cinderella), dream and wishes coming true, about the true soul being recognized under all the ragged clothes, of virtue being rewarded and that evil gets punished at the end. So I do agree with some things he says but I just do not understand the point of opening up the story at such a great extent. Why show that there is sexuality in '<https://assignbuster.com/commentary-to-bettelheims-chapter-on-cinderella-essay/>

Cinderella'? I never saw it when I was a child and I'm sure other children didn't either and the ones that grew up to the age of almost teenagehood did not exactly care enough to read it. So what are these theories for?