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Overcoming Fear of the Fairytale

Once upon a time there was fear and fantasy. Man, fearing the deeper truths of reality, pondered the depths of particular truths through myth. Just as the mockingbird mimicked other birds' songs, myth imitated reality. It reflected the universal values of our world, interweaving ideas of virtue and vice throughout the tale. Myths validated natural law and the social order of their cultures of origin and illuminated common truths. Children have their own particular genre of myth: fairytales. A fairytale is a children's story about imaginary beings and lands where magic is part of the fabric of reality. Yet fairytales are much more than magic and witches and evil stepmothers. Most good fairytales are about the protagonist's adventures into a perilous realm. The imaginary world serves as a mirror of reality, illustrating the comedy of the universe to the child. The protagonist of the tale fills a general archetype, so the child can easily identify and grow with him. However, the art of fairytales has degenerated into entertainment. Modern adaptations of Grimms' classics cheat the child of deeper meanings by attempting primarily to entertain the child. The modern fairytale protagonists are no longer general but instead are very idiosyncratic, and thus children either are unable to relate to them or relate to them for the wrong reasons—on the basis not of common humanity but on accidentals. The adaptations are heavily dependent upon these idiosyncratic characters to obtain a profit by subscribing to the cult of interesting¹ so people buy into social agendas.² Due to the excessive focus on entertainment, the

¹An idolization of idiosyncratic characters.

²Modern parents might purchase a children's book mainly because the protagonist is curvy which encourages body positivity. This is not to say political agendas like body positivity are wrong, but that they should not be correlated to fairytales.

modern fairytale fails to provide existential depth to the child. I first elaborate further on what constitutes fairytales, then illuminate the modern fairytales' lack of depth, and finally explore how entertainment ill-serves children by corrupting fairytales.

A fairytale is the child's myth. Author Karen Armstrong notes in *A Short History of the Myth* both myth and the fairytale serve to help man cope with the problematic human predicament and find his place in the world (6). However, myth is nearly always tragic and pessimistic, while the fairytale is optimistic no matter how terrifying the story may be. Fairytales serve as narratives proper to childhood. Their structure slowly submerges the child in the depths of particular truths. Author of *On Monsters* Stephen Asma observes that our concepts and structure of the reality that we perceive are fundamentally metaphorical in nature (Asma 13). Thus, the fairytale fits unconscious content into conscious fantasies through the use of fantastic projections of the world. This allows the child to perceive deeper truths. Truths, such as cultural values and morals, are all weaved within the lines of the fairytales. Academic Jack Zipes explores the social role of fairytales in *Breaking the Magic Spell*: "Once there was a time when folk tales were part of communal property and told with original and fantastic insights by gifted storytellers who gave vent to the frustration of the common people and embodied their needs and wishes in the folk narratives" (6). Although fairytales are not reducible to these needs and wishes, Zipes's statement introduces the conversation of cultural values and fairytales. The fairytale neither heavily states nor can be reducible to a moral. Through the use of implication, it subtly communicates depth to the child. While arguing for the importance of the traditional fairytale in "Walt Disney Accused" Frances Sayers articulates that

folklore³ is a universal form, a great symbolic literature which represents the folk. It is something that came from the masses, not something that is put over on the masses.

³Although Sayers uses the term folklore she means to say fairytale, for she is discussing Cinderella which my paper would define as a fairytale.

These folk tales have a definite structure. From the folk tale, one learns one's role in life; one learns the tragic dilemma of life, the battle between good and evil, between weak and strong. One learns that if he is kind, generous, and compassionate, he will win the Princess. The triumph is for all that is good in the human spirit (117-18).

Story shows the child how his worries fit in a frightening but ultimately comic universe.⁴

Suppose there is a small child who attends a primary school in which he is bullied rather viciously. Despite the effort of telling adults about the mean children, the bullying continues. The child begins to feel sad and even hopeless at times. The child's parents, however, dedicatedly read the child fairytales involving scenarios of persistent and brave princes overcoming dragons. Throughout reading the fairytale the parent instructs the child not to become dismayed by the continued bullying. Perhaps by pausing at a scene where the heroine is hopeless with the fear of failing to slay the dragon the parent can draw a parallel between the heroine and the child. And through the protagonist overcoming his struggle the child is taught not to become dismayed by difficulties. He begins to hope because he learns that good will overcome evil. Although the bullying may continue, the child now has hope and bravery to carry him through this difficult time. The fairytale does not merely convey frustrations, such as the child's dismay at the bullying, but enlarges the moral imagination.

