

Comparative study of cinderella

Business



The legendary story of Cinderella has dated back to the first century BC. Over this time every nation has adopted and altered the tale based on social and cultural context. These appropriations have invited reflections on society's values, gender roles, class structure and relationships. A comparative study of Perault's Cinderella, Chinese Cinderella and Pretty Women strongly illustrates the transformation of customs over the past three hundred years. This is easily demonstrated in the modifications of society's values in both Chinese Cinderella and Pretty Women.

The autobiography of Chinese Cinderella consistently reflects on society's values during Adeline Yen Mah childhood in the 1940's. Obedience was a major component within the family household as Niang (Adeline's Step Mother) repeatedly slaps Adeline until her nose bleeds for "disobeying" the rule of no friends are to visit the house. The negative connotation of hitting a child causes the audience to contemplate the environment of which Adeline is living in. The novel frequently acknowledges the importance of acceptance as Adeline constantly strives for her father's praise and recognition.

The father's ignorance towards his daughter evokes empathy as he not only forgets Adeline's birthday but her name as well; indicating that she is a forgotten child.

The value of determination is expressed through Adeline's persistence at school as it is her academic ability that grants her the recognition of her father. This message has invited reflection on how hard work can achieve a person's desired outcome. This concept is considered inferior in the 1990

appropriated version of Cinderella known as Pretty Women. Pretty Women is a clear representation of a modern society based on materialistic values.

The movie begins with Vivian's landlord threatening to evict her if she does not produce her rent showing that he values money over Vivian having a place to sleep the night. The contemporary context of drugs, prostitution and greed causes the viewer to question the priorities of modern society.

When Vivian arrives in Rodeo Drive to buy appropriate clothes she is refused service by a snooty saleswomen as she is still dressed like a hooker. This is contrasted to the next day when she returns to the store wearing an expensive outfit and the sales staff are polite to Vivian, (plot) showing that it requires money to be accepted in society.

Love builds between the protagonists but it is once again overshadowed by the concept of money. Vivian only agrees to stay with Edward after being offered \$3000 and Edward is only prepared to be publicly seen with Vivian after she is dressed in wealthy clothes, therefore questioning if their love is true or based on superficial motives. The female protagonist relying on her male counterpart corresponds to the of Perault's fairytale. Perault's fairy tale Cinderella reflects on the historical context of a patriarchal society during 1697.

The fairy tale quickly establishes that the women must complete domestic duties and raise the children even if they find the activities tiresome. This is shown when the step-mother enforces that Cinderella performs all the house maintenance. The historical context allows the reader to subjectively compare traditional and modern gender roles. Cinderella is considered the

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perfect women as she is beautiful, sincere and devoid of all spiteful emotions, she even helps her step-sister prepare for the ball when she is prohibited to attend.

The fairy tales purpose is to show the honourable behaviour of Cinderella in an attempt to inspire females to adopt her commendable characteristics, resulting in a contemporary audience assessing the qualities of a “ perfect women”.

Cinderella’s social status is only heightened after marrying the prince demonstrating that a woman requires a husband to be rescued from their surroundings. Although this is a politically incorrect statement within the twenty first century, the comparative study of fairytale Cinderella and pretty women shows this aspect still exists despite historical and social context.

Considering the major changes in American society during the ‘ women’s liberation’ in 1964, the film fails to portray modern gender roles as men are still established with a higher status than women. Edward’s occupation gives him the highest possible status, represented through the sports car, penthouse and owning a multi-million-dollar corporation. Vivian’s far inferior status contrasts to that of Edwards’ as she is a prostitute (a job designed to serve men) with minimal education and no means of paying the rent.

The theme continues for the entirety of the movie as men are lawyers, hotel managers and business owners whilst women are given insignificant jobs as shop assistants. The costuming and characterisation illustrates that modern society is still a male dominated environment. As the movie unravels it become evident that Vivian is dependant on Edward as he gives her the <https://assignbuster.com/comparative-study-of-cinderella/>

opportunity to save herself from a life of prostitution. However, unlike Perault's fairytale Edward is also dependant on Vivian as her adoration and love gives his life purpose.

A sense of equality is established within the relationship as the plot ends with both Vivian and Edward being rescued by each others love. Equality is not a contributing element within the class structure of Perault's Cinderella.