Childhood is a crucial period of self-discovery. In *The Uses of Enchantment* psychoanalyst Bruno Bettelheim provides insight on the fairytales' effects on the child: "this growth process begins with the resistance against the parents and fear of growing up, and ends when youth has truly found itself, achieved psychological independence and moral maturity" (12). The statement suggests that the child exists in a purgatory of sorts; he is between infancy and adulthood. The child is destined for adulthood but must endure (a sometimes painful) formation first. Leaving infancy, the child gains an awareness of reality though still lacking the

⁴A comic universe ensures that the story's chaotic plot will eventually align.

depth fully to comprehend it. Thus, the child is in need of something to guide him towards the knowledge of moral truth.

The merit of fairytales exists in their ability to awaken the child to parts of reality that he does not yet know; thus, aiding the child in working out internal issues. Narrative provides a knowledgeable insight into the comedy of the universe with a story medium. By demonstrating how difficult situations can be resolved by a logical chain of events into happy endings, the fairytale fosters a faith in hope in the child. Eleonore Stump explores the narrative's ability to provide a knowledge of basic and non-basic beliefs in *Wandering in Darkness*: “[Knowledge] is a matter of discerning the appropriate relations among propositions, especially the inferential relations between properly basic beliefs and beliefs - ultimately based upon them” (48). The fairytale provides the child with an understanding of beliefs derived from first principles.

Bettelheim elaborates on fairytales' provision of depth:

He can achieve this understanding, and with it the ability to cope, not through rational comprehension of the nature and content of his unconscious, but by becoming familiar with it through spinning out daydreams-ruminating, rearranging, and fantasizing about suitable story elements in response to unconscious pressures. By doing this, the child fits unconscious content into conscious fantasies, which then enable him to deal with that content (7).

Bettelheim suggests that fairytales help form the child's understanding about his ability to recognize the depth of the reality in which he dwells. Narrative guides the child through problems involving growing up by establishing the knowledge of reality and the universal good; thus, the story provides insight into metaphysical or psychological truths.

I. Modern Fairytales Exemplifying Lack of Depth

I now will provide examples for my argument by comparing the levels of depth in classic fairytales and their modern counterparts. Due to the limitations of space, I will focus on “Hansel and Gretel.” The tale has only one name, but so many different manifestations. Whether buried

in a worn *Grimms' Fairy Tales* book, wedged between the tales of “Red Riding Hood” and “Snow White”, or prominently displayed in a cartoonish picture book, the tale is distinctly recognizable. “Hansel and Gretel” particularly is known for its original gruesome details which modern adaptations strive to soften.

Hansel and Gretel are unfortunate. The children’s parents are poor, so poor that they “could no longer procure daily bread” (Grimms 330). One night, the wicked stepmother orders the weak-willed father to “take the two children out quite early into the thickest part of the forest. We will light a fire and give each of them a piece of bread. Then we will go to our work and leave them alone. They won’t be able to find their way back, and so we shall be rid of them.” (330). Although the father declares he will grieve over his poor children, he consents to the stepmother’s cruel plan.⁵ The two children, unable to sleep because of their hunger, overhear the wicked scheme. Hansel creeps outside, filling his pockets with stones to leave as a trail that they can follow when the parents abandon them. In the morning, the parents lead the children into the forest and Hansel cunningly leaves a trail of stones. Once abandoned, the children follow the pebbles until they arrive at the father's house. “Their father was delighted, for it had gone to his heart to leave them behind alone”, while the stepmother scolds him and plans to abandon the children once more (333). The next morning Hansel and Gretel are led into the woods again, yet Hansel only has bread crumbs to leave as a trail and “the thousands of birds in the forest had picked them up and eaten them” (334). The children wander through the woods until they come across a candy cottage. As the pair begin to eat the roof and windowpanes they are interrupted by a gentle voice: “Nibble, nibble, nibble, little mouse. Who is nibbling at my house?” (335). The

⁵The father’s display of grief is a softening on Grimms’ part. However, this mitigation is not an absolute. The good parts of his character and response are overwhelmed by his cowardice which allows the cruelty of the stepmother to take center stage.

children ignore the warning and continue to eat. They then are caught by “a wicked witch who was on the watch for children, and she had built the bread house on purpose to lure them to her. Whenever she could get a child into her clutches she cooked it and ate it, and considered it a grand feast” (337). The witch locks Hansel in a cage and orders Gretel to fatten him up. The old woman hobbles to the stable every morning and cries, “‘Hansel, put your finger out for me to feel how fat you are.’ Hansel put out a chicken bone, and the old woman, whose eyes were too dim to see, thought it was his finger. And she was much astonished that he did not get fat” (338). Soon the witch becomes impatient and declares, “‘Fat or thin, I will kill Hansel and eat him” (338). While preparing the meal, the witch asks Gretel to crawl into the oven to check the temperature. Gretel, however, foresees the witch’s scheme and shoves the witch into the oven instead. The siblings escape her home, taking the witch’s fortune, which they found in her house, with them. They returned home to find their stepmother dead and their father grieving. With the witch’s wealth and wicked stepmother’s death, they live happily ever after.

“Hansel and Gretel” is a coming of age story where the children outgrow their dependent state by becoming self-sufficient. The children are first awakened to hardship by experiencing parental neglect. Thus, the tale conveys an important and unpleasant truth: poverty and deprivation make man selfish. The parents actively choose to abandon their children, twice, to preserve themselves. Bettelheim addresses that the theme of abandonment “gives body to the anxieties and learning tasks of the young child who must overcome and sublimate his primitive incorporative and hence destructive desires” (160). The child is still heavily dependent upon his mother as a source of food and shelter, and thus understandably fears she may leave him. The fairytale illustrates through the characters of the stepmother and father that the child’s deepest anxiety is that his mother will no longer properly fulfill her role and become selfish and

unloving. The mother signifies the caregiver figure and represents the source of food to the children. She is a perversion of the archetypal caretaker. Instead of nurturing and loving the children, she neglects and abandons them. The story illustrates this fear through her. However, by surviving their abandonment Hansel and Gretel learn to become independent. Likewise, the children prevailing against their parents' wickedness communicates to the child the existence of a comic universe.

The children's second hardship is in the form of the witch. She too represents a perversion of the mother figure. Unlike the stepmother, the witch provides nourishment—but the nourishment she provides is in excess. The children munch on her cottage composed entirely of candy and are given milk and pancakes with sugar, apples, and nuts to eat. The witch's nourishment falls short of health. Because the food she provides is primarily sweets, it lacks any nutritional value. She strives not to nourish the children, but to fatten them up to eat them. She desires to consume Hansel and Gretel by drawing them so close to her that they are within her; the end of feeding the children is not their nourishment but the witch's. The witch's excess attention to feeding the children thus serves as an equivalent foil to the stepmother's neglect of the children.

The modern adaptations of "Hansel and Gretel" seek to soften the classic tale by stripping away any frightening content. By sweetening the fairytale, the moral purpose becomes distorted. The distortion fails to properly use traditional forms to communicate the ultimate good of the universe. Ronne Randall's "Hansel and Gretel" serves as an example of a failed adaptation of the traditional fairytale. Randall misplaces the pleasantness and violence by creating a dulled and diluted tale unrelated to traditional timeless truths. He denies much of the original's psychological content by removing unpleasant elements; evil is softened to cruelty and

detachment. The stepmother, for instance, is so far removed from a true archetypal mother that her character cannot point to the reality of evil. When the family becomes too poor to feed everyone, the stepmother decides to leave the children in the forest, despite the caring father's protesting. Randall's characterization of the stepmother as an archetypal villain detaches any emotional fear of parental abandonment for the reader.

Another flaw in the modern softening of the fairytale is the simplification of the story. Original scenes and details are discarded, leaving gaps in the plotline of the adaptation. In the original "Hansel and Gretel" the children at first find their way home by a trail of stones.

Bettelheim explores this scene:

The children's successful return home does not solve anything. Their effort to continue life as before, as if nothing had happened, is to no avail. The frustrations continue, and the mother becomes more shrewd in her plans for getting rid of the children (160).

By implication, the tale reveals the consequences of trying to deal with problems by means of denial. The children suffer the consequence of being forced back into the forest a second time. Hansel attempts to replicate the stone trail with breadcrumbs but they are eaten by birds. The parents abandoning the children in the woods twice indicates a full intent to choose their own wellbeing over their children's. In Randall's adaptation, however, the children are abandoned in the forest only once. As the children are dragged into the wood by their stepmother, Hansel relies on breadcrumbs for safety by using them as a trail not to get lost. However, the crumbs are eaten by the forest birds and the children found themselves to be very lost in the woods. Although the shortening of the tale appears arbitrary upon initial examination, the original's inclusion of the parent's repeated abandonment of the children emphasizes their selfishness and neglect. In the modern tale, however, the children endure less emotional hardship. The adaptation's inclusion of

only one incident where the children are left in the forest causes the abandonment to appear less calculated.