Perault's fairy tale documents a kingdom based hierarchy where an individual's status is not earned but inherited. The class structure had minimal social mobility and was domineered by the king's son who assumed authority over all people, observed through the trumpet men, guards, princesses and duchesses who are willing to perform his very command.

The historical context raises the question if one man should be empowered to rule over an entire nation? The historical circumstance implies that Cinderella's father is the provider of his family and is capable of supplying his step-daughters with fine gowns, petticoats and head dresses indicating that the family is upper-middle class. Although Cinderella's inherited the same social class as her father she was treated like a servant girl by her step-mother, having to perform all domestic duties.

The mistreatment of Cinderella's character evokes empathy as a modern egalitarian society would expect fair rights within the family home. The fairytale quickly establishes that the step-mother wishes her daughters to marry a prince or lord as she insists that her daughters attend the ball.

This was commonly encouraged as women adopted the same class status as their husband illustrating that people desired to enhance their socioeconomic status. The historical context invites reflection on whether a person's status should be inherited or be given the freedom to establish their own position in society.

Pretty Women demonstrates a class structure based on one's ability to achieve their desired status within the community. The class structure established in Pretty Women reflects a materialistic society where an individual's wealth determines their status. Edward's multi-million-dollar Corporation places him in the uppermost position within society shown through the shop assistants, receptionist, lawyers and colleagues that comply too his very need. The plot fails to correspond with the contemporary value of equality as the characters permit Edward to dictate their activities.

The business men are viewed as upper middle class through their appearance and their everyday association with Edward. The middle class is composed of shop assistances demonstrate by their willingness to ingratiate themselves for money when Edward takes Vivian clothes shopping. The characters reaction toward Edward reflects how a wealthy person is immediately treated with high-esteem. Vivian's career in prostitution delegates her with the lowest class as her activities are frowned upon within society illustrated through the elderly women's expression when Vivian first enters the Beverley Hills Hotel.

Although Vivian was original from a family with low socioeconomic status she was capable of changing that aspect through her appearance and money

shown at the end of the movie when she planned to complete her schooling. The movie's conclusion enables the viewer to reflect on social mobility within the modern class structure as it demonstrates an individual's ability to determine their own position in society.

The immobile class structure within Perault's fairytale greatly influenced Cinderella's relationships. Perault's Cinderella reflects many physical relationships that lack an emotional centre.

The step-mother mistreats Cinderella by forcing her to complete all domestic duties but the fairytale fails to mention the feelings associated with being treated unfairly. The fairy godmother watches over and assists Cinderella attend the ball. Although Cinderella is incredibly grateful towards her fairy godmother the story neglects to mention if they are simply acquaintances or if they have a close friendship.

The prince states that he "loves" Cinderella by their second encounter but he is only infatuated with her beauty.

The plot lacks description of the characters thoughts and emotions resulting in the audience questioning the genuineness of the portrayed relationships. This contrast to Chinese Cinderella as all thoughts and emotions expressed through Adeline's perspective. Adeline's journey of self-discovery is influenced and affected by many relationships. Niang in many ways was an evil step-mother as she constantly neglected and despised Adeline for exceeding her children educationally, witnessed when Niang discards Adeline to an orphanage after becoming class president.

Adeline uses descriptive language to vividly convey her personal voice “ They had tossed me aside like a piece of garbage” evoking empathy for the dejected child causing the audience to reflect on the cruelty of Niang’s character. It’s Aunt Baba that nurtures Adeline’s talent “ You have something precious and unique deep inside you which must not be wasted” (Page 137). Adeline was able to trust and befriend Aunt Baba demonstrating how one relationship can positively affect an individual for the entirety of their life.

Adeline often took refuge in books as she felt isolated and ugly around her peers shown when Adeline describes the library as her sanctuary (page 189). It was Adeline’s bond and determination with education that granted her freedom “ Going to England is like entering heaven” (page 220) as she was permitted to attend university. The inspirational message that anyone can achieve their desired outcome through hard work and persistence invites reflection on ones inner relationship.

In conclusion, the comparative study invites reflection on the appropriated Cinderella story through the use of social, cultural and historical context.

Many of society’s values still exist but have been overshadowed by materialistic greed. Although gender roles are not as prominent as in the past they are still a contributing factor in today’s society. Class structure is still present in contemporary communities despite historical and social context. The most influential component within an individual’s life continues to be their relationships. These elements are witness through out Chinese Cinderella, Perault’s Cinderella and Pretty Women.

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