The fantastical story of “Hansel and Gretel” gives body and resolution to the anxieties of a developing child. The gingerbread house, for instance, illustrates a primitive gluttony. While devouring the home the children hear a warning voice which asks, “Who is nibbling at my house?”, but they choose to ignore it. Once again, the children deal with life’s problems by denial. In Randall’s adaptation, however, the events in the scene are disordered. The witch greets the children before asking for their identity: “Suddenly, the door opened C R - R - R E A K ! and an old woman hobbled out. ‘Nibble, nibble, like a mouse, who is nibbling at my house?’ she croaked. ‘I can’t see very well— who are you?’” (18-29). They are not given the opportunity to choose to listen to a warning voice, because there is none. The children are caught without a chance to run. Thus, depth has been stripped from the original story, for the reader is not taught to heed words of warning. Randall drifts from the traditional structure to achieve some sort of entertainment by shortening the tale. Yet the reduced version denies the child a proper perception of reality. Ironically by stripping the story of details, the purpose of entertainment is not achieved. In fact, the original fairytales are not only more educational, but actually more amusing. Because they preserve the particulars, the older versions are made more enjoyable. In the case of “Hansel and Gretel”, the short interaction reveals an interesting dichotomy between the children’s gluttony for the sweets and witch’s gluttony for the children. Thus, the original detail provides entertainment and depth compared to the shallow modern adaptation.

II. The Entertainment Monopoly

The fragility of the child during his transition into adulthood requires a delicate procedure of introducing him to depth. To Bettelheim “modern stories for young children avoid these

existential problems”, although these are crucial issues for the child (8). The fairytale has shifted its focus from depth to entertainment. Neither mentioning death, nor the limits to our existence, nor the wish for eternal life, modern fairytales fail to confront basic human predicaments. Truths are softened and the age-old stories are commercialized.

Entertainment’s substitution for depth perhaps stems from the modern fear of fantasy. To Zipes “[fairytales] were regarded as harmful for children since their imaginative comments might give young ones ‘crazy ideas’, i.e., suggest ways to rebel against the family... [They are] rewritten and made into didactic fairy tales for children so that they would not be harmed by the violence, crudity and fantastic exaggeration of the originals. Essentially the contents and structure of these saccharine tales upheld the Victorian values⁶ of the status quo” (15, 18). The statement suggests the fear of rebellion in the parent. To the fearful parent, if the child is not exposed to imaginative ideas of rebellion, then he will continue to obey. Yet, the child’s existential anxieties and violent emotions need to be taken seriously. Bettelheim comments: “The deeper inner conflicts originating in our primitive drives and our violent emotions are all denied in much of modern children’s literature, and so the child is not helped in coping with them” (10). Fairytales provide illustrations of the child’s internal conflicts in the form of monsters. In *The Power of the Myth* mythologist Joseph Campbell discusses the role of the myth in human society: “[Monsters] represent powers too vast for the normal forms of life to contain them...some horrendous prescience or apparition that explodes all of your standards for harmony, order, and ethical conduct” (278). The monster takes these internal conflicts very seriously and addresses itself directly to them. Yet the fairytale unflinchingly devotes itself to overthrowing the monster, signifying an overthrow of vice.

⁶Although Randall’s version was published in 2012, its softened retelling of the tale mimics mundane Victorian tradition.

The fairytale, however, is not didactic. It does not provide an end moral, but points to the triumph of goodness. Any message that should be found within the fairytale is merely implied, rather than clearly shown. Philosopher James Heisig notes in *Bruno Bettelheim and the Fairy Tales* that the vagueness of the tales is pedagogically suited to engage “the child's imagination to fill in the details and to invest his interests accordingly” (95-6). The folk tale, on the other hand, is an instructive tale with vivid moral teachings. Although the fairytale and folk tale both address ethics, the fairytale seeks to discern the comedy of the cosmos, while the folk tale is didactic. Children’s literature holds a place for fairytales and folktales; however, they have been displaced by their modern counterparts.

The fairytale’s expression of depth in fantasy gives the child confidence within reality. However, the modern emphasis on a realistic setting goes against the fairytale structure. Many people assume that the more “realistic” a story is, the better it equips children to engage with reality but this is not the case: fantasy better equips children to engage with reality because it makes invisible reality (good and evil) concrete. Realism often ignores anything invisible. In the article “Participating in Enchantment” Betty McGrade argues against realism in fairytales: “realism is foreign to children's own ways of thinking and therefore fails to recognize, much less help resolve, their central problems...the stories [are] a source of hope for the future which makes development toward maturity attractive and thus possible” (235). By having a realistic setting, modern fairytales further detach themselves from the child’s natural mindset. Depth cannot properly be presented to a child in a realistic context.⁷ The child naturally exists in a state

⁷Imagine presenting a large philosophical work to a child explaining the depths of particular truths in the universe and expecting him to understand. We can present ideas of particular truths to them but we need to use a medium (i.e. fairytales) which would be appropriate to their level of maturity. Understanding certain truths is also personal relative where there are exceptional sorts of children who can understand moral truths, but that is not the general case.

of fantasy and best understands abstract morals of society through the concrete medium of fantasy. The symbolic nature of fairytales allows the child to partake in some level of awareness without succumbing himself fully to an excess of anxiety.

Heisig further investigates the modern fairytale and its loss of depth and goodness; it has become commercialized and primarily focuses on entertainment:

Children subjected to the biases of standardized schooling and mass modes of entertainment no longer want to be “told” stories that might depart from the “correct” versions printed in books or on films. And their educators, wary of offending the complex psychology of the child’s development, learn to trust modernized editions of folktales, if indeed they tell them at all. The stories grow too heavy to be sung. They lose the right to roam about from mouth to mouth and be transformed each time they come to rest on a storyteller’s heart (94).

Heisig notes that the modernized editions of fairytales have grown “too heavy to be sung” (94).

The traditional oral story has been adapted to the perilous conditions of the printing press.⁸ It serves as a graveyard to fairytales by stripping away the value of active narrative; thus, written stories are subjected to strict and dry conditions. The written medium limits the story to easily answerable moral questions. Storyteller Isaac Singer notes in an interview elucidating fairytales: “it is a great tragedy that modern writers have become so interested in messages that they forget that there are stories which are wonderful without a message; that the message isn't everything” (10). The adaptations fail to focus on the individual child, but subject themselves to a general and commercial audience. The modern fairytale has become sickly sweet, adapted to entertain and bombard the child with positive messages about handling everyday crises so that their authors can more easily profit from them. The ideal way of transmitting fairytales is by means of oral communication. Heisig further emphasizes the importance of the storyteller: “not only does such oral storytelling permit the greatest flexibility of response, but it sets up a valuable interpersonal

⁸The conditions are not perilous in themselves, but for how the fairytale is supposed to be properly told.

event between the storyteller and the child” (97). This cultural activity allows the tale to be tailored to the individual child, rather than generalized to a profitable audience. Truths are best received when the story becomes personal by emphasizing struggles the child has in common with the heroine. Any truths to be found within modern adaptations, however, are softened; there is no monetary gain to be found in reflecting on reality as such. Due to our inability to tell a fairytale, there is a place for their written forms. Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm properly source the original tales and set up archetypes. Once the Grimms’ versions are again well known, however, we can return to the oral tradition.

Technology as well has perverted the fairytale. Karl Kroeber in *Retelling/Rereading: The Fate of Storytelling in Modern Times* describes how modern culture has caused the traditional fairytale to fall disrepute: “In a world capable of instant electronic transmissions and rapid and inexpensive reproduction of images, for example, the patience required of a narrative audience, its willingness to let a story unfold at its pace, may not be a valuable attribute” (187).

Technology encourages a shortened attention span, training the modern child to reject depth. Thus, fairytales limited to bright illustrations and eccentric characters sell.⁹ The modern child, however, no longer is exposed to depth and truths to guide him through development. In “Books for the Post-Revolutionary Reader” Richard Peck explores the modern child’s lost relationship with traditional fairytales:

Today only a handful of children deeply immured within the middle class hear traditional tales at their parents' knees. From pre-school on, the American young learn their murder, mutilation, and infanticide from the television and the rented video, if not in their own homes, then in another. The television screen becomes itself an agent of infanticide. (41)

Ironically modern children are exposed to the violence of television yet sheltered from the

⁹Although these elements are not necessarily shallow, the adaptations lack anything beyond that. The images and characters are used to bombard children into purchasing empty literary works, for the purpose of entertainment.

subdued violence of traditional fairytales. However, there is something more terrifying about visualized evils compared to their written counterparts. Television directly exposes the child to reality but lacks the comforting resolution of the fairytale; it evokes an excess of fear without catharsis. Thus, the modern child should be exposed to stories as a medium for understanding violence rather than a television.

Conclusion: Reparation of the Entertainment Dilemma

Now that I have acknowledged the importance of children's books in literature I can discuss the importance of reviewing the books read to your children. Fairytales are commonly viewed as a negligible sub-genre of literature. Thus, there is little parental awareness of or thought about the effects stories have on children. The common parent views fairytales as an easy bedtime story to calm down the child before he is tucked in. Mundane best-selling fairytale adaptations are picked off the shelves of local bookstores or purchased on an iPad. The child does not complain; however, he only knows about the standard manufactured tales overflowing with colorful illustrations and unique protagonists. These seemingly good things desaturate and dull and dilute the fairytale; despite modern fairytales' entertaining pictures and characters, the core remains shallow. The original plots are softened so as not to frighten the child with monsters or heaven forbid bore the child with metaphorical details. No great moral presents itself to the child, leaving modern children unexposed to existential depth. Instead, he is shallow and sheltered, neglected and unexposed to reality.

A solution to modern fairytales is to read children Grimms'. The traditional fairytale provides the depths of particular truths that modern adaptations lack. Grimms' heroines' endurance of hardship offers a sense of hope to the child. He externalizes his anxieties by relating his struggles to the protagonist's. The protagonist is on a journey to self-discovery just as

the child is on a journey to adulthood. Hansel and Gretel begin as small children dependent upon their parents, yet after surviving their abandonment and overcoming their gluttony they gain independence. And by transcending their vices, the siblings are able to live happily with their father. The child reading this tale relates his own struggle with development to the protagonist — allowing him to overcome his fear of abandonment by the tale’s deliverance of hope. Also, additionally, fairytales illuminate for the child the evils of reality. McGrade notes:

the punishments meted out to evil doers in fairy tales, which often seem cruel to adults, are reassuring to children, who feel more secure knowing that justice is done. Children are unable to identify their own intense and ambivalent emotions explicitly and need to organize their inner chaos by externalizing aspects of these feelings in different figures (236).

The dark forces are not always pleasant and benevolent, but frightening and malicious. The child, however, must be taught to recognize and overcome them in order to achieve a sense of justice. Although the wicked witch in “Hansel and Gretel” remains in fantasy, the reader may identify a cruel person or an invisible evil that has many manifestations—cruelty, uncertainty, instability, etc.—in his life with the villain. By reading of the witch’s defeat, the child learns of the triumph of goodness and is given hope for enduring his personal pain. In “How the Grimm Brothers Saved the Fairy Tale” Zipes explores the hope in children’s stories:

Though brusque and raw, the Grimms’ tales of the first edition still resonate with us today because they indicate how we can transform ourselves and our conditions to live in a better world. As philologists, collectors, translators, researchers, editors, and mediators, the Grimms worked in the hope that their tales would benefit us in unimaginable ways, and, indeed, it is this hope that can still be felt when we read and listen to their tales.

Zipes illuminates an essential feature of fairytales: hope, or “happily ever afters”. Fairytales are fully aware of the child’s sensitivity, thus good forever triumphs. If the cannibalistic witch is never punished, then it appears to the child there is no justice in the world. And the fairytale does not wish to inculcate cynicism. Thus, “happily ever afters” are essential. They preserve the

enchantment and comedy of the cosmos in the fairytale.¹⁰ Walter suggests “kids need the timeless truths of fairy tales more than ever, and the relevance of Hansel and Gretel most of all” (331). Children long for a good story, a tale that will guide them through hell and heaven, introduce them to evil and good. Despite the modern fairytale’s failure to present a tale of merit, the original fairytale serves as a proper guide into the unknown. Fight to find the fairytale, it exists buried within forgotten children’s books and storytelling minds.

¹⁰Even if the fairytale’s implication of an ultimate goodness is wrong, it still supplies a hopeful fiction that may actually contribute to a person’s happiness more than a nihilistic truth.

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